

Summary of the Sixth Session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the United Nations Environment Assembly: 19 February – 1 March 2024

“The world needs action, speed and real, lasting change.” As the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) came to a close, Inger Anderson, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), drew attention to the need to tackle the triple planetary crisis and slow climate change, restore nature and land, and create a pollution-free world.

Under the theme “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution,” UNEA-6 quickly became a marathon effort that saw the adoption of 15 resolutions, two decisions, and a Ministerial Declaration. Resolutions covered topics ranging from the environmental aspects of minerals and metals, the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and highly hazardous pesticides to sustainable lifestyles, sand and dust storms, land degradation, and environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict.

UNEA-6 also highlighted the importance of cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) with a full day devoted to discussions. More than 170 ministers participated in a High-level Segment that featured three leadership dialogues and a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

A number of other events took place prior to or alongside UNEA-6, including the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, the Youth Environment Assembly, meetings of the International Resource Panel, the Climate and Clean Air Conference, the United Nations Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment, the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, and the Cities and Regions Summit, and dozens of side events.

UNEA-6 convened from 26 February – 1 March 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya. A record 7,000 delegates from 182 UN Member States, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, international organizations, scientists, and the private sector participated in the meeting.

In the week leading up to UNEA, delegates convened in Nairobi for the sixth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-6), from 19-23 February 2024, to negotiate the resolutions and decisions, which were then forwarded to UNEA for final negotiations and adoption.

A Brief History of the UN Environment Assembly

UNEA was established in the wake of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, 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 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:

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

Key Turning Points

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 GC;
- 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 former 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, which meets intersessionally. With the advent of universal membership, the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) meets in advance of each UNEA session to prepare for the session by negotiating resolutions.

UNEA Meetings

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. The ministerial outcome document reaffirmed ministers’ 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 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 (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 the 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 be in line with the UN budgetary cycle.

UNEA-3: UNEA-3 (4-6 December 2017) convened under 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 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: UNEA-4 (11-15 March 2019) convened under the theme “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.” UNEA-4 concluded with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration, 23 resolutions and three decisions, which addressed shared and emerging global environmental issues. The Assembly also endorsed the UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) and budget for the 2020-21 biennium, and launched the Sixth Global Environment Outlook report.

UNEA-5.1: UNEA’s first online session took place amid the COVID-19 pandemic from 22-23 February 2021, adopting a limited set of three procedural decisions: endorsement of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2025, and PoW and budget for the biennium 2022-2023; the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; and agreement to convene a resumed, in-person fifth session in 2022. The Assembly also launched the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP by the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972.

UNEA-5.2: The resumed fifth session took place from 21 February-2 March 2022, convening under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” UNEA-5.2 adopted 14 resolutions, one decision, and a Ministerial Declaration, as well as a political declaration commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP.

UNEA-6 Report

On Monday, 26 February 2024, UNEA-6 President Leila Benali (Morocco) opened the meeting, acknowledging the hard work leading up to UNEA-6 and highlighting three inflection points that permeate the work and atmosphere at this Assembly, specifically major conflicts that are having serious impacts on the world. She also pointed out that in 2024 50% of the world's population will vote in elections, which may give way to populist movements posing a threat to the work to be done at UNEA-6. Finally, she stated that UNEA-6 is an opportunity to restore trust in multilateralism and humanity.

UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen called on the record number of delegates attending UNEA-6 to unite in their efforts to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution by transcending political differences. She urged delegates to craft strong resolutions to shore up the environmental foundations for a peaceful, equitable, and sustainable future.

Emphasizing policy commitments to sustainable environmental stewardship, Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General, UN Office at Nairobi, elaborated on plans to refurbish the Nairobi campus with environmentally sustainable features, including reforestation, and solar and waste management retrofitting.

Roselinda Soipan Tuya, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya, warned that the world is currently not doing well, urged a change of course as nature is declining.

Many regional groups welcomed the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), with one calling for its rapid ratification. Many also welcomed the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on an international legally binding instrument on plastics pollution scheduled to be completed later this year.

Ethiopia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, added desertification, deforestation, and land degradation to the challenge of addressing the triple planetary crisis.

The State of Palestine, for ASIA PACIFIC, called for more synergistic action to address the triple planetary crisis, which can otherwise hamper efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Barbados, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARRIBBEAN GROUP, invoked the spirit of Nairobi to find compromise on important issues, including addressing the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems and the ocean; and to provide developing countries with additional means of implementation and capacity building.

The EUROPEAN UNION (EU), on behalf of its 27 Member States, with GEORGIA, MONTENEGRO, and UKRAINE aligning, stressed a sense of urgency since none of the UNEA-6 resolutions had yet been agreed to, with some not even having completed a first reading by the OECPR, and called for a strong ministerial declaration.

Malaysia, for the GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, noting the group's 60th anniversary and the outcome document of its third South Summit under the theme of "Leave No One Behind" (January 2024, Kigali, Uganda), called for collective action taking into

account all principles in the Rio Declaration, emphasizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The US, also on behalf of AUSTRALIA, CANADA, CHILE, GEORGIA, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, NORTH MACEDONIA, NORWAY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, SWITZERLAND, TÜRKIYE, UKRAINE, and the EU, condemned Russia for its unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, causing loss of human life, destruction, environmental degradation, and use of sea and land mines. He welcomed UNEP's continued work in Ukraine and called on Russia to withdraw its troops. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, exercising their right of reply, denied allegations made by the US, stressing that UNEA should not be politicized.

ALGERIA highlighted the challenges of desertification and land degradation, access to resources, and diverse scientific approaches as priorities for his delegation. COLOMBIA cautioned against one-sided solutions and market-based approaches that exacerbate other environmental challenges and deepen inequalities. FIJI cited fragmented finance and called for resource allocation for small island developing states (SIDS).

Assuring UNEA-6 of increasing collaborative approaches, the BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP emphasized the private sector as an important community in making vast investments to address global environmental challenges and creating progressive green and sustainable jobs.

The CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP reported on the Youth Environment Assembly hosted prior to UNEA-6, and called on UNEA to ensure this becomes institutionalized at every biennial meeting.

The FARMERS MAJOR GROUP noted with alarm replacement of the terms "agriculture and farmers" with "food systems and frontline actors" in UNEA-6 draft resolutions.

The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MAJOR GROUP called on UNEA-6 to respect the collective rights of all Indigenous Peoples to their land and intellectual property, which should underpin all resolutions. Pointing to the ancestral knowledge systems that have provided sustainable solutions for generations, she emphasized the importance of distinguishing between local communities and Indigenous Peoples as rights holders during negotiations.

The LOCAL AUTHORITIES MAJOR GROUP expressed concern about solar radiation modification (SRM) and experimentation in this regard, and the lack of integrated environmental policies in resolutions, calling for greater inclusivity and advancing a just transition.

The NGO MAJOR GROUP supported the reservations about SRM and other potentially harmful inventions, and called for protecting Mother Earth and silencing firearms, noting that "peace is not a word, but a behavior."

The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY MAJOR GROUP supported introducing stronger language in the resolutions, and on nature-based solutions reiterated calls for banning SRM and open-air tests.

The REGIONAL FACILITATOR OF MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS, WEST ASIA, noted ongoing human rights violations globally and stressed the importance of food sovereignty and recognizing rights of nature.

The RAPPORTEUR OF THE SIXTH CITIES AND REGIONS SUMMIT reported on successful city initiatives to tackle the triple planetary crisis and called for removing obstacles to increased financing.

The WOMEN MAJOR GROUP called for the complete phase-out of highly hazardous chemicals, as the impact on women and children are immense. She urged UNEA-6 to follow expert advice on global non-use of SRM, and including language on gender equity and women's knowledge on sustainable practices.

The WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MAJOR GROUP stressed the climate change impacts from drought, heat stress, and skin cancer on workers in their 433 international trade unions, and stated that policies tend to be non-inclusive and should really allow a just transition.

Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work: The Assembly adopted the agenda ([UNEP/EA.6/1](#)) and organization of work ([UNEP/EA.6/INF/1](#)). The Assembly elected Norbert Kurilla, Advisor to the President of Slovakia, as the Chair of the Committee of the Whole (CoW) and Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP, as CoW Rapporteur.

Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives: CPR Chair Firas Khouri (Jordan), reported on the outcomes of the OECPR-6. He noted that the draft ministerial declaration was forwarded to UNEA-6 for further consideration alongside 19 draft resolutions and two draft decisions.

Election of Officers: Delegates confirmed the following elections that took place at UNEA 5.2: Leyla Benali, Minister of Energy, Transition, and Sustainable Development, Morocco, as UNEA-6 President, and as Vice Presidents: Abdou Karim Sall, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal; Jafar Barmaki, Ambassador, Iran; Malik Amin Aslam, Minister for Environment, Pakistan; Ján Budaj, Minister of Environment, Slovakia; Joaquim Leite, Minister of Environment, Brazil; Carlos Eduardo Correa, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia; Zac Goldsmith, Minister for Pacific and the Environment, UK; and João Pedro Matos Fernandes, Minister of Environment and Energy Transition, Portugal. Delegates also elected Oleksandr Krasnolutsky, Ukraine, as UNEA-6 rapporteur.

Credentials: On Thursday, 29 February, President Benali reported on the credentials of representatives, as reflected in the meeting report.

Committee of the Whole

The CoW convened on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 26, 27, and 28 February. CoW Chair Norbert Kurilla opened the first plenary of the CoW with the mandate to agree on draft resolutions and urged delegations to show willingness to compromise, noting that there is very little time left to conclude their work. He presented, and delegates agreed to, both the agenda ([UNEP/COW.6/1](#)) and the organization of work. The Secretariat explained that the CoW contact groups have the same sequencing of clusters as the OECPR working groups, and each cluster will be led by the same Co-Facilitators as during OECPR, now serving as Co-Chairs. As the contact groups concluded their work, the CoW endorsed the draft resolutions and forwarded them to the UNEA plenary for adoption.

The report of the negotiations presents an account of the UNEA-6 plenaries and a summary of the resolutions and decisions discussed under five clusters by the OECPR and as taken up by the UNEA CoW.

International Environmental Policy and Governance Issues

Under this agenda item, delegates at both the OECPR and the CoW discussed draft resolutions and decisions. They met in cluster and contact group settings from Monday, 19 February, to Wednesday, 28 February. More detailed coverage can be accessed here: [Monday, 19 February](#); [Tuesday, 20 February](#); [Wednesday, 21 February](#); [Thursday, 22 February](#); [Friday, 23 February](#); [Monday, 26 February](#); [Tuesday, 27 February](#); [Wednesday, 28 February](#) and [Thursday, 29 February](#).

Cluster A: This group, co-chaired by Yume Yorita (Japan) and Nana Ama Owusuaa Afriyie Kankam (Ghana), met during both the OECPR and UNEA-6 in contact groups and informal sessions. They considered draft resolutions on: highly hazardous pesticides; sound management of chemicals and waste; promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally; and combating sand and dust storms.

Highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs): On [Tuesday](#), the OECPR considered the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.9) on HHPs. Delegates discussed unmanaged risks of HHPs and some suggested including language on technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries. The OECPR delegates continued to consider this draft resolution on [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), and [Friday](#).

After holding informals on the HHP draft resolution during UNEA-6, on [Thursday](#), delegates managed to clean up remaining bracketed text and the CoW forwarded it to the plenary for adoption.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on HHPs (UNEP/EA/L.14), UNEA encourages stakeholders, including Member States, to take effective measures to phase out HHPs in agriculture where the risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available, and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives.

UNEA also invites Member States to continue to cooperate and coordinate in efforts to prevent illegal trafficking in HHPs, including, where relevant, as highlighted in decisions BC-16/24 of 12 May 2023, RC-11/11 of 12 May 2023, and SC-11/23 of 12 May 2023, adopted by the Conferences of the Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, respectively, on synergies in preventing and combating illegal traffic and trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes.

UNEA further invites Member States and all other relevant stakeholders:

- to become members of the voluntary, multi-stakeholder global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides established under the GFC – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste; and
- those in the position to do so to carry out further research on safer and affordable alternatives of HHPs, as appropriate.

UNEA further requests the Executive Director to:

- support the work of the global alliance on HHPs; and
- report to UNEA-7 on the implementation of the present resolution.

Sound management of chemicals and waste: On [Monday](#), OECPR delegates considered the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.13). A point of divergence on text between delegates was the centered on language on human rights, and capacity building, financial, and technical support. Discussions continued throughout the week.

During UNEA on [Wednesday](#), progress stalled on this draft resolution mainly due to text related to the terms of reference of the Special Programme, however, following informal discussions, the resolution was adopted during the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEP/EA/L.12), UNEA, *inter alia*:

- acknowledges the voluntary, multi-stakeholder, multisectoral GFC – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste;
- encourages all stakeholders to provide further resources to the GFC Fund;
- requests the Executive Director to facilitate coordination between the GFC Fund, the Specific International Programme, and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the BRS Conventions, the Minamata Convention, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, within their respective mandates, in order to enhance complementarity and avoid duplication;
- adopts the amendments to the terms of reference of the Special Programme, as set out in the annex to the present resolution, in order to take into account the GFC and its implementation, in line with the decision in paragraph 16 of UNEA resolution 5/7 of 2 March 2022 on the sound management of chemicals and waste; and
- requests the Executive Director to prepare a report, subject to availability of resources, building on existing measures and initiatives to address lead, cadmium, arsenic, and organotins, and to continue the work of UNEP in supporting Member States in their actions.

Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally: On [Tuesday](#), OEWG delegates began considering the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.16). Delegations' views converged on how to best reflect that some air pollutants are also contributing to global warming and how to appropriately reference the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

By [Tuesday](#) of the following week, UNEA delegates had significantly advanced on agreed upon text, although some language on a reference to local cities and the subnational level remained bracketed until just before final adoption by the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA/L.13), UNEA encourages Member States to accelerate efforts to implement relevant provisions of UNEA resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally, including developing national air quality programmes and setting national ambient air quality standards, bearing in mind the most recent air quality guidelines of the World Health Organization, as appropriate, in their national circumstances.

UNEA requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to form and facilitate a cooperation network on air quality, working with interested Member States, members of specialized agencies, secretariats of the UN entities, including the UN Regional Economic Commissions, relevant MEAs, international, regional and subregional bodies, organizations and initiatives, that would, *inter alia*:

- work with Member States to build and enhance national air quality monitoring capacity including the use of low-cost sensors

- of proper quality, passive samplers and satellite data, and digital solutions in conjunction with monitoring reference equipment;
- share relevant knowledge, information and expertise; best practices; interactive online tools; and data and air quality maps, through the online platform; and
- support capacity building for addressing air pollution including through mutual learning from, *inter alia*, available science, technical expertise and information, including related to co-benefits of nitrogen management and climate plans.

UNEA further requests the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to provide an updated global online platform for network-wide information sharing and communication; and invites Member States, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders, to help mobilize means of implementation in order to address air pollution, particularly in developing countries.

Combating sand and dust storms: On [Tuesday](#), OEWG negotiations on the draft resolution on sand and dust storms (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.17) stalled over whether the terms North-South and South-South could not simply be referred to as international cooperation. Examples of cooperation that were considered in this context were, *inter alia*, preparing and implementing action plans and setting up regional centres for research, technical, and scientific collaboration.

By the following [Thursday](#), UNEA delegates moved swiftly through the preamble paragraphs; however, progress stalled in considering how broad sources of resources should be. The resolution was ultimately forwarded to UNEA-6 for adoption.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on combating sand and dust storms (UNEP/EA/L.10), UNEA requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to support Member States and members of UN specialized agencies through the UN Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, among others, in collaboration with relevant UN conventions, entities, and other partners and stakeholders in addressing the challenges of sand and dust storms, as appropriate, building on the “Global assessment of sand and dust storms” stipulated in General Assembly resolution 70/195 of 22 December 2015.

UNEA invites Member States to enhance sharing of best practices and knowledge on all relevant aspects of combating sand and dust storms and mitigating their adverse impacts, as appropriate, including the socio-economic impact of sand and dust storms and the impacts on ecosystems and human health and well-being, paying special attention to people in vulnerable situations.

UNEA calls upon Member States to further implement practices, measures, and policies responsive to the needs of women and girls to combat sand and dust storms and to ensure the equitable, inclusive, effective, meaningful and informed representation and participation of women at all levels to ensure the empowerment of women and girls.

UNEA also invites Member States to promote cooperation, as appropriate, through, *inter alia*:

- promoting research, technical and scientific collaboration among existing regional centers and, while avoiding duplication with existing centers, setting up new ones for enhanced preparation and implementation of programmes and action plans;
- requesting the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to organize a workshop, involving Member States,

members of UN specialized agencies, technical and financial institutions, and other relevant stakeholders on the sidelines of UNEA-7, to explore possible gaps and areas for improvement to address sand and dust storms and their adverse effects at the regional and sub-regional levels; and

- promoting North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.

UNEA invites Member States and regional development banks to contribute financial resources towards regional initiatives and projects to address the challenges of sand and dust storms.

Solar Radiation Modification (SRM): On [Tuesday](#), OECPR opened this draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.14). Delegations were reluctant to discuss the text since many had concerns about the lack of science, the technological and scientific gap between developed and developing countries with regards to understanding SRM, duplication of work already being conducted under UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the IPCC, and fear that, if passed, the resolution will possibly signal that SRM technologies are an acceptable practice. After discussions in contact groups and informal meetings, delegates could not reach consensus, and the draft resolution was withdrawn.

Cluster B: This group, co-chaired by Rohit Vadhwana (India) and Gudi Alkemade (Netherlands), met during both the OECPR and UNEA-6 in contact groups and informal sessions. They considered draft resolutions on: effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; strengthening international efforts to halt land degradation, restore degraded lands and increase ecosystem and communities' resilience to drought; strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution; and living well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth.

Effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution: On [Monday](#), during the opening of OECPR-6, the EU highlighted its draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.18). On [Tuesday](#), Alkemade and Vadhwana informed delegates that this resolution was merged with the resolution on sustainable management of cascade systems (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.5). Discussions continued through the week on the new merged draft (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.24).

On [Wednesday](#) at UNEA, remaining issues on the draft resolution were discussed, including provisions on coherence between UNEP's medium-term strategy and the UN system-wide strategy in activities on water and sanitation, as well as general coherence between UNEP's activities and other UN entities. The resolution was adopted in plenary on Friday.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (UNEA/EA/L.16), UNEA calls upon all Member States and members of specialized agencies and invites relevant international organizations and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to, *inter alia*:

- implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate, and adopt coherent responses to the water-related challenges and risks across sectors, regions and actors, taking into account, where applicable, the interlinkages of water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition, with their social, economic and environmental impacts;
- mainstream sustainable water management and the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of aquatic

ecosystems into relevant intergovernmental processes, as well as national and local development strategies and relevant policies, with consideration of the One Health approach;

- enhance the collection and monitoring of reliable, up-to-date water-related data in accordance with national laws and policies, including on water quality and quantity, and increase their use for evidence-based decision-making across sectors, noting the water cycle, and implement sustainable, integrated, disaster-risk-informed water resources management as a necessary tool for successful disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation, *inter alia*, as a contribution to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;
- promote integrated water resource management in agriculture to address water stress, and adapt agricultural systems, *inter alia*, to promote overall water efficiency and resilience to water stress as well as to transition to sustainable food systems, and taking into account indigenous and traditional knowledge and approaches, including, *inter alia*, that associated with cascaded tank village systems as well as agroecological and other innovative approaches; and
- promote integrated water resources management in and between large water consuming industry sectors to reduce water stress risks and pollution, and adapt water reuse strategies, *inter alia*, by enhancing wastewater reuse and strengthening pollutant discharge control to improve the overall water efficiency and their resilience to water stress.

UNEA further requests the UNEP Executive Director, in collaboration with relevant UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders, subject to the availability of resources, to, *inter alia*:

- present to UNEA-7 a set of strategic priorities for how freshwater will connect across and accelerate the implementation of UNEP's 2026-2029 Medium-Term Strategy, and for how it engages with the UN system-wide strategy on water and sanitation; and
- play an active role in the preparatory process of the 2026 UN Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, as well as the 2028 UN Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, in close cooperation with other UN Water members.

Strengthening international efforts to halt land degradation, restore degraded lands and increase ecosystem and communities' resilience to drought: On [Tuesday](#), OEWG delegates began considering the draft resolution on land degradation and drought (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.6). There was significant debate on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as this category had not been previously agreed upon within UNEA. Discussions continued throughout the week.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (UNEA/EA/L.17), UNEA calls on Member States, in their efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality, and enhance drought resilience to:

- apply and, as appropriate, align with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 2018-2030 Strategic Framework their national policies, programmes, plans and processes related to desertification, land degradation and

drought, in all relevant sectors, to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to drought;

- contribute, as appropriate, to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- shift from reactive to proactive drought management, taking into consideration the importance of monitoring and early warning systems, risk and impact assessment, and mitigation, preparedness and response; and
- consider promoting integrated approaches to sustainable land management.

UNEA also calls on Member States, in their efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality, and enhance drought resilience to further enhance the involvement of civil society, especially women, girls and youth in the affected areas, in the implementation of policies, programmes, plans, actions and processes, as appropriate.

UNEA requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, and in cooperation and collaboration with the UNCCD, other Rio Conventions, UN agencies and programmes, and other relevant organizations, within their respective mandates in their efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality and enhance drought resilience to:

- facilitate the sharing of knowledge;
- enhance data availability, as well as to bridge data gaps, in particular for countries with affected or threatened areas, including through the use of innovative technologies; and
- facilitate the mobilization of adequate and additional resources to support Member States in their efforts.

Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution: COSTA RICA presented its draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.20) to the OECPR, on [Monday](#). There was formidable discussion on how to include language from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, considering that not all UNEA Members are parties to this Convention.

Discussions continued through UNEA until [Thursday](#) and the resolution was adopted during the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution (UNEA/EA/L.18), UNEA encourages Member States to, as appropriate, adopt, ratify or implement the regional seas conventions, protocols and action plans for the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment, while promoting high visibility of the regional dimension in all relevant global processes and forums.

UNEA also encourages Member States to, as appropriate:

- sign and ratify the BBNJ Agreement at the earliest possible date;
- fully and effectively implement the GBF, as appropriate, including its goals and targets relevant to the ocean, and increase efforts at all levels to achieve those goals and targets;
- engage in the ongoing process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, with the ambition of completing that work by the end of 2024, as mandated by UNEA resolution 5/14;

- ratify, accept, approve, or accede to the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter, 1972; and
- make significant efforts to tackle ocean acidification and its causes and to further study and minimize its impacts.

UNEA requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- strengthen, without prejudice to and within UNEP's mandate, the Regional Seas Programme to further support the regional seas conventions and action plans;
- continue providing technical support to Member States and members of UN specialized agencies, upon request, in implementing their respective obligations and activities under the regional seas conventions and action plans, MEAs, and other relevant environmental instruments, including through the dissemination and sharing of best practices; and
- assist Member States and members of UN specialized agencies, upon request, in the assessment of marine biodiversity within national jurisdiction and regional seas conventions and action plan areas, in collaboration with other relevant entities; and
- provide technical support to Member States and members of UN specialized agencies, upon request, for the development of marine and coastal planning and management tools within national jurisdiction, in particular marine protected areas, integrated coastal zone management, and marine spatial planning, based on the best available science including, where appropriate, traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices.

UNEA further invites the secretariats of the regional seas conventions and action plans to, as appropriate, upon request of their contracting parties or participating countries to, *inter alia*: develop and present joint voluntary actions for the regional seas covered by the relevant convention at the third UN Ocean Conference, in order to address pertinent environmental issues in the area in question; and support their parties in participating in the ongoing negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment by, among other things, making available relevant information.

Development of criteria, norms, standards and guidelines for nature-based solutions to support sustainable development: On [Wednesday](#), OECPR opened discussions on this draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.10). Discussions revolved around the modalities that would support implementation of nature-based solutions (NbS), with alternative proposals including a technical expert group, workshop, or UNEP taking on the task. A few parties questioned if there is even a need for such work, as they deemed UNEA resolution 5/5 on NbS suffices with specifics of implementation determined at the national level. Major Groups stressed that NbS are currently open to interpretation and are subject to misuse, and called for a working group to include an expert nominated by Major Groups. The deadlock could not be resolved and the draft resolution was withdrawn during UNEA-6.

Living Well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth and Mother Earth Centric Actions: This draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.23), was introduced in the OECPR plenary by BOLIVIA on [Wednesday](#). He stressed the important role this resolution would play in empowering Indigenous knowledge systems, non-market centered approaches and nature-based solutions. Many delegations argued that the draft had been submitted too late and should be resubmitted well in advance of UNEA-7.

On Friday, CPR Chair Khouri announced the resolution had been withdrawn.

Cluster C: This group, co-chaired by Karin Snellman (Sweden) and Alejandro Montero (Chile), met during both the OECPR and UNEA-6 in contact groups and informal sessions. They considered draft resolutions on: fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between UNEA, UNEP and MEAs; enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of environment ministers and UNEP regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges; and promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of MEAs and other relevant environmental instruments.

Fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between UNEA, UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements: On [Tuesday](#), the OECPR discussed the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.7) was discussed with significant push from developing countries advocating for inclusion of a paragraph on reaffirming the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Delegates also struggled to see eye-to-eye on text stating that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development required sufficient resources.

In UNEA on [Wednesday](#), in the final push to reach agreement, delegates continued to debate fundamental aspects of the draft resolution including how to interpret the word “synergies”; however, in the interest of time and getting the resolution adopted, delegates compromised on the text.

Final Resolution: The final resolution (UNEA/EA.6/L.9), requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources without prejudice to the specific objectives of relevant MEAs, recognizing their respective mandates, and in line with the relevant decisions of the governing bodies of the MEAs and in cooperation with the respective MEA secretariats, to:

- strengthen and promote its capacity-building initiatives to facilitate coherent and effective implementation of MEAs at the regional and national level on a Member State-driven basis, including through the fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law and through UNEP’s regional offices, regional centres of MEAs, and UN Regional Economic Commissions;
- request the UNEP Executive Director to develop an analysis of case studies, success stories, and lessons learned from cooperation, collaboration, and complementarities at the national level in the implementation of MEAs;
- strengthen cooperation between UNEP and UN country teams, and to encourage UN country teams to mainstream the objectives of MEAs into their work;
- enhance cooperation with Member States, upon request, in identifying opportunities for collaboration in implementing reporting processes under MEAs; and
- mobilize resources to implement this resolution.

UNEA also encourages Member States to:

- promote synergies, cooperation or collaboration, as appropriate, in the implementation of MEAs, without prejudice to their specific objectives, and observing their independent and autonomous nature including through the establishment

of coordinated and cooperative approaches, structured communication channels and convening of national focal points of various MEAs;

- identify in their Voluntary National Reviews to the HLPF, where applicable, contributions of MEAs to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- identify, with relevant stakeholders, approaches for strengthening cooperation in the implementation of MEAs.

Enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of environment ministers and UNEP regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges:

On [Monday](#), OECPR delegates considered the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.8). There was some debate on specific language on environment ministers as well as whether references to specific Major Groups and stakeholders is appropriate.

The resolution was adopted during the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (UNEA/EA.6/L.6), UNEA, *inter alia*: requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- enhance the consideration of the role and viability of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, in cooperation, where appropriate, with existing regional organizations and institutions, and without prejudice to their respective mandates and processes by: including on the agendas of annual subcommittee meetings of the CPR an item on the contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to UNEP’s Medium-term Strategy and Programme of Work; and continuing to provide technical support, where requested; and
- produce a report on the role and viability of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities as catalytic platforms for international cooperation in tackling prevalent environmental challenges, consulting key partners and stakeholders, where relevant, in the preparation of the report, and preparing a summary of the findings for consideration by the OECPR and UNEA-7.

Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments:

On [Tuesday](#), OECPR delegates considered the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.12). The main points of debate were respecting individual mandates of each MEA when developing synergies, and ensuring that synergies are Member State driven.

This resolution was then discussed in a contact group established by the CoW, and on [Wednesday](#) delegates reached agreement on the text. The resolution was adopted during the closing plenary.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution (UNEA/EA.6/L.7), UNEA encourages Member States to enhance:

- synergies, cooperation or collaboration, as appropriate, when implementing their respective obligations and commitments under MEAs and other relevant environmental instruments, while respecting their individual mandates, thereby contributing to the effective implementation of national environment policies and actions, delivering global environmental benefits, contributing to the achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, considering the best available science, Indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge, and local knowledge; and
- knowledge and understanding of the potential co-benefits of synergies, cooperation or collaboration, as appropriate, by

increasing efforts to collect and share good practices, and foster information exchange.

UNEA requests the UNEP Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources to:

- assist Member States, upon request, in enhancing synergies, cooperation or collaboration;
- collect, synthesize and share good practices, tools, success stories and lessons learned, among Member States, relevant partners, and stakeholders, through relevant existing regional and global platforms and fora, and building on existing initiatives, to improve synergies, cooperation or collaboration; and
- report to UNEA-7 on the implementation of the present resolution.

Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions towards climate justice: On [Tuesday](#), OECPR opened discussion on this draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.4). Some developed countries raised concerns about the resolution as a whole. While expressing support for climate action, they reserved their position on the resolution, pointing that it might interfere with the work and mandate of UNFCCC, and UNEA may not being the proper forum. There was also concern about the lack of clarity about the proposed forum on climate justice for vulnerable countries, and finally, consensus could not be reached. The draft resolution was withdrawn before the UNEA-6 closing plenary.

Cluster D: This group, co-facilitated by Felista Rugambwa (Tanzania) and Robert Bunbury (Canada), met during both the OECPR and UNEA-6 in contact groups and informal sessions. They considered draft resolutions on: environmental aspects of minerals and metals, environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts, promoting sustainable lifestyles, and circularity of a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry.

Environmental aspects of minerals and metals: On [Tuesday](#), OEWG delegates discussed the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.15) addressed complex points such as how minerals and metals are treated in other MEA processes. There was also discussion on including capacity-building aspects into this sector.

Delegates continued to meet on the draft resolution during UNEA until [Thursday](#), when they finalized the draft and forwarded it to the plenary for adoption on Friday.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on environmental aspects of minerals and metals (UNEP/EA.6/L.8), UNEA, among others:

- recognizes that sustainable management of mineral and metal resources contributes significantly to the achievement of the SDGs;
- emphasizes that the scope of the resolution covers the full life cycle, including extraction, on-site and off-site processing, refining, management of mining waste and tailings, rehabilitation of sites and closed or abandoned mines, manufacturing, and recycling; and
- stresses the need for enhanced action to support the environmentally sustainable management of minerals and metals, reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and all its principles.

UNEA encourages Member States, and invites relevant stakeholders from both the public and private sectors along the full life cycle of minerals and metals, to align the management of minerals and metals with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and with their relevant obligations and decisions under MEAs, as well as to promote sustainable consumption and production.

It further requests UNEP, subject to availability of resources, in cooperation with Member States, stakeholders and experts, to:

- establish a digital knowledge hub to compile, among others, existing good practices relevant to the environmental aspects of minerals and metals, and to share this information;
- develop capacity-building opportunities on environmental aspects of minerals and metals with experts on the subject from each region, including but not limited to virtual trainings; and
- support enhanced cooperation among Member States on policy, technological, technical, and scientific aspects with the aim of strengthening management of environmental aspects of minerals and metals.

It finally invites UNEP to strengthen its cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations, fora, and with relevant stakeholders on environmental aspects of minerals and metals; and requests a report to UNEA-7.

Environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts: On [Thursday](#), OECPR delegates contended with the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.3). Throughout the two weeks, delegations struggled to overcome impasses in this resolution, with a particular note on how to contextualize a UN General Assembly resolution and whether conflicts should be specific to international ones.

Delegates worked with the assistance of UNEP Legal Advisors until [Thursday](#), when they finalized the draft and forwarded it to the plenary for adoption on Friday.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts (UNEP/EA.6/L.15), UNEA:

- urges Member States to adhere to the rules of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, human rights law, and international humanitarian law, as applicable, in relation to the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict;
- invites Member States to take note of the International Law Commission's principles on protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts, as applicable; and
- encourages Member States to consider how to increase the effectiveness of environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts.

UNEA requests UNEP, with the oversight of the CPR, to report to UNEA on the UNEP's provision of environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts, and identify and develop technical guidance, including new and emerging practices, on the collection of data on environmental damage associated with armed conflicts. UNEA encourages UNEP to strengthen its collaboration with other UN Agencies and relevant stakeholders to provide, upon request of UN Member States or members of UN specialized agencies, environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts.

UNEA also requests UNEP, in consultation with Member States, to include environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts in the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2026-2029, to be considered at UNEA-7 and to report on the implementation of this resolution.

Promoting sustainable lifestyles: On [Wednesday](#), OECPR delegates discussed the draft resolution on promoting sustainable lifestyles (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.11). Delegates endeavored to identify precise text on consumption patterns and behavior as well as sustainable lifestyles juxtaposed against the SDGs and other multilateral agreements.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on promoting sustainable lifestyles (UNEP/EA.6/L.11) UNEA:

- reaffirms the commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the three dimensions of sustainable development, which are integrated, indivisible, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature;
- recognizes the potential of behavioral changes towards sustainable lifestyles and the role of the private sector and industry, local authorities, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples in supporting more sustainable lifestyles;
- emphasizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, leaving no one behind; and
- recognizes adequate individual education and skills can further accelerate collective efforts for sustainable consumption and production and promote more sustainable lifestyles, and each country is best positioned to understand its own national circumstances and priorities to encourage more sustainable lifestyles.

UNEA encourages Member States and invites others to: create the necessary evidence-based enabling conditions, foster public and private collaboration, pursue education at all levels and awareness-raising initiatives in support of empowering citizens to make informed choices about sustainable lifestyles, as referenced in SDG 4.7 (Education for sustainable development and global citizenship); and to promote and enhance cooperation, sharing information and best practices that enable the adoption of sustainable lifestyles, including sustainable living.

UNEA requests UNEP, including through the One Planet Network Programme on Sustainable Lifestyles and Education, and the Green Jobs for Youth Pact, subject to available resources, to:

- support Member States, at their request, in the development and implementation of national or regional action plans for promoting sustainable lifestyles, or the integration of sustainable lifestyles in existing actions plans;
- facilitate, upon request, the sharing of information, best practices, and research on sustainable lifestyles, including sustainable living; and
- in partnership with the UN Regional Commissions, undertake regional dialogues, subject to the availability of resources, to discuss sustainable lifestyle practices in the context of the diversity of nature's values and approaches, including, as appropriate, eco-centric approaches of individuals and communities, including that of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, for living in harmony with Nature, or Mother Earth, as recognized by some countries and regions to enable sustainable lifestyles; and
- submit a report to inform UNEA-7 on these dialogues and on the progress of the present resolution.

Circularity of a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry: On [Monday](#), the draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.21) was introduced to the OECPR. One delegation stressed the importance of this resolution in combating air pollution. Focused discussion was centered on how to transition to a circular economy with a systematic approach and inclusive of all sectors.

During UNEA, delegates continued to discuss this text until the late hours on [Wednesday](#), when they finalized the draft resolution and forwarded to the closing plenary for adoption.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on circularity of a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry (UNEP/EA.6/L.4), UNEA, among others:

- acknowledges that pursuing circular economy approaches as a pathway to achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns can contribute to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, water stress, pollution and their impact on human health, thus contributing to the achievement of related goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed environmental goals;
- recognizes that international exchanges, shared experiences and means of implementation can help in the implementation of circular economy approaches to achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns; and
- welcomes efforts to advance circular economy approaches, noting in this context the establishment of national, regional, and global initiatives.

UNEA also notes that sugar cane is produced in more than 80 countries, is vital to many national economies with millions of people depending on it for their livelihoods, and the sugar cane agro-industry is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and welcomes the launch of the International Alliance for the circularity of a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry at UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 4 December 2023.

UNEA invites Member States with a sugar cane agro-industry to:

- integrate low carbon, climate resilient, circular economy approaches for that sector, into their national strategies and in accordance with their national circumstances, as well as, as appropriate, regional initiatives including those related to relevant multilateral environmental agreements, as a contribution to address climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation, and pollution;
- explore and develop partnership initiatives, in cooperation with the private sector and other relevant stakeholders that support circular economy approaches in the sugar cane agro-industry and promote cleaner technologies, good practices that prevent deforestation, education and awareness, capacity building, information exchange on best practices, scientific research, innovation, technology development and transfer on mutually agreed terms; and
- help mobilize means of implementation from all sources, in order to support the uptake of circular economy approaches in the sugar cane agro-industry in the context of achieving sustainable development and to promote resilient sustainable consumption and production patterns, especially by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in developing countries.

UNEA requests UNEP to: in consultation with Member States, members of specialized agencies and relevant stakeholders, in particular the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the UN to continue to collect information and conduct further analysis on circular economy approaches in the sugar cane agro-industry, among other crops, and report to UNEA-7.

Stepping up efforts to accelerate transitioning domestically, regionally and globally to circular economies: On [Tuesday](#), OECPR opened this draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.19). A number of delegates wanted to include a reference to, or a separate provision on, UNGA resolution 77/161 on promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Discussion focused on describing the nature of circular economies, with some delegates asking to delete references to trade aspects and international obligations, while others wanted to replace references to preventing greenhouse gas emissions with managing or removing them. The proponent and other delegations urged maintaining the original text, noting that large parts are consistent with previous UNEA resolutions. Delegates could not reach consensus, and the draft resolution was withdrawn before the UNEA-6 closing plenary.

Cluster E: This group, co-facilitated by Tobias Ogwen (Kenya) and Nader Al-Tarawneh (Jordan), met during both the OECPR and UNEA-6 in contact groups and informal sessions. They considered draft resolution on amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF) and draft decisions on the management of trust funds and on dates and the provisional agenda for UNEA-7 and OECPR-7.

Amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF: On [Wednesday](#), delegates advanced work on a number of fronts on this draft resolution (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.22), however, an ongoing issue emerged related to the concern of a number of developing countries that there is a need for greater inclusivity, transparency, accountability and responsiveness for the projects and programmes. After further discussion, the draft was forwarded to UNEA-6, where it was adopted.

Final Resolution: In the final resolution on amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF (UNEP/EA.6/L.5), UNEA:

- adopts the updated text of the instrument contained in Annex VIII of document UNEP/EA.6/12 “Information supplementary to the report of the Executive Director on amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF,” in light of the decision of GEF-7 (August 2023), which approved the amended text of the instrument contained in document GEF/A.7/08; and
- requests UNEP, in line with its mandate and its medium term strategy agreed by UNEA, to continue to consider ways of enhancing the capacity of UNEP, as the leading global environmental authority, in order to continue to strengthen its role as an implementing agency of the GEF.

Management of Trust Funds: Regarding the draft decision on management of trust funds (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.1), delegates considered the information provided by the Secretariat. Questions arose regarding the oversight of governance of trust funds and establishment of new ones. One delegation initially reserved on the establishment of a general trust fund for climate stability and only lifted their reservation during the last round of negotiations.

The CoW endorsed the decision on Wednesday, and UNEA-6 adopted the decision during the closing plenary.

Final Decision: In the final decision on management of trust funds (UNEP/EA.6/L.2), UNEA notes the closure of inactive trust funds and the reassignment of balances to the relevant activities and that UNEP carries out the functions of administering trust funds on the principle of full cost recovery of administrative costs. UNEA approves the establishment of the following trust funds:

- the general trust fund for Caribbean Biological Corridor Initiative;
- the general trust fund for climate stability;
- the general trust fund for living in harmony with nature; and
- the general trust fund for the core activities of the Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V).

The decision further notes and lists trust funds that have been extended, including in support of: the work of UNEP; and MEAs and action plans.

Provisional Agenda and Dates of UNEA-7: This item (UNEP/OECPR.6/L.2) was introduced during the opening plenary session on [Monday, 26 February](#), and was adopted by the closing plenary.

Final Decision: In the final decision on the date and venue for UNEA-7 (UNEP/EA.6/L.3), UNEA decided that UNEA-7 will take place from 8-12 December 2025 and OECPR-7 from 1-5 December 2025 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

Regarding the date and venue for UNEA-7, the Assembly urges UNEA-6 to keep in mind the cycle of UNEA meetings and the recommended time between UNEAs (decision 2/22 and UNEA rule of procedure 1) and the need to approve the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme of Work and Budget in 2025.

The Assembly further:

- approves the provisional agenda for UNEA-7;
- requests the Bureau in consultation with CPR to define a theme;
- strongly urges Member States to draft resolutions for consideration by UNEA-7;
- encourages Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of the offices of the UNEA President and Bureau and CPR Chair and Bureau; and in delegations to UNEA and OECPR sessions;
- welcomes the UNEP report on the implementation of Environment Assembly decisions 5/2 paragraph 20 requesting a prioritized, results-oriented and streamlined programme of work for the biennium 2024-2025 and 5/4 of 2 March 2022 with regard to the extension of the programme of work for the period 2022-2023 by two years, to the end of 2025, with the budget and targets being prorated accordingly; and
- requests UNEP, through inclusive and regular consultation with Member States, to prepare a draft programme of work and budget for the period 2026-2027 and a draft medium-term strategy for the period 2026-2029, fully taking into account views of Member States and making every effort towards reflecting consensual views for consideration and approval by UNEA-7.

Multilateral Environment Agreement Day

On [Wednesday, 28 February](#), heads of multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats, ministers, representatives from international organizations, and other stakeholders took part in “MEA Day,” which was organized according to UNEA decision 5/4, calling for placing cooperation of MEAs on the UNEA agenda for the first time. The common message from the diverse set of

speakers pointed to the important role that MEAs and environmental diplomacy play in addressing the triple planetary crisis as well as renewing multilateralism and mutual respect.

UNEA-6 President Leila Benali reinforced this message, urging MEAs to support Member States in their respective action plans for stronger results. UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen complemented this solution-driven approach by stating that UNEP could provide a platform for bringing coherence to MEAs.

In the session “Strengthening the science policy interface for effective implementation of environmental commitments,” speakers advocated for a more inclusive approach to achieve effective implementation of environmental commitments. Some examples of how this can be achieved included: interdisciplinary solutions to address chemicals and waste; recognizing the difference between science that defines the problem and science that identifies policy options for action; integrating traditional knowledge into decision making; and promoting citizen science through data collection and interpretation, ensuring the public has ownership of scientific recommendations.

In the session “Strengthening cooperation between UNEA, UNEP and MEAs to enhance effective implementation at the national level including through means of implementation,” speakers drew attention to the challenges to implementation of MEAs at the national level: the lack of communication and coordination among ministries at the national level, including due to their different visions for the same ecological challenges. Many praised the Bern process, which seeks to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between MEAs.

High-level Segment

On [Thursday, 29 February](#), the high-level segment opened with an urgent call for action from UNEA-6 President Leila Benali. She emphasized the world is fast approaching the point of no return and called for strengthening environmental multilateralism to deliver critical solutions. She stressed the need for coordinated efforts between the UN system and the public and private sectors, increased investment in research and development, and sustainable engagement with local communities. Benali announced her intention to establish an alliance of goodwill environmentalists.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in a video recording, urged delegates to accelerate the just transition from fossil fuels to renewables and to protect and restore ecosystems. He said national governments should, *inter alia*: set their targets for the Global Biodiversity Framework; mobilize the Loss and Damage Fund; adopt an international plastics treaty; and deliver the proposed SDG Stimulus.

UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen called for standing together as a global family to push back against the triple planetary crisis. She echoed her message from the opening of the OECP, beseeching Member States to show the “Nairobi spirit” and conclude their hard work at UNEA-6 by passing the resolutions and decisions in the strongest form possible.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization, said if the planet were a patient, it would be admitted into intensive care as its vital signs are alarming: it has a fever, much of its lifeblood—its water resources—are contaminated, and its condition is deteriorating. Ghebreyesus highlighted the impacts of this on human health, such as increased cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and called for the agreement on ending plastic pollution to strongly reflect health impacts.

Additional statements can be found at unep.org/environmentalassembly/unea6/statements

Leadership Dialogues

Super-highway or still in slow-motion: Are science, data and digitalization really speeding our transition to a sustainable future? On [Thursday, 29 February](#), Salina Abraham, Chief of Staff and Advisor to the CEO, Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR- ICRAF), moderated this session, which sought to engage diverse leaders from science, policy, and society to grapple with the question of how to move from data and analysis towards impactful actions. The session drew insights from the UN Secretary-General’s Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative to explore the concept of early warning for the environment to forestall and minimize slow and rapid-onset risks to the planet.

In her keynote address, Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Egypt, shared how shifting the scientific narrative to the economic costs of action and inaction helped secure high-level political commitment towards new integrated approaches for sustainable development in her country.

IPCC Chair Jim Skea said that while the science-policy body has continued to adapt its analysis into actionable language for different audiences, science cannot evoke the necessary action on its own. He challenged policy makers and political leaders to “turn the science we provide into purposeful climate action.”

Interventions from the floor called for, *inter alia*:

- improving the integration of data from global science-policy bodies to strengthen synergistic approaches to different multilateral processes;
- incorporating time-tested Indigenous and local knowledge to ensure marginalized groups are not left behind; and
- strengthening data governance networks by engaging diverse stakeholders in a safe and accessible way.

Innovative data partnerships highlighted included: applied IPCC climate models assessing city-scale adaptation strategies in Singapore; artificial intelligence-driven networks to counter invasive species in Saint Kitts and Nevis and restore peatlands in the UK; a Japanese-funded project supporting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to report on their emissions “with high transparency”; and a citizen-triggered initiative in China that spurred a nationwide air pollution monitoring system, “democratizing” early warning data.

Show me the money: Can the global financial system really tackle climate change, nature loss and pollution? In this dialogue, which took place on Friday, 1 March, Sean Kidney, CEO, Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI), stressed that achieving the called-for drastic emissions reductions is the bare minimum to avoid catastrophic global warming. While noting promising developments in the green bonds sector, especially in emerging markets, he underscored that unleashing an estimated USD 250 trillion in climate financing by 2030 requires addressing investors’ anxieties about the direction and speed of policy change. He outlined CBI support for, *inter alia*, work on green taxonomies and reconfiguring UNFCCC nationally determined contributions as “economic opportunity plans.”

María Susana Muhammad Gonzalez, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia, discussed the diminishing financial space for countries that are “trying to do the right thing.” She underscored the equally important imperatives of incrementally building an enabling institutional and regulatory environment, while

also launching a transformative agenda to tackle the triple planetary crisis. Gonzalez stressed that these existential threats cannot be addressed through “the law of the market,” and urged more countries to join an emerging multilateral pact exploring the equivalent of COVID-19 Special Drawing Rights for the green transition.

Ministers and representatives from intergovernmental organizations highlighted the need for:

- policy clarity and alignment at national, regional and global levels, including through synergies across the biodiversity, climate, and chemicals and waste multilateral agreements;
- recognizing that the green transition requires careful planning and collaboration;
- exploring public-private partnerships to leverage funding for climate adaptation and other high-risk sectors;
- ensuring existing pledges and commitments are honored;
- scaling up debt for nature swaps, green and blue bonds and other innovative financial instruments; and
- honoring the obligations of both states and businesses to progressively realize human rights and “do no harm.”

Reiterating the importance of addressing political questions at the heart of the green transition, Minister Gonzalez concluded with a warning to countries to take heed of “the empty space between the old that needs to die and the new that needs to emerge.”

Alive and kicking: Environmental multilateralism is a beacon of hope but is it delivering fast enough?: UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen encouraged participants to begin this dialogue, which took place on Friday 1 March, by recognizing past successes of multilateral environmental negotiations, including the adoption of the GBF, the GFC, and the BBNJ Agreement, the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, the protection of the ozone layer, and the global phase-out of lead in gasoline. Despite these positive examples, she acknowledged the pace is too slow. She pointed to the examples of the International Labour Organization and the GFC, both of which incorporate stakeholders in decision making roles, for inspiration during discussions on what a UN 2.0 would look like.

Grace Catapang, Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) Frontline Youth Ambassador, received a standing ovation following her plea for delegates to remember the faces and voices of those who depend on the decisions being considered in the MEA and UNEA negotiating rooms.

During the discussion, ministers and intergovernmental organizations emphasized the need to speed up action at the local level and options for better coordination and partnerships. Many speakers called for greater unity and attention to equity and social justice considerations.

The importance of funding was discussed, with one speaker asking if it would be possible to establish guidelines that only permit resolutions with adequate funding to be adopted. Another speaker questioned what it would take to achieve a greater focus on long-term needs rather than short-term political considerations.

Speakers also suggested considering how to:

- reform existing agreements rather than create new agreements for every new issue;
- foster policy coherence;
- overcome silos and single-issue approaches to collaborate across sectors; and
- hold each other responsible for delivering on commitments.

Catapang acknowledged that all participants had come to Nairobi because they care about the environment and expressed hope that their words would not be empty.

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue: Partnering for the Environment

During this dialogue, which took place on [Thursday, 29 February](#), speakers emphasized the importance of adopting a whole-of-society approach and listening to diverse voices. They also highlighted the need to combine listening with providing avenues for active participation, such as direct involvement in decision-making.

UNEA-6 President Benali highlighted the need for “do” tanks as well as “think” tanks. She also applauded UNEP’s efforts to consider how to foster synergies among MEAs.

UNEP Executive Director Andersen said the “must do” list for the environment is long and governments need to deliver and step up their commitments.

Representatives from Major Groups emphasized the need for “infrastructure” and support systems to empower women. They called for recognizing that each Major Group has different “superpowers.”

Most Member States stressed that governments cannot and should not bear the burden of environmental challenges alone. Several gave examples of engagement with civil society, such as inclusion on delegations and consultations ahead of negotiations. The importance of stakeholder access to important information, such as on potential conflicts of interest, was emphasized.

The role of innovative partnerships and collaboration, incorporation of Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, and provision of adequate financing was also echoed by many Major Group representatives.

Closing Plenary

UNEA-6 President Benali opened the closing plenary on Friday, 1 March, by thanking all negotiators who stayed up late to deliver the outcomes.

Salina Abraham, Chief of Staff, Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), presented the reports of the three leadership dialogues. Andrea Nakova, Journalist for Human Rights, presented the summary of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue.

JAPAN exercised its right to respond to the statement by North Korea during the High-level Segment regarding the discharge of wastewater and pointed to the recent review and monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency of wastewater discharges, having found the level of radioactivity and the discharges to be compliant with multilateral standards. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION responded to statement by the US, the EU, the UK, CANADA, JAPAN and others stressing that this is an environmental meeting that should not be politicized.

Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration: UNEA-6 President Benali presented the draft ministerial declaration (UNEP/EA.6/HLS/L.1) titled “Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution,” urging its adoption before any statements in opposition.

PAKISTAN questioned the logic of this approach, noting that the UNEA-6 President had indicated the previous evening that she would use her own discretion, and that does not constitute consensus. UNEA-6 President Benali responded that she felt that

there was consensus on key principles. Delegates then adopted the ministerial declaration.

After adoption, many noted that while they joined the consensus, they wanted specific concerns noted in the report of the meeting.

IRAN, CUBA, SAUDI ARABIA, ECUADOR, INDIA, ARGENTINA, EGYPT, CHINA, and MEXICO expressed concern about the lack of reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). CUBA further expressed dissatisfaction and concern that multilateralism has been placed in jeopardy.

The EU, COLOMBIA, SAUDI ARABIA, ECUADOR, SENEGAL, and MEXICO expressed concern that wording from the UNEA 5/14 on plastics pollution was not correctly reflected, including to cover the full life cycle of plastics.

BRAZIL reaffirmed its commitment to the agreements reached at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, including the MEAs known as the Rio Conventions and the instruments under them, and ongoing work on the respective commitments. JAPAN said we “should not go back to 1992” and instead urged achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

IRAN lamented that references to sand and dust storms were not included. The EU and its Member States expressed their commitment to a high level of ambition to address the triple planetary crisis. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted the omission of the concept of verifiable science and asked it to be reinstated.

EGYPT commended Presidency efforts and inclusion of the language on means of implementation with clear responsibilities, and stressed that sustainable development and poverty eradication are at the center of climate action. UNEA President Benali stressed that the Ministerial Declaration text is a result of compromise and equality in reflecting views of Member States.

Final Outcome: In the UNEA-6 Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/EA.6/HLS/L.1), the Ministers of Environment affirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, and acknowledge with a sense of great urgency the threats posed to sustainable development by global environmental challenges and crises including climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as desertification, land and soil degradation, drought and deforestation, and their impacts on human health and the environment, which are further aggravated by persistent levels of poverty, inequality and food insecurity.

The Ministers note, *inter alia*:

- with great concern the findings of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, as well as the findings of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and Their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), recognizing that more than 3,500 of the 37,000 alien species introduced by human activity to regions and biomes around the world have become invasive and pose major global threats to nature, the economy, food security and human health; and
- their commitment to urgently address the challenges before us through effective, co-sectoral, inclusive, and sustainable actions, ensuring that such actions are science- and knowledge-based, taking into account traditional knowledge, and are gender sensitive, with the engagement of all relevant actors and partners, including civil society, academia, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and the private and public sectors,

as well as women and girls, children and young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other populations affected disproportionately by global environmental challenges and crises, leaving no one behind.

Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements:

High-level dialogues: Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Director, Law Division, UNEP, delivered summaries of the high-level dialogues and reported on key messages. UNEA took note of the summaries.

Presentation and Consideration of the report of the Committee of the Whole (CoW): CoW Chair Norbert Kurilla (Slovakia) reported on the work conducted by the CoW as outlined in the report (UNEP/EA.6/CW/L.1) and thanked rapporteur Silvio José Albuquerque e Silva (Brazil). He noted that the CoW considered 19 draft resolutions and two draft decisions, held three plenaries, and stressed that delegates worked literally day and night in two working groups. During the final CoW plenary, 10 resolutions and two decisions were endorsed and recommended for adoption. Delegates requested additional time to find agreement on the outstanding drafts, and were advised that further deliberation would continue in the informal setting, which is reflected in the CoW report. UNEA took note of the CoW report.

Adoption of the resolutions, decisions and outcome document of the session: UNEA President Benali reported that as a result of informal consultations, five additional draft resolutions were developed, and asked proponents to introduce the drafts. All [15 resolutions](#) and two draft decisions were adopted.

Despite intense work over the two weeks in OECPR, CoW, and later in informal consultations, four draft resolutions were withdrawn by the proponents:

- Solar Radiation Modification (SRM), submitted by Guinea, Monaco, Senegal, and Switzerland;
- Development of criteria, norms, standards and guidelines for nature-based solutions to support sustainable development, submitted by Cameroon;
- Effective, Inclusive and Sustainable Multilateral Actions towards Climate Justice, submitted by Sri Lanka; and
- Stepping up efforts for enhancing the circular economy transition domestically, regionally and globally, submitted by EU.

Additionally, a resolution on Living Well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth and Mother Earth Centric Actions, submitted by Bolivia, was withdrawn on 23 February.

The EU, regretting the unsuccessful conclusion of the negotiations on ensuring a transition to circular economies, expressed satisfaction that resolutions on a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry and promoting sustainable lifestyles were adopted.

SWITZERLAND welcomed adoption of the resolutions on addressing the environmental aspects of mining and metals, emphasized the need for further work on its impacts, and welcomed the establishment of the digital hub on minerals and metals, saying it represented a step forward in sustainability in the full life cycle of minerals. He regretted the fact that UNEA-6 delegates could not reach an agreement on solar radiation modification, although exchanges were rich and useful.

COLOMBIA also welcomed the adoption of the resolutions on mining and metals, stressing the importance of developing standards on mineral extraction, particularly due to the transition to renewable energies, and expressed hope that during the next UNEA delegates would support an even more robust resolution.

EL SALVADOR reaffirmed the importance of oceans and the role marine organisms play, and said that while they are not a party to UNCLOS, they continue to participate actively on ocean matters, particularly in the light of pollution, including through capacity building in BBNJ activities.

IRAN underscored that on the resolution on amendments to restructure the GEF, UNEP and the GEF should be equally responsive and accessible to all countries for financial support without favoring certain countries and by distancing themselves from political influence.

TURKEY stressed that not being a party to UNCLOS is not an indicator of a country's commitment to protecting marine ecosystems and that regarding references to UNCLOS in the resolution on strengthening ocean efforts to combat climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution, his delegation distances themselves from the resolution.

MALAWI reflected on the positive outcomes of UNEA-6 through adoption of the 15 resolutions and 2 decisions, and welcomed in particular the resolutions on multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges, and on promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration that would forge partnerships. She urged continued dedication to effectively implement the resolutions and resource mobilization to ensure this.

On the resolution to enhance synergies among multilateral environmental conventions and instruments, JAPAN expressed his pleasure at its adoption as it will ensure implementation in a consistent and effective manner.

VENEZUELA noted that while they are not a party to UNCLOS and other marine agreements, they agreed to the resolution on oceans in a spirit of consensus, and are committed to improve the health and sustainable use of marine resources.

SRI LANKA expressed regret that the draft resolution on climate justice did not achieve consensus in the negotiations, and said his country will continue to engage with Member States on the issue and the work will continue.

INDIA thanked all Member States who participated in developing and supporting engagement on the draft resolution on sustainable lifestyles, saying he looked forward to its effective implementation.

Speaking for MAJOR GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, Sarojeni Rengam, Executive Director, Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific, shared three observations from the outcomes of UNEA-7 that were of concern: resolutions opened language that was already agreed upon in other fora; constant weakening and outright exclusion of marginalized groups; and lack of commitment on a just transition and failure to deliver on a resolution on climate justice. She underlined how environmental crises and armed conflicts continue to most adversely impact the vulnerable especially women and youth.

Election of Officers: Delegates elected by acclamation Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority of Oman, as UNEA-7 President. They further elected the following UNEA-7 Vice Presidents: Fitsum Assefa Adela, Minister of Planning and Development, Ethiopia; Collins Nzovu, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Zambia; Ali Gholampour, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Iran; Anikó Raisz, State Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Policy and Circular Economy, Hungary; Nino Tandilashvili, First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia; Juan Carlos Castro Vargas, Minister of Environment, Peru; Zakia Khattabi,

Minister for Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development and Green Deal, Belgium; and Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Climate and Enterprise, Sweden. Delegates also elected Joyelle Trizia Clarke, Minister of Environment, Saint Kitts and Nevis, as UNEA-7 rapporteur.

Incoming UNEA-7 President Abdullah bin Ali al Amri thanked his predecessor for her work securing resolutions that will have a profound effect, and expressed gratitude for the trust placed in his country to lead the next stage in the journey to protect the environment, noting that it comes with great responsibility. He promised to secure environmental support and assistance faster and called on everyone to not promote violence, stop the war machine, and save lives.

Provisional Agenda and Dates of UNEA-7: Delegates adopted the decision (UNEP/EA.6/L.3) regarding the provisional agenda, dates and venue of UNEA-7, setting it to take place from 8-12 December 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Other Matters: COLOMBIA condemned Israel for bombing hungry Palestinians awaiting aid the previous day and called for an end to this genocide. She announced that they will sign a memorandum of understanding with the State of Palestine to build capacity to document the environmental situation in Palestine.

Report of the meeting: Delegates adopted the report of the meeting (UNEP/EA.6/L.1).

Closing statements: As host country, KENYA welcomed the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, and called for more interactive dialogues to bridge gaps, wishing everyone safe travels home.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, in a video message, welcomed the spirit of cooperation, and said we cannot afford to deplete nature's resources and urged maintaining our environmental legacy for our children and generations to come.

The GROUP OF FRANCOPHONE AMBASSADORS in Kenya welcomed that UNEA is addressing the triple planetary crisis, urged listening to science to avoid tragedy; and called for the French language to be used actively in this work.

The EU commented on four milestones that can help tackle the triple planetary crisis: the GBF, the GFC, the BBNJ Agreement and the UNEA-5 outcome on plastics; and warned that "we cannot afford to stand still or backtrack."

UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen welcomed UNEA-6's adoption of 15 resolutions, two decisions, and the Ministerial Declaration through inclusive multilateralism, such as the voice of youth and other Major Groups. She assured delegates that UNEP will now take on the responsibility for implementation.

UNEA-6 President Benali said UNEA-6 advanced on the core mandate, ensuring a legitimate human right to a healthy and safe environment for everyone everywhere and left a mark on the global multilateral agenda through collective intelligence and promoting equality.

She gaveled the meeting to a close together with incoming UNEA-7 President Abdullah Bin Ali Al Amri at 6:23 pm.

A Brief Analysis of UNEA-6

When the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) last convened in 2022, participants celebrated the adoption of two important guiding resolutions kick-starting negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution and on a science-policy body for chemicals and waste. So when delegates

arrived in Nairobi for UNEA-6, many wondered if this meeting of the highest environmental decision-making body in the UN system would measure up.

As the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution has started to dominate the multilateral environmental agenda, more stakeholders are looking to UNEA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to make progress on truly universal solutions. With this increased prominence, can UNEA capitalize on its growing attendance and visibility and help solidify Nairobi's status as environmental capital of the world, or will it struggle to find its place in the crowded landscape of multilateral instruments and fora?

This brief analysis focuses on the role of UNEA in the global environmental governance system, its ongoing struggle for vision, and how it can move forward building on its strengths.

Stretched Too Thin: Managing UNEA's Mandate and Expectations

UNEA-5.2 was hailed as a true celebration of multilateralism, which was not undermined even by the fact that the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine happened as delegates were in Nairobi. At UNEA-6, after two weeks of seemingly endless negotiations multilateralism won out again, as Member States were able to adopt a resolution on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts tabled by the very country that had been invaded, amid many calls for peace.

Nevertheless, UNEA-6 never quite measured up to its predecessor. Many called some of the resolutions “weak from the beginning,” even before they were watered down even further in efforts to reach consensus. Some raised concerns that perhaps UNEA was more focused on the quantity of resolutions over their quality. Very few resolutions had novelty or strong value proposition to them. Most were on topics that had been addressed at previous meetings of the Assembly and/or tackled by specific multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Many called UNEA-6 outcomes underwhelming at best, with some expressing concern that they backtracked on many important issues: the language in the resolution on synergistic approaches, for example, is weaker than language in the UNEA-2 resolution on facilitating cooperation, collaboration, and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.

It was not unexpected that UNEA had a difficult time breaking new ground. The intersessional period featured several major successes, including the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). These positive developments, along with the negotiations on a new legally binding instrument on combating plastic pollution launched at UNEA 5.2, were often mentioned and difficult to match in terms of magnitude and breadth.

While UNEA negotiations are often long and grueling, UNEA-6 was particularly intense. Not a single text was agreed during the week-long meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representative (OECPR) that preceded UNEA-6, and only 10 resolutions were endorsed by the Committee of the Whole (CoW) by Wednesday, leaving the other drafts hanging a mere two days before the closing plenary. Many pointed out that longer resolutions mean longer negotiations, with one delegate suggesting that proponents

“shot themselves in the foot” when they drafted long preambles, often including 20 or more paragraphs.

Preambles complicated the matter in another, perhaps unexpected, way. They contained references to already agreed upon instruments that were relevant to the specific resolutions, like to the GFC in a preamble to a resolution on sound management of chemicals and waste, or to BBNJ in the preamble to a resolution on water policies. Some Member States saw this as importing long-standing controversies like concerns of non-parties to UNCLOS, or desire to elevate certain targets from the respective frameworks.

As a result, what could have been an easy win in terms of quickly agreed paragraphs resulted in major negotiating battles, as not all delegations agreed with the way these references were formulated, despite coming directly from those instruments. Many lamented that renegotiating already agreed text is a dangerous path to pursue and bad precedent to establish. While it is indeed counter-productive to *de facto* reopen negotiations on hard-won texts, it is also important to understand the connection among the various MEAs.

Few participants haven't noticed that, as one delegate pointed out, “the soup is thickening.” The environmental governance landscape is more crowded than ever and it gets harder to delineate and strongly define independent mandates and scopes. This is especially evident with the Rio Conventions. For example, which aspects of land degradation should be under the purview of UNEP, and which under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)? Should UNEP be working on the scientific assessment of solar radiation modification (SRM), or should the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)? This conundrum, manifesting across many negotiations over the two weeks in Nairobi, illustrates UNEP's ongoing struggle to fulfil one of its core functions: coordination of environmental policy within the UN system.

“Weaving the MEA Tapestry”: Nairobi as the Environmental Capital of the World

While UNEA is touted as the UN's highest environmental decision-making body with an agenda-setting function, it has a less authoritative but more obvious function: opening space for dialogue and bringing new environmental issues to the table. Many participants noted that Multilateral Environmental Agreements Day (MEA Day) was a success, and bold leadership dialogues at the High-level Segment explored important topics in a “radical and honest way.” With each MEA having its own Conference of the Parties (COP), its own governing system and process, and its own ambition, only the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS Conventions) have a dedicated institutional space for cross-convention collaboration through their synergies. Having all MEAs in one space for a dialogue under the UNEA tent, yielded a rare opportunity for rich discussion and identifying cross-cutting issues.

It is increasingly recognized that just as environmental problems are interconnected, so should be the solutions. The triple planetary crisis cannot be tackled in silos, and UNEA is uniquely positioned to help connect the dots among MEAs: whether the UNEP-administered, Rio Conventions, or a stand-alone MEAs like the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which is older than UNEP itself.

But while UNEP is one of the many UN entities tasked with an environmental portfolio—and not the best funded one for that matter—it becomes increasingly hard for it to exercise its “coordination” function. Pushing for coordination results in more

push back from the respective UN bodies and MEAs, creating an environment for forum shopping by Member States, which further stalls progress, as was evident in during the two weeks in Nairobi. One thing that UNEA-6 has shown is the potential for convening MEAs, UN entities, and other stakeholders to foster dialogue and advance the environmental agenda—and there is no better place for this than in Nairobi, “under the one big UNEA tent,” as noted by UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen.

Catalyzing Environmental Action and the Elephant(s) in the Room: Trust and Financing

Many participants noted the stark contrast between bold statements, warnings, and calls to action during the High-level Segment and the low level of ambition in the resolutions and the Ministerial Declaration. Effective implementation of existing MEAs and resolutions is key—and without it, adopting more instruments will not contribute much to addressing the triple planetary crisis.

On the surface-level, multilateralism is indeed “alive and kicking,” as some proclaimed, evidenced by the impressive level of compromise in the highly-contested Ministerial Declaration and consensual adoption of the resolution on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts, despite intense geopolitical struggles. However, looking deeper into the reasons for failed resolutions and watered-down texts that were adopted, there appears to be a growing distrust among Member States and stakeholders, and overall disappointment with multilateral processes.

Many developing country delegates voiced concerns over removal of reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities from the Ministerial Declaration text and noted pushback on including meaningful language on the means of implementation in many resolutions.

Concerns also persisted around SRM, where many developing countries resisted the idea of institutionalizing work at UNEP, fearing that it could eventually lead to the deployment of untested technology. This, as some delegates countered, is not the best way to address common concerns about dangers of SRM technologies. UNEP could have instead provided an entry point for countries that don’t have capacity to deal with SRM on their own.

Youth delegates, who were encouraged by Inger Andersen “to be in every room and speak up,” were crying as they witnessed the climate justice resolution fall apart late on the penultimate day of UNEA-6, after it had been progressively diluted to the point that “climate justice” was replaced with “climate action” in the latest version of the text.

A major part of implementation is the necessary financial resources. When asked to “show the money,” countries with an obligation to provide funding pushed back on any detailed language on means of implementation. UNEP is already stretched too thin and struggling to fulfil expectations and implement many existing resolutions without the necessary resources. This elevates the importance and timeliness of the high-level dialogue and growing number of voices calling for innovative financing and restructuring the international financial system to ease the debt/financial burden and level the playing field for countries that have been historically disadvantaged. Without this, calls for action, however bold, will remain empty words.

As the MEA calendar for 2024 is filled with many more meetings, including the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of all three Rio Conventions, it is important to pick up on the signals from UNEA-6 and prepare for the challenges to come. Since UNEA-6 discussions

shied-away from some of the commitments to look after the whole life cycle of plastics and to meet current negotiation timelines, it gave a glimpse into challenges the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, may face at its upcoming meeting in Canada, as circularity is a major requirement for the instrument on plastic pollution. The inter-sessional period will also see BRS and Minamata COPs slated for 2025. With growing visibility and attendance at each of the global MEA COPs, “weaving a stronger MEA tapestry” will be crucial and could be a role for UNEA to step into.

Upcoming Meetings

Integrating Environmental and Socio-economic Domains for Sustainability: The GEF Independent Evaluation Office will host its fourth conference, aimed to promote intensive discussions focused on how evaluation practice has increasingly integrated the cross-pollination of environmental, socio-economic, and policy domains. **dates:** 5-7 March 2024 **location:** Washington, DC, US **www:** gefio.org/events/conference-2024

Second Session of the SIDS4 Preparatory Committee: The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 4th International Conference on SIDS will discuss substantive preparations for the Conference, including consideration of the draft outcome of the Conference. **dates:** 1-5 April 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024/preparations#preparatory_committee_meetings

Plastic Pollution INC-4: The fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will continue negotiations on the instrument. **dates:** 23-29 April 2024 **location:** Ottawa, Canada **www:** unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-4

UNFF 19: The 19th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 19) will be the policy portion of the biennial cycle focused on the following themes: enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits; increasing significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests; and mobilizing financial resources and strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, promoting governance frameworks to advance implementation, and enhancing cooperation, coordination, and coherence for sustainable forest management. **dates:** 6-10 May 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/esa/forests/forum/index.html

SIDS4: The fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) will bring together leaders to assess the ability of SIDS to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs and discuss a new programme of action for SIDS. The Conference will convene under the theme “Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity.” **dates:** 27-30 May 2024 **location:** St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024

67th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF will consider its work program and other matters related to its functioning as the financial mechanism for various MEAs. The Council will also meet as the 36th east Developed Countries Fund/ Special Climate Change Fund (LCDF/SCCF) Council and the 2nd Global Biodiversity

Framework Fund (GBFF) Council. **dates:** 17-21 June 2024

location: Washington, DC **www:** thegef.org/events

OEWG-3 Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent Pollution:

Under its UNEA mandate, the third session of the Open-ended Working Group is expected to complete its proposals for the science-policy panel for UNEA consideration. **dates:** 17-21 June 2024 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** unep.org/owwg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution

2024 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF):

The 2024 session of the HLPF will convene on the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.” It will include in-depth review of SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 8-17 July 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** hlpf.un.org

Summit of the Future: Building on the SDG Summit in 2023, Member States will consider ways to lay the foundations for more effective global cooperation that can deal with today’s challenges as well as new threats in the future. **dates:** 22-23 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

CBD COP16: The sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing will convene for the first time since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. **dates:** 21 October – 1 November 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Montreal Protocol MOP 36: The Meeting of the Parties will discuss issues related to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. **dates:** 28 October – 1 November 2024 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **www:** ozone.unep.org

UNFCCC COP 29: The 2024 UN Climate Change Conference will also convene as the 19th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 19), and the sixth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 6), which will convene to complete the first enhanced transparency framework and the new collective quantified goal on finance, among other matters. The 61st sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 61) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 61) will also meet. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Azerbaijan **www:** unfccc.int

Plastics Pollution INC-5: The fifth session of the INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5), is supposed to conclude negotiations. The session will be preceded by regional consultations. **dates:** 25 November - 1 December 2024 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5

UNCCD COP 16: COP 16 will mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. COP16 is set to become a landmark event for accelerating action on land restoration, drought

resilience and green transition., among other things. **dates:** 2-13 December 2024 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** unccd.int/events/governing-bodies-meetings/unccd-conference-parties-16th-session-cop16

IPBES 11: The 11th Session of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Plenary will consider the assessment on interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food, and health and the transformative change assessment. **dates:** 10-16 December 2024 **location:** Windhoek, Namibia **www:** ipbes.net/events/ipbes-11-plenary

Basel COP17 Rotterdam COP12 and Stockholm COP12: The next TripleCOP will address the listing of chemicals under the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as well as technical guidelines for the sound management of wastes under the Basel Convention. Technical and financial support, among other issues, will also be addressed. **dates:** 28 April - 9 May 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** brsmeas.org

Minamata Convention COP-6: COP-6 is expected to consider, *inter alia*: a phaseout proposal on dental amalgam; draft guidance to assist parties in identifying, managing and reducing mercury trade from primary mercury mining; a report on challenges in phasing out mercury in cosmetics; and a report on national emissions plans. **dates:** 3-7 November 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** minamataconvention.org

UNEA-7: The UN Environment Assembly brings together of Member States of the UN, civil society, business and other stakeholders to set priorities for global environmental policies. UNEA-7 will also approve the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme of Work and Budget. **dates:** 8-12 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

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| BBNJ | Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction |
| BRS | Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| CoW | Committee of the Whole |
| CPR | Committee of Permanent Representatives |
| GBF | Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GFC | Global Framework on Chemicals |
| HLPF | High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| MEAs | Multilateral environmental agreements |
| OECP | Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SRM | Solar radiation modification |
| UNCCD | UN Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNCLOS | UN Convention on the Law of the Sea |
| UNEA | UN Environment Assembly |
| UNEP | UN Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | UN Framework Convention on Climate Change |