



## SECOND UN ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY OF THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME: 23-27 MAY 2016

The second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) opens today at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and will continue until 27 May 2016. The overarching theme of the session is “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

The meeting will address many international environmental policy and governance issues, including illegal trade in wildlife, marine plastic debris and microplastics, ecosystem-based adaptation, and sustainable development and poverty eradication. UNEA-2 will also discuss and approve the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for 2018-2021 and its Programme of Work for 2018-2019.

The UNEA-2 outcome will contribute to the work of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which meets in July 2016 in New York.

A Science-Policy Forum on 19-20 May 2016 and a Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on 21-22 May 2016 preceded the meeting. A Sustainable Innovation Expo takes place in parallel with UNEA-2.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNEP

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC’s responsibilities included the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve it, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reported to the UN General Assembly, which was responsible for electing the 58 members of the GC, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) was constituted by the GC as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 53/242 (1998). The purpose of the GMEF was to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

The GC and the GMEF met annually in regular or special sessions beginning in 2000. Some of the highlights from 2000-2012 include: the adoption of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration in 2000, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit

on Sustainable Development should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG); the creation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; the 2005 Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building; the establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

**GCSS12/GMEF:** Convening from 20-22 February 2012, in Nairobi, Kenya, the twelfth GC Special Session (GCSS-12) marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP. Eight decisions were adopted, including on: “UNEP at 40;” IEG; the world environment situation; sustainable consumption and production (SCP); and the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and waste.

**RIO+20:** The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 13-22 June 2012. With regard to UNEP, the outcome document, *The Future We Want*, called for the UN General Assembly to take decisions on, *inter alia*: designating a body to operationalize the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), and strengthening and upgrading UNEP, including through: universal membership in the GC; secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the UN regular budget; enhanced ability to fulfill its coordination mandate within the UN system; promoting a strong science-policy interface; disseminating and sharing evidence-based environmental information and raising public awareness; providing capacity building to countries; consolidating headquarters functions in Nairobi and strengthening UNEP’s regional presence; and ensuring the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** On 21 December 2012, the 67th session of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 67/213 on strengthening and upgrading UNEP and establishing universal membership of its GC, which allows for full participation of all 193 UN Member States. The resolution also calls for UNEP to receive secure, stable and increased financial resources from the UN regular budget and urges other UNEP donors to increase their voluntary funding.

**GC27/GMEF:** Convening from 19-22 February 2013, this meeting was the first Universal Session of the GC. The GC adopted a decision on institutional arrangements, inviting the UN General Assembly to rename UNEP’s governing body the “UN Environment Assembly of the UNEP.” Other decisions were adopted on, *inter alia*: state of the environment; justice, governance and law for environmental sustainability; Climate



Technology Centre and Network; UNEP's follow-up and implementation of UN Summit outcomes; and budget and the Programme of Work (PoW) for the biennium 2014-2015.

**OECPR-1:** The first meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) to UNEP took place at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24-28 March 2014. The OECPR considered: the half-yearly review of the implementation of the PoW and budget for 2012-2013; policy matters, including its advice to UNEA; and the draft PoW and budget for 2016-2017 and other administrative matters. The meeting provided an opportunity to: prepare for the UNEA sessions in 2014 and 2016; debate the role of UNEA in the UN system; and prepare draft decisions for adoption by UNEA. Delegates did not approve any decisions during the session.

**UNEA-1:** This meeting took place at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 23-27 June 2014, on the theme, "Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including sustainable consumption and production." The Assembly included a High-Level Segment on "A Life of Dignity for All," which addressed: sustainable development goals (SDGs), including: sustainable consumption and production (SCP); and illegal trade in wildlife, focusing on the escalation in poaching and the surge in related environmental crime. UNEA-1 also convened two symposia addressing: the environmental rule of law and financing a green economy.

Delegates adopted one decision and 17 resolutions on, *inter alia*: strengthening UNEP's role in promoting air quality; the science-policy interface; ecosystem-based adaptation; implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; illegal trade in wildlife; chemicals and waste; and marine plastic debris and microplastics. A Ministerial Outcome Document was adopted, although several Member States noted reservations with this document.

**OECPR-2:** The second meeting of the OECPR took place from 15-19 February 2016 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, in preparation for UNEA-2. Delegates discussed an initial set of 24 draft resolutions, working in five clusters on: environmental governance and education; chemicals, waste and SCP; oceans and water-related issues; natural resources, conflict and the environment; and biodiversity, administrative and organizational matters. Many new proposals were presented during the meeting, and delegates agreed to continue discussing the proposed resolutions during the intersessional period.

Delegates also were presented with a concept note from the UNEP Executive Director on "Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," and the draft Global Thematic Report on "Healthy Environment, Healthy People."

They provided their views on a possible outcome document from the UNEA-2 High-Level Segment, and considered: policy matters; the UNEP programme performance review; the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2019, PoW and budget; and changes to the UNEA cycle. On the sidelines, informal discussions took place on stakeholder engagement policy.

### INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The 2015 meeting of the HLPF took place under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 26 June-8 July 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York, on the theme of "Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015." Moderated dialogues took place followed by a ministerial segment from 6-8 July, which included the release of the Millennium Development Goals 2015 report and ministerial-level dialogues.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:** The UN General

Assembly created the Open Working Group (OWG) to elaborate a set of SDGs, as called for by Rio+20. The OWG met 13 times in New York and developed the full set of SDGs and targets, completing its work in July 2014. Following completion of the work of the OWG, the UN General Assembly held a series of eight sessions between January and August 2015 in New York to prepare the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda. The final session adopted a package, titled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," which contained a preamble, declaration, 17 SDGs and 169 targets, a section on means of implementation and the Global Partnership, and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation.

**UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT:** The Summit, which took place from 25-27 September 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Delegates took part in six interactive dialogues on the topics of: ending poverty and hunger; tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls and leaving no one behind; fostering sustainable economic growth, transformation and promoting SCP; delivering on a revitalized Global Partnership; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions to achieve sustainable development; and protecting our planet and combating climate change. Many leaders announced national commitments to implement the SDGs.

**MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR) TO UNEP:** The third meeting of the CPR sub-committee and the 132nd meeting of the CPR took place from 26-30 October 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. The sub-committee, *inter alia*: prepared draft resolutions for consideration at OECPR-2 and UNEA-2; and held an interactive discussion on the promotion of air quality, agreeing to maintain this as a priority in the work of UNEP and UNEA. On preparation of the draft Medium-Term Strategy, the sub-committee welcomed new sections on monitoring and evaluation, and on the "2030 Vision," and considered improving alignment of indicators in the PoW with the SDG indicators.

The 133rd meeting of the CPR took place on 19 January 2016. Delegates further considered preparations for UNEA-2 and discussed matters including: elements to be included in the outcome of the high-level segment; whether the high-level segment should produce a negotiated outcome or a chair's summary; and whether or not this segment should include a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Between the January meeting and UNEA-2, the CPR sub-committee convened 24 sub-committee meetings and several informal meetings on the draft resolutions, stakeholder engagement policy, and possible changes to the UNEA cycle.

At the 134th meeting of the CPR on 3 May 2016, delegates agreed to transmit a draft outcome document of the high-level segment and 20 draft resolutions, organized in five clusters, to UNEA-2 for further consideration and adoption.

**HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON ACHIEVING THE SDGS:** This UN General Assembly event on 21 April 2016 in New York consisted of keynote speeches, country statements about national implementation, and panel discussions on themes related to: financing poverty eradication and sustainable development; and enhancing international cooperation on data and technology for achieving the SDGs.

**GLOBAL MAJOR GROUPS & STAKEHOLDERS PREPARATORY MEETING:** Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) met from 21-22 May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss and prepare their input to UNEA-2. Representatives of Member States updated MGS on the status of UNEA-2 resolutions and opportunities for MGS to contribute.