

Summary of the 5th Meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme: 15-17 February 2021

In ordinary times, large intergovernmental decision making is inherently political. Navigating these politics during a pandemic is further complicated by their virtual nature, with the inability to mingle or huddle in groups to listen, learn, and hash out the details of an agreement.

OECPR-5 focused on three procedural decisions: endorsement of a medium-term strategy (MTS) for 2022-2025, and programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022-2023; the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; and convening the resumed, in-person sessions of OECPR-5 and UNEA-5.

Deliberations on the first day were delayed, and then deferred, due to problems with the software, a frustrating situation for the Secretariat and Member States alike. Key sticking points on the endorsement of the MTS for 2022-2025 included: concerns by some delegates that not all comments provided during the extensive consultation period had been taken up in the final version of the MTS; references to "environmental rights," which many delegates noted lacked an intergovernmentally agreed definition; and concerns over UNEP's attention to geographical and gender parity of its staff.

On the resumption of UNEA-5 and OECPR-5, there were divergent views on the most appropriate way to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP. Some delegates wanted a one-day special session, while other Members stressed that a two-day event was necessary to provide space to appropriately celebrate the work of UNEP.

Discussions among Member States were so contentious that an additional day proved necessary. With dogged determination, OECPR-5 managed to complete its work and forwarded the three decisions to the first session of UNEA-5, which convenes on 22 February 2021. This included agreement that the special session to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP would convene over two days, in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5.

OECPR-5 convened from 15-17 February 2021 and 88 Member States, 29 accredited organizations, and over 500 online attendees took part in the deliberations.

A Brief History of the UN Environment Assembly

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) was formed in the wake of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), in response to the grave challenges stemming from environmental degradation, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and rising inequality among a global population projected to reach 11 billion by the end of the 21st century.

Origins of UNEA

The United Nations Environment Programme 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

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UNEP Governing Council (GC) was established as the main governing body with the UNGA electing its 58 members, 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 from 2000-2012 include:

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

The twelfth GC Special Session from 20-22 February 2012, in Nairobi, Kenya, marked UNEP's 40th anniversary.

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

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

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

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

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

Key Turning Points

OECPR-1: The first meeting of the OECPR 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 UNEP Programme of Work (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.

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

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

UNEA-2: UNEA-2, from 23-27 May 2016, endorsed a draft Global Thematic Report on "Healthy Environment, Healthy People" and adopted 25 resolutions, including one spelling out the roles of UNEP and UNEA in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing policy-relevant information through its assessment processes, supporting the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Other resolutions addressed, *inter alia*, food waste, sustainable coral reef management, and protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict. Two ministerial roundtables addressed the links between environmental quality and human health and environment, addressing, *inter alia*, air and water quality, heavy metals, climate change, and marine plastic debris.

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

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

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

UNEA-4: UNEA-4 took place from 11-15 March 2019, on the theme "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production." UNEA-4 coincided with the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum; Science, Policy and Business Forum; Sustainable Innovation Expo; and the Cities Summit.

UNEA-4 concluded with the adoption of a ministerial declaration, 23 resolutions and three decisions, which addressed shared and emerging global environmental issues. The forum also endorsed the UNEP Programme of Work and budget for the 2020-21 biennium and launched the Sixth Global Environment Outlook report.

OECP-5 Report

OECP-5 Chair Fernando Coimbra (Brazil) opened the meeting on Monday morning, 15 February, expressing his hope that face-to-face meetings will soon be possible, as required for effective multilateral diplomacy. Chair Coimbra provided an overview of urgent decisions to be agreed upon at OECP-5 on administrative and budgetary matters, noting that negotiations on substantive matters have been deferred due to “inherent limitations of diplomacy in online settings.”

UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen stressed that, despite the pandemic-related challenges, “we cannot afford to wait: environmental governance can and will continue.” She emphasized that it is possible to change our relationship with the natural world, tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and waste. Providing an overview of the work that lies before the OECP-5, Andersen emphasized that despite the financial challenges, contributions to the core fund have increased, thanking all contributing Member States.

The European Union (EU), also on behalf of Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine, stressed that the foundations of our lives are under threat, calling for a better, greener, and more sustainable future. Highlighting that the current model of development degrades the planet and threatens the achievement of the SDGs, he noted that the online session presents a clear opportunity to mobilize efforts. He expressed unreserved support for the medium-term strategy (MTS) and the programme of work (PoW).

The AFRICAN GROUP noted that the pandemic affects the environment and economies, leading to human suffering. He drew attention to the African Green Stimulus Programme for post-COVID-19 recovery and resilience building. He also suggested avoiding the use of undefined terminologies that have not been agreed upon in competent, multilateral fora, recalling the Group’s position that no formal negotiations should be held in a virtual setting. SOUTH AFRICA, ZAMBIA, and EGYPT concurred, cautioning against virtual negotiations and reaffirming the procedural nature of the online session. ZAMBIA underscored the need for progress on budgetary and administrative issues, encouraging the OECP-5 to exercise flexibility, equal participation, and transparency in decision making.

TURKEY supported adopting the MTS, and announced its intention to establish 15% of total land area as protected areas nationally by 2023, in line with the MTS target.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted the importance of UNEP’s work on marine litter, including developing an international agreement under its auspices. He expressed concern about the draft MTS, highlighting that the document omits his country’s comments on the need for equitable geographic distribution of UNEP staff. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BELARUS supported the African Group on the need to avoid the use of terminology, such as “environmental rights,” which has not been agreed at the intergovernmental level.

ARGENTINA underscored the need for virtual meetings to be limited to procedural matters only, and suggested considering hybrid formats.

Chair Coimbra interrupted the session, due to technical difficulties, noting that further requests for the floor under this agenda item would be resumed at a later point.

On Tuesday afternoon, Chair Coimbra resumed the plenary for general statements from Member States, and Major Groups and other stakeholders.

KENYA expressed its gratitude, as the host government for UNEP, for the resilience and commitment shown to the work of UNEP in light of challenging global circumstances. She further highlighted Kenya’s desire to work collaboratively with Sweden on the celebration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP.

VENEZUELA called for the lifting of sanctions and an independent report on the impacts of the unilateral measures taken against Venezuela, which has halted the progression of its people and its economy.

CHILE acknowledged that while post-pandemic recovery will not be easy, it nevertheless presents a unique opportunity for the global community to accelerate its efforts on an inclusive sustainable development agenda.

The EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU noted that this pandemic has been a “wake up call” to increase the scale and efforts necessary to address the persisting existential threat to nature and humankind.

Organizational Matters

On Monday morning, Chair Coimbra introduced the meeting’s agenda (UNEP/OECP-5/1) and delegates adopted it without comments.

Chair Coimbra further invited delegates to adopt the minutes of the 153rd CPR meeting (UNEP/OECP-5/2).

VENEZUELA expressed concerns for some of the content, emphasizing unsustainable consumption patterns and the human dimension of climate change.

The minutes were adopted with no further comments.

Chair Coimbra introduced the organization of work as set out in the annex of the meeting’s agenda (UNEP/OECP-5/1). He noted that, due to technical challenges, opening plenary would be suspended and a contact group would convene to discuss the three draft decisions.

The Committee approved the organization of work without comments.

Plenary reconvened on Tuesday, 16 February, in the afternoon. The meeting was extended by one day, and additional sessions of the contact group and plenary took place on Wednesday, 17 February, in the morning and afternoon, respectively.

Budget and Programme Performance, including Implementation of Previously Adopted Assembly Resolutions

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Joyce Msuya presented the working documents for UNEA-5 to be substantively considered during the resumed session of UNEA-5 in 2022.

Msuya presented 21 working documents (UNEP/EA.5/4-24), reporting on implementation on a wide array of UNEP workstreams. The full list of documents can be found in the meeting’s agenda ([UNEP/OECP-5/1](#)). She also drew attention to 18 [information documents](#), including work on environmentally sound management of waste. Thanking all UNEP staff for their contribution, “Msuya stressed that extensive reporting requirements create a significant burden for the Secretariat. She added that, due to limited UNEP

resources, reporting requirements may come at the expense of additional work by the Secretariat on better implementation of the resolutions.”

The EU and SWITZERLAND commended the Secretariat for its hard work, adding that it offers a unique opportunity to prepare for the substantive discussion at the resumed session. The EU added that observations and questions for reviewing the reports, as well as additional information, may be discussed at the annual CPR Subcommittee meeting.

The OECPR took note of the reports, recommending that the online meeting of UNEA-5 defer substantive consideration of these reports to the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022.

Administrative and Budgetary Issues

UNEP Executive Director Andersen underscored the three planetary crises that are at the core of the MTS: climate, nature and biodiversity, and pollution and waste. Noting that unsustainable consumption and production practices “erode the natural foundations of life at which prosperity is based,” she stressed the need for transformative change.

Andersen thanked Member States for their commitment and spirit of compromise in progressing the MTS (UNEP/EA.5/3), and the PoW and budget (UNEP/EA.5/3Add.1). She expressed hope that work on the draft resolution would be finalized and an MTS will be presented to UNEA “for the benefit of people and the planet, however challenging this road may be.”

The EU and SWITZERLAND observed that the MTS is a balanced document, hoping that the Committee can address any outstanding issues and endorse it.

PALESTINE emphasized the needs of countries affected by disasters as well as conflicts within all sub-programmes, including climate action, and action against pollution and dangerous chemicals.

ARGENTINA expressed concern on the way certain obligations are reflected in the MTS, requesting reflecting these considerations in the minutes of the meeting.

The OECPR took note of the Executive Director’s presentation. Chair Coimbra said that further consideration on these issues will take place while discussing the draft decisions.

Contribution to the Meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Chair Coimbra introduced the agenda item to discuss UNEA contributions to the forthcoming meeting of the HLPF to be held in July 2021.

SWITZERLAND suggested that the Committee work to reduce the length of the report and ensure that it is succinct, focused, and highlights major achievements of UNEA.

EGYPT appealed to the OECPR that lessons are taken from past errors and inputs to the HLPF should be inclusive and transparent.

Chair Coimbra highlighted that the document is prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with the CPR Bureau and the Committee itself. He further added that there would be three rounds of consultations to ensure the Committee is kept abreast of iterations of this document and can duly provide their inputs.

Chair Coimbra proposed, and the Committee agreed, to defer the consideration of UNEP’s report to the HLPF to a future meeting of the subcommittee of the CPR.

Progress Update on the Implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 73/333.

Chair Coimbra asked the Co-Facilitators of the informal consultations on this resolution to provide updates.

Co-Facilitator Ado Lohmus (Estonia), Vice President and UNEA Bureau Member, noted that UNEA-5 was requested to prepare a political declaration for a high-level meeting commemorating the creation of UNEP at the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. He further added that initial consultations on the political declaration were held virtually in July 2020; the CPR directed that the declaration should be drafted as a non-binding document, which supports existing international environmental law, frameworks, conventions, and agreements, and reflects the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Co-Facilitator Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan), Vice-Chair and UNEA Bureau Member, noted that the first draft of the declaration calls for the strengthening of international environmental law and governance in the context of sustainable development; environmental law as an essential element for the protection of our planet; the strengthening of environmental law at the national and international levels; and the acceleration and facilitation for action and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Co-Facilitator Syedah further stated that substantive inputs on this declaration are intended to take place during an in-person meeting in June 2021.

The AFRICAN GROUP and the EU expressed their support for the declaration. MALAWI noted that it did not welcome convening the 50th anniversary celebration of UNEP to coincide with UNEA since the incoming Presidency will be held by Africa. FRANCE welcomed further consultations, expressing its hope that this declaration could be adopted at UNEP’s 50th anniversary celebration.

The INSTITUTE FOR PLANETARY SYNTHESIS stated that resolution 73/333 is an important tool to achieve the implementation of environmental law, but more concrete efforts are needed to reconcile conflicting MEA provisions and their diverse mandates.

OECPR-5 took note of the update and requested the Secretariat to assist on the preparation of the next steps as laid down by the Co-Facilitators.

Preparation of Decisions and Outcomes of the Online Fifth Session of UNEA

On Monday, Chair Coimbra introduced three draft decisions, inviting Member States to consider them and recommend them for adoption at the online session of UNEA-5, in accordance with the outcomes of the 152nd and 153rd CPR meetings. Delegates addressed draft decisions on:

- an MTS for 2022-2025, and PoW and budget for the biennium 2022-2023;
- management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; and
- the adjournment and resumption of UNEA-5 and OECPR-5.

Discussions took place in a contact group from Monday to Wednesday and in plenary on Tuesday and Wednesday. The contact group convened in English on the *Go-to-Webinar* platform, while plenary sessions used the remote simultaneous interpretation platform *Interprefy*.

Draft decision on the MTS 2022-2025 and PoW and budget for the biennium 2022-2023: The OECPR considered this decision in the contact group. In an initial exchange of views on the MTS, several recalled the extensive consultation process on the development of the MTS prior to the meeting, but noted some comments were not fully addressed.

Some delegates objected to the use of certain terminology in the MTS not previously agreed, such as “nature-based solutions,” “ecosystem-based approaches,” and “net zero target.”

The inclusion of reference to “environmental rights” in the draft MTS was raised repeatedly. Some delegates noted that this is not intergovernmentally agreed language and proposed it be removed from the text. Others disagreed, noting that the terminology of “environmental rights” has been used by UNEP for 30 years. Some called on UNEP to explain and clarify the use of this term. Others noted that additional focus is needed in certain areas, including chemicals and animal welfare.

Some Members stressed that the MTS is not a negotiated document and should not be reopened. One delegate said that adoption of the MTS could be postponed, but questioned if this was the best way to support UNEP. Many emphasized the importance of adopting the MTS, urging flexibility and spirit of compromise.

Addressing concerns raised by some Member States, UNEP Executive Director Andersen stressed that the MTS language reflects previous programmes and does not seek to introduce new concepts. She suggested amending the reference to environmental rights to refer to the “human rights’ obligations related to the enjoyment of safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.” She emphasized that this formulation reflects decades of work by UNEP through its environmental law programme, and should not cause division and concern. She further called for everyone’s support, noting that while the MTS is not open for further negotiations, the draft decision must be endorsed with consensus.

Stadler Trengove, UNEP Legal Advisor, clarified that negotiations on draft resolutions can take place in informal discussions in the contact group, adding that, to ensure utmost transparency and inclusiveness, the text should be discussed and approved line by line.

With general agreement on the proposed revision to the terminology by Executive Director Andersen, delegates agreed to focus on the text of the draft decision. Chair Coimbra led the first reading on Monday.

In the ensuing discussion, participants considered four newly proposed preambular paragraphs, which: link the MTS with the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs; call for enhanced coordination and coherence with the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda; recall UNEP’s coordinating mandate, while calling for respect of the mandates of other MEAs; and stress the importance of recruiting staff on a wide geographical basis.

A lengthy discussion took place on seven suggested operative paragraphs, which, *inter alia*:

- called for aligning UNEP’s activities with the objectives of other agreements;
- requested that the MTS address in a balanced manner the three pillars (mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation) of the multilateral climate negotiations; reaffirmed that the inclusion of language that has not been multilaterally negotiated does not imply acceptance;
- noted that UNEP support related to the objectives of the Paris Agreement should be in line with national priorities and nationally determined contributions (NDCs);
- requested not to prejudge the content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and
- further requested that the MTS is implemented in a manner consistent with consumption, production, and trade regulations.

Some Member States supported the suggested paragraphs, while others requested their deletion. Yet others noted they should be used as preambular paragraphs, identifying repetition of previous suggestions and requesting further work.

On Tuesday morning, Chair Coimbra opened the second meeting of the contact group, noting that, overnight, Member States and the Secretariat did a considerable amount of work on the draft decision.

On the preambular language, two Member States proposed a compromise solution. Delegates then discussed the suggested language at length, with some indicating concern with referencing one paragraph from the Rio Declaration to the exclusion of others. Others were concerned about reference to the “three pillars of the Paris Agreement,” preferring instead to refer the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

Opinions diverged on the role of UNEP addressing in a “balanced manner” all the provisions of the Paris Agreement. One Member State noted that she required additional time to reflect on the meaning of this term, while others suggested using “in a holistic manner.”

Additional debate ensued on the status of the Paris Agreement relative to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with some noting the Paris Agreement is under the UNFCCC, and others seeing no hierarchy between the two instruments. One Member State noted this is an ongoing debate and not something that is likely to be easily resolved during the meeting. Delegates eventually agreed to compromise text recalling the provisions of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and welcoming UNEP’s activities, within its mandate, that are in line with countries’ (NDCs) and priorities.

Regarding reference to UNEP professional staff representation, Member States deliberated on language related to geographical balance and gender parity. Delegates and the Secretariat sought to synchronize text with the UN Charter principle on fair and equitable representation while ensuring that the text also serves the interests of Member States and UNEP’s intended work in the biennium. Some suggested requesting the Executive Director to submit a comprehensive report on human resources to be considered at the resumed session of UNEA-5, outlining its efforts to improve the recruitment process in seeking equitable geographical representation and gender parity.

A delegate stressed that gender parity has been achieved among UNEP staff, while serious imbalances persist regarding geographical balance. Underscoring the need for balanced geographical representation, some delegates emphasized the need for urgent action rather than additional reports. Others noted that gender parity and geographical balance are equally valid considerations. Chair Coimbra reminded delegates of the legal advice to use previously agreed language, either “as a wide geographical basis as possible,” or “equitable geographical distribution.” Noting lack of consensus, he invited interested delegations to discuss bilaterally, and said outstanding issues would be taken plenary.

On Tuesday in plenary, the EU and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION announced compromise text, requesting “that the Executive Director in UNEP’s recruitment strategy pays due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the UN and submits a comprehensive report on human resources to be considered at the resumed session of UNEA-5.” In addition, in the draft decision UNEA “further requests the Executive Director to undertake further action to ensure gender balance and parity in its recruitment strategy in line with UN-wide strategy on gender parity.”

The contact group revisited a draft provision taking into account the use of terminology that has not been intergovernmentally negotiated, with some noting that an acceptance of all its terms by all Member States cannot be implied. Some posited that by using certain terms that arguably have no universal definition, implementation of UNEP's PoW would be compromised. Members were also able to reach consensus that "some definitions and terminologies used are not intergovernmentally agreed and hence should not prejudice any future negotiations or agreements."

With these amendments, OECPR-5 agreed on the draft decision, recommending it for adoption by UNEA-5.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/EA.5/L.1), OECPR-5 recommends that UNEA-5, *inter alia*:

- Approve the MTS 2022-2025 and the PoW and budget for the biennium 2022–2023;
- Approve appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of USD 200 million for the biennium;
- Stress the need for the PoW and budget to be based on results-based management;
- Authorize the Executive Director to enter into forward commitments not exceeding USD 20 million for Environment Fund activities, to implement the 2022-2023 PoW;
- Request the Executive Director to continue to improve the achievement of programme objectives and the efficient and transparent use of resources to that end, subject to UN processes of oversight, review, and independent evaluation; and to ensure that trust funds and earmarked contributions to UNEP are used to fund activities that are in line with the PoW;
- Urge all Member States and others in a position to do so to increase voluntary contributions to UNEP;
- Welcome the efforts made by the Executive Director, in close consultation with the CPR, to design a resource mobilization strategy that improves the adequacy and predictability of resources and encourages the Executive Director, in close consultation with the CPR, to implement the strategy with the priority to broaden the contributor base from Members as well as other partners;
- Request that the Executive Director in UNEP's recruitment strategy pays due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the UN and submit a comprehensive report on human resources to be considered at the resumed session of UNEA-5; and
- Request the Executive Director to submit for consideration and approval by UNEA-6, in consultation with the CPR, a prioritized, results-oriented, and streamlined PoW for the period 2024–2025.

Draft decision on management of trust funds and earmarked contributions: Chair Coimbra introduced the draft decision on management of trust funds and earmarked contributions in the contact group on Monday afternoon. He noted that the approval of the budget and management of trust funds is crucial to address the three environmental crises that UNEP Executive Director Andersen highlighted throughout the meeting, and furthermore, necessary for the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Delegates reached agreement on the draft decision without changes. On Tuesday evening, in plenary, OECPR-5 endorsed the draft decision and recommended it for adoption by UNEA-5.

Final Outcome: The decision (UNEP/EA.5/L.2) establishes trust funds for the revolving fund activities of the Bamako Convention, the "Faith for Earth Coalition," and the UNEP Financial Services

Initiative. It also approves the extension of the trust funds for, *inter alia*, the Adaptation Fund Board, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants, UNEP's Implementation of Ecosystem Based Adaptation, and trust funds in support of regional seas programmes, conventions, protocols, and special funds.

Draft decision on the adjournment and resumption of UNEA-5: Chair Coimbra introduced the draft decision regarding the adjournment and resumption of UNEA 5 and OECPR-5 in the contact group on Monday morning. Lengthy discussions took place both in the contact group and in plenary. The draft decision was successfully adopted on Wednesday evening.

On Monday in the contact group, some delegates emphasized that efforts should be made to ensure that the 50th anniversary of UNEP is marked with a two-day celebration, which coincides with the resumed session of UNEA-5.

Discussions oscillated between whether text in the draft decision should specify certain resolutions and processes. Some cautioned that this might create a hierarchy of resolutions. Others maintained that by explicitly mentioning certain topics, such as marine litter and plastic pollution, it allows Member States and UNEA to gauge the formidable work that remains to be addressed.

Delegates exchanged opinions on a suggestion to review the reports of UNEP's Executive Director at the annual Subcommittee meeting of the CPR in 2021. Some noted that it would be good use of the intersessional period, while others expressed concern that the Subcommittee's agenda may be flooded with reports, detracting focus from oversight issues. Following deliberations, delegates agreed to add the reference regarding the reports' review at the annual Sub-Committee meeting.

On Tuesday in the contact group, some Member States recommended that the political declaration to be prepared by UNEA for a UN high-level meeting, as called for by UNGA resolution 73/333, be adopted at a special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP. They argued that this would lead to maximum visibility for the declaration's adoption and the UNEA meeting. Others disagreed, noting that such a decision is premature and arguing that holding a special session for such a reason sets a bad precedent. They further noted that currently there is no clear picture of the high-level meetings in 2022, requesting the identification of appropriate "landing zones for this political declaration" as well as further clarity on the commemoration event itself. Some delegates requested additional time to consider the options and reach an informed decision.

Some delegates supported preparing the declaration at the resumed UNEA-5 session. Others suggested that UNEA shall "continue to prepare" the political declaration at the resumed UNEA-5 session, using language from the UNGA resolution 73/333. Yet others proposed the adoption of such declaration at an event linked to the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP, to be held on 3 March 2022.

UNEP Legal Advisor Stadler Trengove noted that, according to the UNGA resolution, action is needed to clarify that preparations for the declaration will be finalized at the resumed UNEA-5 session. He also outlined the roadmap for the production of the declaration, including steps already taken, such as the nomination of co-facilitators and an informal consultative process.

A lengthy discussion took place on a suggestion to extend the term of office of the current CPR Bureau due to unprecedented developments linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consensus could not be reached, and the meeting was extended by one day to revisit the draft decision.

On Wednesday morning, deliberations continued in the contact group. One delegate suggested holding a special session to finalize the drafting of the political declaration. Several called for indicating some finality regarding the development of the political declaration in the draft decision. Legal Advisor Trengove reminded everyone that the mandate refers to a regular session.

Some Member States suggested preparing the political declaration at the resumed UNEA-5, but leaving options open regarding its formal presentation and adoption. Legal Advisor Trengove confirmed that a special session can also be a high-level meeting. Others reminded the Committee that the co-facilitators have developed structure and content, calling for finalizing the mandate. Following further lengthy deliberations in the contact group and bilaterally, delegates agreed that the resumed session of UNEA-5 shall finalize implementation of the mandate in UNGA resolution 73/333, to prepare a political declaration for a UN high-level meeting.

Disagreement persisted on whether to further recommend the adoption of such a declaration at a special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP. Some said that different provisions of the draft decision are interlinked, noting that the adoption of the political declaration would enrich the commemoration, adding value and naturally leading to a two-day commemoration. Others stressed that the celebration of the 50th anniversary, which is a priority event for all, and the political declaration from UNGA 73/333 resolution should not be linked.

Regarding the prolongation of the term of office of the current CPR Bureau, some Member States argued that in view of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, which has prolonged the term of the UNEA-5 Bureau, the CPR at its 154th meeting in May 2021 should consider extending the term of office of its current Bureau to June 2022.

A few delegates expressed concern over having a single regional group simultaneously presiding over UNEA and chairing the OECPR. Other delegates proposed a recommendation that the CPR should consider changing the cycle of the mandate of the CPR Bureau in relation to the cycle of the UNEA Bureau, noting that this is a structural issue unrelated to the pandemic.

Some delegates cautioned against negotiating substantive matters in this online setting and suggested dealing with the issue in a practical manner by extending the term of office of the CPR Bureau in a way similar to the extension of the UNEA Bureau. Others saw merit in addressing the extension of the current Bureau, while leaving the consideration of bureau cycles for the appropriate setting.

Chair Coimbra tabled a compromise proposal, recommending that “in view of the prolonged presidency of the UNEA-5 Bureau, due to the COVID situation, the CPR, at its 154th meeting, consider extending the term of office of the current CPR Bureau and to consider the cycle of the mandate of the Bureau of the CPR in relation to the cycle of the UNEA Bureau.”

Some Members noted that if some delegates believe that the fact that the same regional group may hold the UNEA presidency and the CPR chairmanship simultaneously is problematic, it should be discussed in the CPR, without prejudging the course of action.

Other delegates noted that there are two distinct problems: the CPR Bureau extension as a procedural, urgent issue in light of the resumed session; and the larger issue of the bureau cycles. Some Member States cautioned against this decision becoming a political

issue, overshadowing the portrayed spirit of compromise. Others insisted that the main issue to be discussed is the CPR Bureau extension.

Consensus could not be reached, and Chair Coimbra suggested that a small group of interested delegates meet in the virtual corridors to try and find a way forward.

On the matter of publishing draft resolutions in advance of the resumed UNEA-5, Member States considered text stating resolutions would be available eight weeks in advance. Some preferred additional preparatory time, asking that resolutions be published ten weeks in advance of the meeting.

Regarding the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP, delegates considered two alternate proposals, one which includes a commemorative event during the high-level event of UNEA-5, and another to convene a special session in advance of UNEA-5.

Many argued that a special session is required, with diverging opinions on whether the session should be one or two days. Delegates preferring a one-day session argued that they were unclear on what would be discussed at a two-day session, and sought clarification. Others noted that UNEA-5 would also convene a high-level event, and questioned the effectiveness of holding two high-level events, days apart.

This prompted a wider dialogue on the OECPR’s mandate and if it is in a position to address the mobilization of budgetary resources for UNEP’s anniversary or whether this should be decided by UNEA-5. Following a break, it was noted that this issue demands further reflection and may need to be deferred to plenary and ultimately UNEA.

Discussion continued in plenary on Wednesday afternoon.

On the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP and the political declaration mandated to UNEA by UNGA resolution 73/333, the EU, with SWITZERLAND, urged for a way out, opining that the mandate includes that the declaration should be adopted at the commemorative event. They further noted, supported by the US, that there is a link between the length of the commemorative special session (with options being one or two days) and the political declaration under resolution 73/333, as the latter would be a substantive component, allowing for a second meeting day.

The AFRICAN GROUP cautioned against deciding prematurely on the agenda of future meetings, stressing the need to allow for the consultative process to continue.

The US, supported by CANADA, suggested a compromise, recommending “the consideration” of adoption of such a declaration at a special session to commemorate UNEP’s 50th anniversary.

The UK proposed finalizing the text of the political declaration at the resumed session of UNEA so it can be adopted at a special session, such as the commemorative session.

Chair Coimbra tabled a compromise solution, recommending that UNEA, as it deems appropriate, shall have the authority to adopt the political declaration as one of the outcomes of the special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP.

Following lengthy debates, the EU maintained that it was exercising a spirit of compromise; however, they were resolute that the political declaration should coincide with a one-day celebration to ensure the event is as impactful as possible. SWITZERLAND echoed this comment, noting it was committed to work towards making the celebration as productive as possible.

The AFRICAN GROUP responded that it too has demonstrated flexibility by accepting to hold the celebration in March as opposed to June, but it could not compromise on reducing the celebration to a single day as opposed to a two-day event and remained firm

that language should prescribe allowance to extend the celebration beyond one day.

The US expressed its disappointment that a number of Member States have not acknowledged the progress made over the last two days, and that its persistent message over the course of the last few months that it does not support a two-day celebration has not been taken into account.

Another lengthy debate ensued with Chair Coimbra appealing to participants to show flexibility and reach a compromise to adopt the draft decision.

The EU suggested preparing the political declaration at the resumed UNEA-5, and inviting the UNGA to consider the adoption of the political declaration, including the option of adopting it as one of the outcomes of the special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP.

The AFRICAN GROUP requested to include a recommendation noting that the CPR at its 154th meeting would consider the possibility of extending the terms of office of the CPR Bureau until the conclusion of the resumed session of UNEA-5, in addition to dealing with the CPR and UNEA Bureau cycles.

Following further consideration, appeals from the Chair to find middle-ground and exercise flexibility, compromise solutions, and disagreement, Members reached consensus on a package deal.

Following this agreement, OECPR-5 endorsed the draft decision and recommended it for adoption by UNEA-5.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/EA.5/L.3), OECPR-5 recommends that UNEA-5, *inter alia*:

- Decide to adjourn UNEA-5, and to resume deliberations at its headquarters in Nairobi from 28 February to 4 March 2022;
- Decide that OECPR-5 will resume from 21-25 February 2022, and request the CPR to decide on the format and agenda of its meeting;
- Call upon the Secretariat and Members to continue work on all relevant work streams, with a view to continue joint efforts to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the SDGs, and to address relevant existing mandates from previous sessions of UNEA;
- Take note of the reports of the UNEP Executive Director submitted to UNEA-5 on progress achieved in the implementation of UNEA resolutions, as set out in the Annex to this decision, and decide to review these reports at the Annual Subcommittee Meeting in 2021;
- Decide that at the resumed session of UNEA-5, UNEA shall finalize implementation of UNGA resolution 73/333 to prepare a political declaration for a UN high-level meeting, and invite the UNGA to consider the appropriate event for the adoption of such declaration, including the option of adopting it as one of the outcomes of the special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of UNEP, taking into account the result of further consultations;
- Recommend that the CPR, at its 154th meeting, shall consider, in view of systemic problems, in a comprehensive manner, the cycle of term of office of the CPR Bureau in relation to the UNEA Bureau;
- Decide that the resumed UNEA-5 shall consist of plenary meetings, a sessional Committee of the Whole, and a high-level segment, including leadership dialogues and a multi-stakeholder dialogue;
- Strongly encourage Member States to submit draft resolutions for consideration by the resumed session of UNEA-5 at an early stage, preferably at least eight weeks in advance of the resumed session of the fifth meeting of the OECPR to allow for

a productive period between the virtual and resumed session of UNEA-5, taking into account the limited time and resources available for negotiation of such draft resolutions; and

- Decide to convene a special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP to be held in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5, for two days in March 2022 in Nairobi, under the leadership of the Presidency and the Bureau of UNEA-6.

UNEA-5 President briefing: Sveinung Rotevatn (Norway), briefed the OECPR on the consensual message that will be delivered to UNEA-5 on Wednesday evening. President Rotevatn thanked delegates for overcoming certain initial reservations, setting the course for a successful UNEA. The message, he added, has shown the world that the UNEA has found a common ground and shared purpose despite working together on this in a virtual setting. He thanked the Chair and the Secretariat for their continued legal, administrative, and policy guidance and noted that in the absence of being able to hold formal negotiations, this message does not establish precedence for future forums.

ARGENTINA, the EU, and EGYPT took the floor to stress that despite their reservations on a number of points, in the spirit of compromise, they would accept the message, which will be forwarded to UNEA. ARGENTINA wished for further language on specific allowances to be made for developing countries in light of the devastating impacts of the pandemic. President Rotevatn stated that much of Argentina's inputs have already been incorporated into the message, particularly with relation to green recovery, but, at this juncture, no further proposed changes can be introduced.

EGYPT and SOUTH AFRICA requested that the message avoid giving precedence to specific work streams under UNEP and COSTA RICA stated its disappointment that the message was not more ambitious.

POLAND, noting its participation in the UNEP Youth Environment Assembly (YEA) 2021, delivered a message on behalf of the YEA. He said that as children and youth are the agents of change for the future, it is crucial to increase the constituencies of this group in multilateral forums to realize the 2030 Agenda.

The AFRICAN GROUP took note of the message, noting the exceptional circumstances under which it was developed, adding that it cannot be used as a negotiating document. KENYA, as host country for UNEP, applauded the work of the OECPR, but also noted it shares the same concerns put forward by the African Group.

MEXICO expressed support for the draft message and suggested making better use of the intersessional periods.

President Rotevatn noted that satisfying everyone's priorities would require negotiations that were not feasible under the circumstances. He stressed that the consensual message from the online session of UNEA-5 is crucial to show that amidst the pandemic, UNEA is still able to focus to its important work.

The OECPR took note with appreciation of the intention of UNEA to deliver a consensual message, with the understanding that it does not constitute a negotiating document.

Consideration of a Draft Chair's Summary

Chair Coimbra informed delegates that the draft Chair's summary had been circulated, calling for adoption with the understanding that the summary would be amended to include the closing plenary's interventions.

OECPR-5 adopted the Chair's summary.

Closing Plenary

UNEP Executive Director Andersen noted the hard work undertaken by all Member States to find a “middle space.” She underscored the work being completed is “historic in proportion,” emphasizing that it shows commitment and that “we are still in business even in the time of global pandemic.” She stressed the importance of presenting the three administrative decisions to the online session of UNEA to ensure we are ready and prepared for the resumed session of UNEA-5 in 2022. She underscored the need to look into the future with a bold vision and a strategic direction.

OECPR Chair Coimbra reminded delegates that the meeting was scheduled to resume at a date to be decided by the online session of UNEA-5. He thanked all delegates, the Secretariat, and participants for the hard work and the spirit of compromise, and adjourned the meeting at 6:49 pm EAT (GMT+3).

A Brief Analysis of OECPR-5

This year’s online session of the fifth Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-5) faced a pared down, and what was touted as, a largely procedural agenda. The meeting considered just three decisions on a medium-term strategy (MTS) 2022-2025, and programme of work and budget, the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions, and the resumption of the fifth sessions of UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and OECPR. While not intended as a negotiating session, OECPR-5 proved that there is no such thing as a procedural or administrative decision. Intergovernmental decision-making is inherently political and complex.

This brief analysis examines what OECPR achieved at its first ever online session, and what impacts this is expected to have on the online session of UNEA-5 on 22-23 February 2021 and the resumed session, scheduled to convene in 2022.

No Procedure without Politics

OECPR is composed of all accredited Permanent Representatives to UNEP. As the main intersessional entity of UNEA, the CPR is the subsidiary body mandated to provide advice on policy matters and prepare UNEA’s agenda.

In this online session, the CPR had agreed to focus on three decisions considered “procedural.” These decisions would ensure UNEP can continue operating during a global travel ban, and substantive debate on key thematic issues would be deferred to a resumed face-to-face session of the OECPR in 2022. Procedure, defined as the established method of accomplishing a task is, however, rarely simple in intergovernmental negotiations. In an environment where the established methods of accomplishing tasks require a varied, careful, and skillful balancing of a diverse suite of needs, there is no procedure without politics.

In ordinary sessions, in ordinary years, and in ordinary times, delegates discuss, intervene, negotiate, put forward proposals, and eventually find their way to consensus through a myriad of possible pathways. In the breezeways of UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, delegates mingle, take coffee and lunches together, and frequently huddle in groups on the floor of the negotiating room, to listen, learn, and hash out details. With good will, gumption, and often a few late nights these interactions lead to consensus.

There is no doubt that delegates brought the same energy to the online OECPR session, as the tone was friendly, open, and patient. But what happens when meetings are limited to sequential interventions? OECPR-5 showed us, that actually, when interactions

between participants are limited to “being audible,” and in the absence of eye contact and physical presence, the elusive space of consensus is a much harder place to locate.

Finding Common Ground

Much of the informal OECPR session was taken up with discussions related to endorsing the MTS 2022-2025. While many noted there had already been three rounds of consultations, and the document should not be reopened, others believed their views had not been fully taken into account. Several delegates raised concern about the MTS’ reference to “environmental rights,” noting there is no intergovernmentally agreed definition for this term. In a skillful move that the UNEP Executive Director, Inger Andersen proposed, and Member States agreed to, replacing the term “environmental rights” with “human rights’ obligations related to the enjoyment of safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.”

Negotiations then moved on to the preambular paragraphs in the decision text, with issues of geographic and gender parity of the UNEP staff, as key sticking points. All Member States agreed to the reference to geographic parity, owing to the importance of international bodies being representative, and ongoing concerns that UNEP is yet to achieve this. Several mentioned that Europeans still dominate professional posts. Many favored including reference to both geographic and gender parity, ensuring that UNEP considers both issues equally in recruitment activities. Surprisingly, this was met with resistance from key proponents of geographic parity. One delegate surmised that UNEP has already achieved its aims relating to gender balance. Others noted this is not the case, citing the composition of the senior management group as an example, which they said is still dominated by males. Another pointed out that gender parity isn’t static, and like the issue of geographic representation, requires ongoing attention to ensure UNEP continues to make progress and achieves parity on both issues.

The third administrative decision on resumption of the OECPR and UNEA saw divergent views on key issues including on how to mark UNEP@50, the celebration of UNEP’s 50th anniversary. Delegates faced two possibilities: mark UNEP@50 with a special event during the high-level segment of the resumed session of UNEA-5, or a separate special session, to convene in conjunction with the resumed session. Some questioned the wisdom of convening a separate special session, since UNEA is already having a high-level session, suggesting this apparent duplicity may be confusing. The African Group and others stressed the need for a significant event, led by African countries, to commemorate UNEP, an African-based agency. Despite many delegates’ reservations, they eventually compromised to have a two-day session, leaving open the possibility of adopting the political declaration, mandated to UNEA by UN General Assembly resolution 73/333, at the special session. This compromise will need to be approved by the online session of UNEA-5.

There were also disagreements over the high-level political declaration to be prepared, as called for by UNGA resolution 73/333. Delegates debated if UNEP@50 or UNEA would be the high-level meeting to adopt the political declaration. Some said that such a discussion is premature, noting that currently there is no clear picture of the high-level meetings in 2022. They explained the General Assembly is expected to take decisions related to the Stockholm+50 conference, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Many Member States stressed the need to not prejudice the ultimate

destination of the “landing zone” for the declaration instead deferring to the General Assembly to provide direction on this.

Tensions were also evident on the issue of the presidency of UNEA and the chairmanship of the CPR Bureau. Some Member States raised an issue with the leadership of both bodies held by the same regional group concurrently. Others noted that it has been done before, but that, if this is a problem, it should be subject to negotiation by the CPR at its next meeting. Others concurred, noting that delegations likely required additional time to consult regionally on their respective positions around this issue. OECPR eventually agreed that the 154th meeting of the CPR would address this, comprehensively reviewing the term cycle of the CPR Bureau in relation to the UNEA Bureau, taking into account systemic issues.

Staying Strong in Challenging Times

OECPR-5 faced technical hurdles, problems with software, interpretation, the ability to be heard, and yet it persevered. The tenacity of the Chair and UNEP staff was clear. Delegates remained flexible, even in a space where there was little space for flexibility. And with dogged determination, despite some participants noting they were at the “end of their wits,” OECPR-5 managed to agree on three decisions and forward them to UNEA-5, a signal that UNEP remains strong even in the face of a global pandemic.

Upcoming Meetings

UNEA-5: The online session of the fifth meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly will convene under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” UNEA will also consider three decisions forwarded from the OECPR. **dates:** 22-23 February 2021 **location:** virtual **www:** <https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea5>

7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum: The 7th APAN Forum will be held virtually under the theme “Enabling Resilience for All: The Critical Decade to Scale-up Action,” sharing learnings from actions towards climate-resilient development. **dates:** 8-12 March 2021 **location:** virtual **www:** <http://www.asiapacificadapt.net/adaptationforum2020/>

Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit: This Summit, hosted by the Republic of Korea and P4G, will bring together high-level government officials, CEOs, and civil society leaders to deliberate on how scalable and replicable market-based solutions can advance increased ambition on climate action and sustainable development. **dates:** 30-31 May 2021 **location:** TBC **www:** <https://p4gpartnerships.org/content/p4g-seoul-summit>

Global Major Group and Stakeholders Forum online consultation: This event will gather perspectives from Major Groups and Stakeholders in preparation for the resumed UNEA-5 session in 2022. **dates:** June 2021 **location:** online

60th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: The Council is the GEF’s main governing body, and meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. **dates:** 15-17 June 2021 **location:** TBC **www:** <https://thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-60th-council-meeting>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021: The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene the 2021 session of the HLPF under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.” Following the first five days, the

HLPF’s three-day ministerial segment takes place jointly with ECOSOC’s high-level segment. **dates:** 6-15 July 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

2021 Food Systems Summit: Convened by the UN Secretary-General, the Summit aims to maximize the co-benefits of a food systems approach across the 2030 Agenda and address the challenges of climate change. The Summit will provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all of the SDGs. **dates:** September 2021 (TBC) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York (TBC) **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

2021 Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26): The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26), the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) are expected to convene one year after its originally scheduled dates. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, UK **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

UNEA-5 resumed session: Convening under the theme, “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs,” UNEA-5 will provide a platform for discussing and implementing nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, by holistically addressing its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Building on the online session in February 2021, the meeting will discuss ways to ensure that policies for economic recovery following COVID-19 lead to a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world. Upon completion of the online part of UNEA-5, according to the OECPR-5 recommendation, it will be decided that a special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP will be held for two days (5-6 March 2022) in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5. **dates:** 28 February – 4 March 2022 (TBC) **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

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

Glossary

CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NDCs	Nationally determined contributions
OECPR	Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
PoW	Programme of Work
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly