

Comments from the Permanent Mission of Colombia to UNEP

Informal Working Group meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Note of the Secretariat on the Structure and Organization of the 2017 UNEA

16 February 2017

Preliminary Structure of UNEA-3

General Comments:

1. Colombia supports a structure for the UN Environment Assembly that can include a specific agenda item for the ministerial outcome as it assures that the Ministers can focus on discussing this important matter, and therefore, the adoption of the outcome becomes more likely. However, there must be clarity and consensus on what this outcome will be, well in advance of UNEA-3.
2. Colombia supports a structure in which a small number of sessions are being held simultaneously. It is essential to consider that there are small delegations which cannot attend a large amount of sessions being held simultaneously. Parallel meetings should be limited to two at a time.
3. Colombia supports a structure with a short opening plenary, to ensure that the short amount of time available can be maximized.
4. It is crucial to emphasize that the chairpersons of the Regional Forums have the opportunity to deliver the main outcomes of these scenarios in the UNEA, included the High Level Segment. Their participation is vital not only as building blocks for the UN Environment Assembly but also within it.
5. In conclusion, Colombia could support the first structure proposed. However, we encourage all countries to continuously and restlessly work on the structure and structure of UNEA-3.

Leadership Dialogues:

1. In the first proposed structure, it is observed that the Secretariat proposes to conduct four leadership dialogues at the same time in two distinct setting. Therefore, four of the priority areas which have been included in the national submissions could be highlighted so that the Ministers may discuss more deeply each priority area.

High Level Segment:

1. Colombia welcomes the considerations regarding the inclusion in the speaker list of the Chairpersons of the Regional Fora and Global Meetings with UNEP representation. It is crucial that they have the opportunity to deliver the main outcomes of these scenarios in the UN Environment Assembly, included the High Level Segment. Their participation is vital not only as building blocks for the UN Environment Assembly but also within it.
2. For instance: For Colombia it is essential to present the results of the Forum of Ministers for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (Forum of Ministers). This is a very important issue for our delegation, due to the inconvenience during UNEA-2 for the Viceminister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia to deliver and present the results of the Forum of Ministers that took place in Cartagena, Colombia in March 2016.
3. As an example, this year the communication of the outcomes of two Regional Forums could significantly contribute to the UN Environment Assembly:

- 3.1. Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (September, Bogotá).
- 3.2. Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development (April, Mexico).
4. We urge the Secretariat and President of UNEA-3 to guarantee the space for the Chairpersons of the Regional Forums.

Committee of the Whole:

1. The time given to the Committee of the Whole (COW) for the negotiation of the resolutions does not seem sufficient. It is important that the Assembly takes into account that the discussions of the resolutions usually exceed the allocated time. It is not clear how the COW will be able to negotiate the resolutions related to, among others: air pollution, water pollution, land pollution, marine pollution, Sound management of chemicals and waste.
2. The position of the delegations and regional groups could be taken into consideration when electing the chairs for the COW and Drafting Groups.
3. It is important that the Secretary provides some clarifications regarding the short time given to the COW.

Deadline for the Presentation of Resolutions:

1. In the Second UN Environment Assembly, the resolutions were presented on the same day of their first reading or the night right before, hindering the delegations' work of consulting and information gathering. The fact that countries may present draft resolutions up until two days before the ending of UNEA affects the work made on the resolutions.
2. It will be helpful if the Secretariat and UNEA President encourage Member States to consider the time constraints and promote the presentation of the draft resolutions in a prudent timely manner in order to assure effective discussions and negotiations.

Number of Resolutions

1. For the upcoming UNEA, we hope that the number of resolutions to be negotiated will be limited and therefore the delegations could be able to present new resolutions as mentioned before in a timely manner.
2. A manageable number of resolutions will give the opportunity to small delegations to attend, provide inputs and participate actively in the negotiation sessions, keeping the sense of Universal Membership of UNEA as the primary environmental authority within the United Nations system - which is taking decisions of great impact in environmental issues.

Outcome:

1. In the preparation process it is crucial to precisely agree on the format of the outcome document. It is also crucial that from the first day of the UNEA a process for the delivery of the outcome is established.
2. Furthermore, Colombia considers that is essential to discuss a desired outcome of the assembly before the meeting takes place.
3. The CPR Meetings, as a subsidiary body, should be the instance in which, inter alia, the roadmap, number of resolutions, and type of outcome document are discussed. For this it is important to provide in advance Member States with information regarding the agenda of the meetings and matters for decision making.

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