

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Hazem Shabat, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to the Republic of Kenya, and Permanent Representative to UNEP, UN-Habitat and UNON, Chairperson of the Group of 77 and China, Nairobi Chapter at the 152<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on Agenda item 7 “preparation for the fifth session of UN Environment Assembly” (Nairobi, 19 November 2020)**

At the outset allow me to commend you the Chair of the CPR, and also wish to commend the Executive Director and the Secretariat for their active engagement with Member States, and for preparing the working documents.

Allow me, as well, to reiterate our understanding that a “two-step” approach for UNEA-5 means that we will have one session of the Assembly divided in two segments, and not a situation that, in practice, would almost amount to two sessions of the Assembly. The Group has reviewed the draft structure for the first segment of UNEA-5, to be prepared and held virtually, and strongly believes that the designated time is too long, which implies that less time will be allocated for the resumed session of UNEA-5 where we are expecting to conduct substantive negotiations.

The Group believes that there is room for restructuring the virtual session so that it becomes more aligned with the notion that it is primarily aimed at the adoption of urgent administrative and budgetary matters. We believe that adopting decisions of the nature of Medium-Term Strategy, Programme of Work and Budget, which have been sufficiently deliberated at previous 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee meeting of the CPR and earlier sessions, does not demand prolonged time slots. The Group also requests more clarification on the nature, purpose and the expected outcomes of the Leadership Dialogue titled “Strengthening UNEP to help us build back better”, which currently lacks a concept note and seems to absorb significant time and logistical resources.

In the light of the aforementioned, the Group reiterates its previous position to limit consideration of items that are directly relevant, and time sensitive administrative and budgetary matters, that are crucial for UNEP's business continuity. We continue to have strong reservations to the preparation, in virtual format, of any substantive outcome, considering the challenges it can pose to inclusivity and transparency. Accordingly, the Group is of the believe that that this session should address the following decisions:

1. Medium Term Strategy for 2022-2025 and Programme of Work for the biennium 2022-2023
2. Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions.
3. A decision on the date and format of the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022.

Regarding the remaining proposed additional procedural decisions, the Group seeks more clarifications from the Legal Advisor and the Secretariat on the necessity and the implications perceived for these additional decisions for UNEP's business continuity.

The Group reiterates that the preparation of the negotiated outcomes of UNEA is a member-State driven process taking place within the CPR. We therefore consider the zero drafts of all draft resolutions and decisions should be prepared by the Member State themselves, probably through the CPR Bureau, without prejudice to the helpful support by the Secretariat.

Considering that the Group of 77 and China only envisages a limited number of urgent administrative and budgetary documents as possible outcomes of the virtual session of UNEA5, we consider that preparation of these documents can take place within CPR subcommittee meetings and a streamlined OECPR, without the need to appoint co-facilitators or clusters, these are only necessary when we are preparing a large number of negotiated outcomes, which will not be the case.

Thank you Chair,