

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 Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP (Nairobi, 10th of December 2020)

Agenda item 2 “Consideration of UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023”

Allow me at the outset to commend you, Chair of the CPR, and the Secretariate for preparing the revised version of the MTS 2022-2025 and POW 2022-2023 and for your active engagement with Member States during the process of this exercise.

Allow me, as well, to thank the Secretariate for taking into consideration a number of concerns raised by the Members of the Group of 77 and China and tackling them while drafting the MTS and POW.

The Group emphasizes on the need to address, under the thematic sub-programme of Climate Action of the MTS, the important issue of sand and dust storm, which are caused by climate change and has negative impacts on many Member-States.

The Group reiterates also the cruciality of enhancing ambition in the provision and mobilization of all types and sources of means of implementation for developing countries in the course of the MTS and POW, and the importance of establishing proper mechanism to grant equal access to funds by Member States.

Thank you, Chair

Agenda item 5 “Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP”

At the outset allow me to thank the Secretariat for preparing a draft strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP five months since its previous iteration. The Group of 77 and China considers that it still requires additional discussion by Member States in a transparent, inclusive and participatory manner.

Our first comment relates to the timetable. It is proposed that the commemorations be launched at the virtual meeting of the fifth session for the UN Environment Assembly, in February 2021, and that the commemoration would conclude in conjunction with the resumed session, in February 2022. Such an arrangement would imply that the commemoration would be over before the 50th anniversary itself, in June 2022, which would be regrettable. While the Group does not object to the notion of a launch of the commemorations at the virtual segment of UNEA-5, an agreement on this issue requires proper understanding of the culmination of the series of envisaged events – that, as suggested by the Secretariat, must take place in Nairobi, contributing to the progressive consolidation of the UNEP headquarters functions as mandated by Paragraph 88 of “The Future We Want”.

The Group reiterates that the preparation for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP is a Member-States driven process. The suggestion that a UNEP “Global Assessments Synthesis Report” serve as background document for the virtual part of UNEA-5 and for the preparations of UNEP@50 requires more information about the report and, of course, an intergovernmental discussion. Also, the reference to a communication initiative and visual identity at the virtual session of UNEA5 should be equally discussed in depth within the subcommittee meetings of the CPR.

The Group noted the offer made by Sweden in October 2019 to host a UN high-level conference in Stockholm and notes that, as of now, there is no UN General Assembly resolution establishing the basis for such an event. While our Group reiterates the willingness to engage on this issue in the proper forum once a proposal is formally presented to the entire membership in a transparent, inclusive and participatory manner, our Group notes that the Secretariat should only make reference to meetings that have been properly mandated. Therefore, the Group stresses that an interrelation between UNEP@50, for which there is a clear mandate, and a possible Stockholm@50 can only be discussed once and if the UN General Assembly Resolution provides a mandate to it.

On paragraph 13 of the draft strategy, the Secretariat refers to “to solicit views for a new course for UNEP’s future”. Let us be clear that the course for UNEP’s future is clearly described in “The Future we Want” and that, UNEP@50 should serve as an opportunity to strengthen the Programme so that it can better deliver its mandate, not reform it. In addition, on paragraph 18 of the draft strategy, the Secretariat states that UNEP intends to develop a “legacy publication”, the Group request for further clarification on the concept of such publication.

Thank you, Chair