

Concept note

XXIII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean
Agenda item 6 “UNEP, Your Partner of Choice”
24th October, 17h00-18h00, Marriott Hotel, Panama City, Panama

Objectives of session

Following the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), all 193 UN Member States are members of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), which is the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). However, while the attendance of Member States at UNEA sessions is close to universal, the participation in its subsidiary body, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), and the number of Member States providing funding to the Environment Fund, UNEP’s core budget, is far from universal.

A broader and more active participation in the CPR, and a wider funding base, would strengthen UNEP’s capacity to support Member States in addressing the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and realize the full potential of the universal membership of UNEA.

To this end, the objectives of the session are to encourage Member States to:

- (i) **increase the membership and active participation of countries from the Latin American and Caribbean Region (LAC) in UNEP governance** through promoting accreditation to the CPR (currently only 132 MS out of 193 are accredited to CPR, out of which 16 of 33 from the LAC region). Whether or not based in Nairobi, CPR-accredited Member States have the opportunity to actively participate in the CPR to influence the work of UNEP and UNEA, through the consideration of current and future UNEP programmes of work, and preparations and follow up of UNEA sessions. (This is possible as all CPR meetings are hybrid with active online participation). Increased participation would widen the influence and ownership of Member States to the work of UNEP, with mutual benefits;
- (ii) **increase total funding provided to the Environment Fund from countries in the LAC region** to help close the current funding gap of around 20% (current annual approved budget is USD 100 million), thereby ensuring UNEP has the funds it needs to deliver its programme of work and respond to emerging environmental challenges;
- (iii) **increase the number of Member States from the LAC region contributing to the Environment Fund**, to widen the funding base to align with the universal membership (globally around 80 Member States out of 193 contribute to the Environment Fund, of which 11 are from the LAC).

These objectives are central to the Secretariat’s [Action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development](#).

For more background information, see Annex 1.

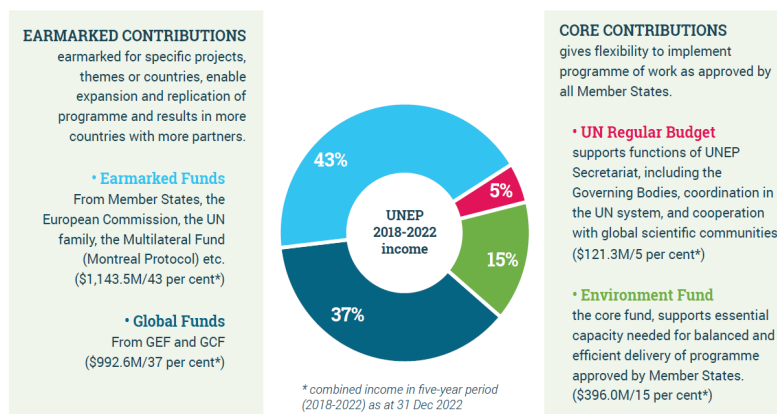
Choreography of session

- (i) Chair opens and introduces agenda item.
- (ii) Opening remarks, by Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP (5 min).
- (iii) UNEP Secretariat presentation and video (20 min). *Background on UNEP as a partner of choice in addressing the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution; information on the status and process of accreditation to the CPR; funding situation (global and regional) and importance of widening the funding base of contributors to the Environment Fund.*
- (iv) Exchange of views with Member States (25 min).
- (v) Closing remarks by Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP (5 min).
- (vi) Closing of agenda item by Chair.

Annex 1: Background information

About funding of UNEP in general

- The world is facing a triple planetary crisis and demands on UNEP's delivery on its mandate have increased – while the organization continues to be dependent on voluntary contributions for 95 per cent of its income.
- Rio+20 encouraged all UNEP Member States to provide secure, stable, adequate and increased resources.
- In 2022, total income to UNEP was around USD 741 million (as at end 2022).
 - the Environment Fund represented 11%,
 - UN Regular budget represented 3%,
 - earmarked contributions were 86% (Global Funds 45% and other earmarked funds 41%).
 - In other words, core and flexible funds accounted for 14%.
- As a reference, the [UN Funding Compact](#) has set a goal of having at least 30% core funding as proportion of the voluntary funding.
- While voluntary income to UNEP is growing, the growth is happening on the side of earmarked funding rather than on core funding, creating a further imbalance of flexible core funding vs restricted earmarked funding, thus moving in the opposite direction of the recommendations of the UN Funding Compact.
- Looking at the income for five years (2018-2022) the situation is as follows;



About the Environment Fund

- The Environment Fund (EF), established in 1973, is the core fund of UNEP to which Member States contribute on a voluntary base. It provides the organization with the capacity to deliver its mandate in all areas of work.
- It supports the delivery of the strategy and programme, and allows the organization the needed flexibility to respond to emerging environmental challenges.
- The fund is used to provide scientific evidence on the state of the global environment; to identify emerging environmental issues and innovative solutions; to raise awareness and advocacy; and to build capacity. It invests in results-focused programme management and robust oversight. It also finances UNEP's convening power in bringing together governments, the private sector and civil society to advance the global environmental agenda, for example through UNEA.
- The Environment Fund budget, currently USD 100 million annually, is approved by UNEA, but has almost never been fully funded.
- The founders of UNEP had a vision of an annual Environment Fund budget of USD 100 million, which in today's money would be around USD 730 million.
- UNEP relies on top 15 contributors for over 90% of its income to the Environment Fund.
- UNEP encourages all Member States to contribute to the Environment Fund.
- In 2022, as at end year, income to Environment Fund was USD 81 million (81%):
 - 83 MS contributed.
 - 110 did not contribute.
 - Out of the 83, 44 contributed their full share as per the VISC (see below).
- From the Latin America and the Caribbean Region (LAC) in 2022:
 - 10 MS contributed to the EF out of 33 of which 6 at the full share of VISC (see below).
 - LAC region contributed a total of about USD 800,000.
 - If all countries would have paid and at full share of the VISC (see below), the contribution from

the LAC region would have been USD 7.35 million.

- o Top-5 contributors from the region in 2022: Mexico, Uruguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Chile.

About voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC)

- [Voluntary indicative Scale of Contributions](#) (VISC) was established by the UNEP Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 (15 Feb 2002) to guide the calculation of contributions from each Member State.
- VISC provides a set of parameters for calculating the expected contribution from each Member State, these are linked to the UN Assessed Scale of contributions, that provides the basis for the UN Regular Budget.
- According to the VISC, Member States are requested to contribute taking into account their size of the economy, and their status of social development. Requested amounts range from USD 1,000 to USD 12 million depending on the country. In the LAC region, the range is between USD 1,000 and USD 12.9 million.
- Since 2002, successive UNEP Governing Bodies, most recently the fifth UNEA, have requested the UNEP Executive Director to continue the application of the VISC when determining the level of each Member State's contribution to the Environment Fund.
- When Member States in 2002 established VISC, their hope was that this would increase the number of Member States contributing. In the years right after, 124 Member States contributed. However, in recent years the number of contributing Member States is around 80.
- The Secretariat is increasing its outreach and information sharing of the VISC hoping this will lead to an increase in number of Member States contributing.

About the Committee of Permanent Representatives

UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) is a subsidiary organ of UNEA, mandated to provide review and oversight of UNEP's programme of work, and to prepare for the political outcomes of upcoming UNEA sessions. It also monitors the implementation of UNEA resolutions. It is a formal platform for continuous engagement of Member States with the organization, to provide collective guidance to UNEP mandate's implementation. Accreditation to the CPR is open to all Member States and provides the opportunity to participate more actively in the decision-making process about UNEP and its programme as well as on the UNEA.

About Accreditation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives

- In the "[Action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development](#)" one goal is to realize the full potential of the universal membership, including:
 - o Promote increased participation by Member States, including those without diplomatic representation in Nairobi, in the deliberations of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
 - o Encourage more Member States to seek accreditation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives
- Currently 132 Member States (out of 193) are accredited to the CPR
- 16 (out of 33) Member States from the UNEP region of Latin America and the Caribbean are accredited to CPR, while 17 are not accredited.
- It is very simple to become accredited to the CPR, and accreditation is open to all Member States, whether they have an embassy in Nairobi or not. Many Member States are already accredited through their capitals or through their embassies in Geneva, New York or in East Africa outside Kenya.
- To become [accredited](#), Member States need to apply through the following steps:
 - o Submission of a communication to the Secretariat [*email: unep-sgb@un.org*] in the form of a note verbale or a letter informing of the wish to get accredited and providing the name and contact information of the representative(s) who wish to be accredited.
 - o Upon receipt of the note verbale/letter, the Secretariat will update:
 - The online Contact Directory of the Committee.
 - The electronic mailing list.
 - o This enables the representatives to receive all communication submitted to the CPR and authorizes the representatives to register as well as participate in the hybrid meetings of the Committee, either in person or online.