



THE GROUP OF 77

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Mahmoud A. Talaat

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Chairman of the Group of 77 and China Nairobi Chapter.

The 131st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations

Environmental Program (UNEP)

(UNON, Nairobi, 16 June 2015)

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates and colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the group of 77 and China.

First and foremost, I wish to welcome the comprehensive report delivered to the committee by Mr. Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of UNEP, including progress on the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly held in June 2014. We commend the efforts exerted by the UNEP secretariat, in conjunction with all relative parties, in assuring the timely implementation of UNEA1 resolutions in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. In this regard, we welcome further reports by the Executive Director on this subject, and request to remain updated on the current state of play.

Mr. Chairman,

In the months since our previous meeting, the discussions on the preparations of UNEA2, as well as the preparatory open-ended meeting of our committee, have been well underway. In this context, the group of 77 and China wishes to commend the Chair of the CPR, on his efforts in reaching out to all groups in informal consultations, on a number of issues of relevance to the process. As chair of the group of 77 and China, my delegation has been engaged with the Chair of the CPR, as well as the UNEP secretariat, on these issues.

With regards to the debate on the structure of the open-ended meeting of CPR, the Group of 77 and China wishes to reiterate its position conveyed in previous subcommittee meetings, as well as informal consultations; that while we do note the merits of having parallel negotiating sessions, as one mean for avoiding lengthy

meetings that could well extend into midnight, we recapitulate on the tribulations encountered by our delegations in covering parallel meetings, in light of the limited human resources amongst delegations of developing and least developed countries.

In this context, the group wishes to emphasize, that should parallel sessions be deemed necessary, it is of the utmost importance that no more than two of such sessions be held at any time during the meetings. The group also seeks to have a formal confirmation from the UNEP secretariat, that sufficient funds will be allocated, for the purpose of financing the participation of experts from capitals of developing and least developed member states. Last but not least, the Group calls upon the Chair and all member states, to efficiently utilize the remaining time period till the convening of the open-ended CPR in February 2016, through extensive informal consultations, and possibly reaching consensus on matters of relevance, before commencing the formal meetings. To this end, members of the group of 77 and China commit to engage constructively, and in positive spirit, with all member states, to ensure a successful outcome of the open-ended CPR and of UNEA2.

Mr. Chairman,

Next month, members of the UNEA2 bureau will be meeting through video conference, to discuss a number of matters pertaining to the organization of UNEA2, including the proposed theme for the high level segment, as well as the stakeholders' engagement policy that should govern the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the assembly meetings.

On the proposed theme for the high level segment of UNEA2, the group of 77 and China, is of the view that the participation of ministers in the deliberations of the assembly should be deemed as an opportunity to have in-depth discussions on issues of concern. Given that UNEA2 will be the first major UN conference with universal participation held after the adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, a single theme, focusing on the role of UNEP and UNEA in implementing the

environmental dimensions of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and SDGs, should only be relevant. The group is of the view that such theme should be strategic and forward-looking, and that our ministers should be providing the political guidance as to how UNEP can contribute to that effect.

For that purpose, Mr. Chairman, our group has been engaged in consultations both internally amongst its members, as well as with other member states, in a view to formulate a proposal on that matter that would be in line with the previously mentioned. That said, we do realize the pressure posed on the secretariat by the time constraints, and the necessity to begin the substantive preparations at the earliest date to ensure a successful UNEA2. The group maintains that consensus on the high level segment theme should be attained as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

The stakeholders' engagement policy in UNEA2 remains one of the most relevant issues that are yet to be resolved. Thus, it would be very important to have the stakeholders engagement policy approved as soon as possible, all while preserving the intergovernmental nature of UNEP and UNEA, and taking into consideration the concerns and national legislations of member states.

We also stress on the importance of involving all members of the CPR in this process, in an open and transparent manner. Our group wishes to reaffirm its commitment to an effective and inclusive participation of all parties in UNEA2, including relevant stakeholders, and especially from developing and least developed countries. We emphasize on the role that relevant stakeholders should play in implementing UNEA2 outcomes.

It is equally important, Mr. Chairman, that the deliberations on the outcome document of UNEA2 be launched in a most timely fashion, so as to avoid long and unnecessary eleventh hour debates, as was the case when negotiating and adopting

the UNEA1 outcome document in 2014. It has well to be noted, that the outcome document should stress on the importance of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development; social, economic and environmental, in a balanced manner, while highlighting the significance of the Rio principles, in particular the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. Also of necessity is that UNEA2 should follow up on the implementation of decisions adopted by the previous session.

Mr. Chairman,

Looking ahead, UNEP's role in promoting the environmental dimension of sustainable development gains an even greater significance in light of the current international context. The group of 77 and China is resolved to continue working with UNEP, as well as all other member states, to ensure the continued relevance of the program, by becoming more useful, accountable, and responsive to the needs of all member states.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.