

# **Minutes of the 113th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.25 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 December 2010, by Mr. Daniel Chuburu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 74 participants from 48 countries and three observers.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Maandi Saad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria; Mr. Geoff Tooth, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Australia; Mr. Liu Guangyuan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China; Ms. Bettina Lorz, Deputy Permanent Representative of the European Union; Mr. Etienne de Poncins, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Mr. Kingsley Saka Abdul Karimu, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana; Mr. Toshihisa Takata, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan; Mr. Yaqoub al-Sanaad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kuwait; Mr. Michel van Winden, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; Mr. Per Ludvig Magnus, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Octav Dan Paxino, Chargé d'Affaires and Permanent Representative of Romania; Mr. Ndumiso N. Ntshinga, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of South Africa.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left or would be leaving the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work, which had greatly assisted it in discharging its mandate: Mr. Ali Benzerga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria; Ms. Elisabeth Barbier, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Mr. Budi Bowoleksono, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Ms. Elizabeth Jacobsen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Luís João de Sousa Lorrvão, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Portugal; Mr. Nicolas Martin Cinto, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in documents UNEP/CPR/113/1 and Add.1.

## **Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 112th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 14 September 2010**

6. The Committee approved and adopted as amended the draft minutes of its 112th meeting, held on 14 September 2010, as set out in document UNEP/CPR/113/2.

## **Item 4: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

### **(a) Recent developments**

7. In his report, the Executive Director drew attention to a number of major international events in which UNEP had played a significant role. The sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010, had been a turning point for the international climate change regime, although it had set a direction for future work rather than marking a conclusion. A number of key outcomes had been achieved, all of which had led the global community to keep faith that a definitive climate change agreement could be reached. As the outcomes would have only a limited impact on activities to combat climate change, it was important to ensure that the agreements reached evolved into specific action in the lead-up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Durban, South Africa, in 2011. The role of UNEP at the session had been visible and constructive: UNEP had launched a number of reports, including one on emissions gaps, which had been one of the most cited documents and reference points for the negotiations. A report on non-carbon-dioxide greenhouse gases had also been significant.
8. Considerable success had been achieved at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010, with, among other things, the elaboration of a new strategic plan, new targets on protected areas and many other indicators, and the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization. In addition, Mr. Robert Zoellick, the President of the World Bank, had launched a new global partnership to introduce the practice of ecosystem valuation into national accounts for better management of natural environments.

9. He highlighted the publication by UNEP of the *Africa Water Atlas* to highlight the particular challenges facing the continent in terms of water, which had been developed by UNEP at the request of the African Ministers' Council on Water. A summary of the atlas would be available shortly. The *Latin America and the Caribbean Atlas of Our Changing Environment*, which drew attention to key environmental issues for policymakers and the public, had been launched the previous day on the UNEP website. He said that UNEP had responded to member States' frequent request that it should bring the latest science to bear in international negotiations and he would prepare a full summary of that work for consideration by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session. He outlined a number of additional reports that had been targeted at particular forums and international processes, including on inland fisheries, the world's mangroves, ocean acidification and its relationship to climate change, and glacial melting.
10. He drew attention to the process leading to an agreement in Busan, Republic of Korea, in June 2010 on the establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Following confusing signals from Headquarters in the wake of that agreement, the proposed endorsement of the General Assembly could be found in a draft resolution on UNEP to be considered by the General Assembly on 20 December 2010.
11. He noted that the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the Millennium Development Goals and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity held in New York in September 2010 had raised interesting questions for UNEP, in particular with regard to its relationship to the targets of the Goals. The Secretary-General had requested that all United Nations entities should direct their resources to attaining those targets.
12. UNEP had submitted its programme of work for the biennium 2012–2013 to Headquarters and had participated in a meeting on that issue with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Advisory Committee had been very interested in and supportive of UNEP; its report would raise a number of points for discussion and detail.
13. Intense discussions had also taken place with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. UNEP was engaged in preparations for the Conference and had participated along with the other United Nations agencies in a recent meeting in New York with the Bureau of the Conference. Noting that the green economy and sustainable development were central topics for the Conference, he said that UNEP had taken part in meetings with the Department and the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development regarding the preparation of a report on the risks and challenges of the green economy to be considered by the Conference. It was to be hoped that the first draft of the report would be ready in time for submission to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at its second session, to be held on 7 and 8 March 2011. An additional UNEP staff member would be seconded to New York to the secretariat of the Conference to strengthen UNEP input to preparations and to help to relieve staffing problems that, along with financial constraints, were hindering progress. Two executive coordinators, Ms. Elizabeth Thompson and Mr. Brice Lalande, had been recruited.
14. The first meeting of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability had been held on 19 September 2010 in New York. The Panel would produce a report on sustainable development that would feed into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It was to be hoped that Panel members would participate in the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council together with Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, who had been designated as Secretary-General of the Conference.
15. He said that discussions at the meeting of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on International Environmental Governance, held in Espoo, Finland, from 21 to 23 November 2010, had been intense, but had clarified the way forward and begun to allow leaders to explore further pathways to explore for international environmental governance reform. He expressed his satisfaction that, in its draft resolution on UNEP, the General Assembly had for the first time welcomed the Governing Council's work on international environmental governance and looked forward to the results thereof.
16. Turning to appointments, he said that candidates had been interviewed for the D-2 position of Executive Secretary of the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, on which the Secretary-General would make a final decision. The Secretary-General's decision on the appointment of the Executive Secretary for the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) to be based at the Convention's secretariat in Athens was pending. He introduced Mr. Michele Condotti, new Head of the Unit for Policy and Inter-agency Affairs.
17. He noted that the Office of Internal Oversight Services had audited UNEP, with particular focus on partnerships. It was crucial for UNEP to strengthen its ability to work through partnerships to enhance the implementation of its programme of work. The audit had raised questions as to the organization's review processes, quality assurance

and management criteria. Although he was not in agreement with the audit's overall findings, it would be considered carefully.

18. He said that the UNEP divisions had coped well with the 10 per cent budget break that he had imposed and would remain within expenditure of some \$80 million. A number of countries had increased their 2010 contributions to the Environment Fund. The shortfall of \$8 million–\$10 million was manageable. He was concerned for the future, however, if the financial situation did not recover in 2011, as it would result in a need to cut back activities, results and initiatives, which would be extremely regrettable given the reform under way. The usual challenges notwithstanding, the implementation of the UNEP programme of work had remained on track and had begun to accelerate towards the end of 2010, producing the intended outcomes.
19. In the ensuing discussion, most of the representatives who spoke thanked the Executive Director for his report, which was generally described as comprehensive and insightful. One said that the quality of the analytical and thoughtful report demonstrated that UNEP should be at the heart of international environmental cooperation.
20. Many representatives welcomed the outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. One expressed his gratitude to the secretariat and to member States for their cooperation in ensuring the meeting's success. A number thanked the Government of Japan for its vision for and commitment to the successful outcome of the meeting. One said that the spirit of compromise that had prevailed had demonstrated the international community's ability to deliver successful outcomes. Many drew attention, in particular, to the importance of the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention while several underscored the significance of the new strategy for the Convention's implementation and the road map for needs on financing. One welcomed the agreement between UNEP and the Convention on administrative arrangements.
21. Several representatives expressed optimism with regard to the outcome of the climate change negotiations in Cancún and a number concurred with the Executive Director's assessment of the meeting. One said that the meeting represented a significant step in the right direction with its focus on efforts to combat deforestation. Another said that, while the agreement reached had been modest in nature, it could represent a turning point in climate negotiations. A number spoke of the need for a legally binding climate regime. Welcoming the outcome of the meeting, one representative said that remarkable progress had been achieved with the establishment of a green climate fund and a centre for technology transfer in addition to the priority accorded to forestation, all of which boded well for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties. One representative commended the Executive Director on the prominent role played by UNEP at the meeting, while a number thanked the Government of Mexico for the instrumental part that it had played in preparations for and work during the meeting.
22. A number of representatives welcomed the outcome of the meeting of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on International Environmental Governance. One thanked the secretariat and the co-chairs of the Group for their efforts. Another suggested that the outcome would strengthen UNEP and was an important step in the implementation of a wider process of international environmental governance reform in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. One underscored the importance of considering the way forward on the matter at the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council on the basis of the Group's discussions. Another thanked the Group, the Government of Finland and UNEP for their hard work, including to ensure that the views of all stakeholders had been heard. One expressed the belief that the meeting had provided a sound basis for future discussions and opened a window of opportunity for progress.
23. Many representatives expressed their appreciation for the draft resolution on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services before the General Assembly. One said that the establishment of the platform would be an important achievement for UNEP; he suggested that UNEP, in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, should prepare the modalities for the platform's establishment. Another called for the platform to become operational through the convening of its first plenary meeting as soon as possible with the full participation of all States to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements required. He thanked UNEP for convening the preparatory meetings on the possible establishment of such a platform.
24. The representative of Japan said that his Government was preparing to host the second session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury and expressed the hope that its outcome would be successful, providing momentum for international negotiations on the matter. His Government wished to host the conference of plenipotentiaries at which the new mercury instrument would be adopted, in 2013. The instrument would be named the "Minamata Convention", thereby reaffirming the resolve of the international community to ensure that the health damage and environmental disaster caused by methyl mercury in the Bay of Minamata would never be repeated in any other country. Another representative said that it was to be hoped that regional concerns on environmental, social and economic aspects of the proposed instrument would be discussed fully during the forthcoming session.
25. One representative congratulated the Executive Director on his efforts to build partnerships with other United Nations entities to boost UNEP work in its areas of comparative advantage. He urged caution, however, with regard to duplicating the efforts of other institutions, referring in particular to a report on emissions gaps and the purview of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He advised UNEP to be more prudent in the

publication of reports as it should be seen to convey the positions of member States rather than of the secretariat. Another spoke of the importance of not spreading resources too thinly to cover too many issues and thereby reducing the quality of UNEP outputs. He underlined the need for the organization's facts, findings, assessments and policy advice to be indisputable.

26. One representative thanked UNEP for its highly professional organizational and substantive input to various meetings. He voiced support for the organization's involvement in preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and its enhanced profile in future environmental work.
27. Another representative said that the decision on UNEP before the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session underscored the role of UNEP as the point of authority in the international environmental structure. One said that his Government would continue to lobby for the creation of an international environment organization. He suggested that the presidents of the Group of Twenty and of the Group of Eight should work towards progress on international environmental governance options.
28. Another representative expressed his concern regarding the financial difficulties facing UNEP. He thanked UNEP for its efforts to resolve major environmental problems and the Executive Director for his work to advance international environmental governance reform and the use of synergies between conventions. He expressed the hope that the programme would, among others, continue its work on capacity-building and play a more significant role on international environmental issues.
29. One representative noted with interest the publication of the *Africa Water Atlas*, suggesting that it could enable better use of water-related resources and put developing countries on a more equal footing with developed countries regarding knowledge of those resources.
30. Underscoring his support for the organization's scientific endeavours, which was of particular importance for informing decision makers, one representative requested further information on the UNEP science strategy and welcomed an in-depth discussion on the matter at the Committee's 114th meeting. It was to be hoped, he said, that UNEP would continue to work on existing environmental evaluations, panels and information networks. He stressed that the science-policy link was significant in international environmental governance reform.
31. One representative underscored the importance of continued communication between the secretariat and the Committee in the lead-up to the Governing Council's twenty-sixth session. He suggested that UNEP should streamline the agenda for the session and noted the importance of Governments' ensuring that UNEP achieved its work through its programme of work and budget, rather than through a proliferation of decisions.
32. Responding to comments, the Executive Director noted that no date had been set for the first meeting of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, as the General Assembly had yet to take a decision on the subject. It was likely, however, that it would be held during the second half of 2011; UNEP would work with other stakeholders to implement the decisions.
33. He stressed that the report on emissions gaps had been launched prior to the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen and that such work was firmly embedded in the UNEP mandate to keep the global environment under review. The report did not represent a policy statement, but was a scientific document that brought together the findings of 25 climate modelling centres to assess the implications of emissions findings and provide an analysis based thereon. He said that the secretariat intended to prepare information documents for the Committee and the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session with a more in-depth analysis of administrative and hosting arrangements between the UNEP secretariat, the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements and their secretariats as part of its efforts to respond to misconceptions regarding programme support costs and to consider reporting obligations and other issues.

**(b) Science strategy**

34. The Executive Director invited Mr. Peter Gilruth, Director of the Division of Early Warning and Assessment, to give a presentation on the UNEP science strategy for 2011–2013.
35. In his presentation, Mr. Gilruth identified aspects of the science-policy interface in which UNEP was already engaged, emphasizing that those needed to be strengthened, and outlined the process leading to the formulation of the science strategy. He described the strategy's four main goals and the key steps required to achieve them. He underscored that the strategy must be embedded in the UNEP programme of work, calling for member States' participation and support to ensure its success.
36. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives welcomed the presentation and the initiative of UNEP in developing the science strategy, emphasizing that science should be central to the organization's work, particularly with regard to environmental sustainability. One representative, however, drew attention to the failure of the presentation to mention partnership with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the significant overlap in the two organizations' activities. Another said that such collaboration was important, citing also the potential interface with the work of the World Meteorological Organization on a global framework

for climate services. A third also emphasized the importance of a global scientific network to share information on early warning and to make full use of key scientific institutions in relevant member States.

37. One representative requested that relevant documents on scientific matters should be distributed in advance so that representatives who were not experts in the issues could make substantive comments. Another asked whether consideration had been given to measuring the impact of UNEP scientific publications on policymakers and Governments and their usefulness in policymaking. A third queried whether the science strategy would be adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session.
38. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that the current science strategy document would not be submitted for adoption; it was hoped that the strategy would make clearer the focus on science in the medium-term strategy and programme of work, in particular the focus on science for sustainability, and the approach to working with science in UNEP, which did not preclude collaboration with other organizations. UNEP was working with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization on science issues and, in his view, the necessary coordination had already been established and was being scaled up through the memorandum of understanding between the two bodies, among other things. Similarly, UNEP was engaged in discussions with the World Meteorological Organization and was represented by the UNEP Chief Scientist in its initiatives. He acknowledged that impact was a valid concern and a difficult issue to tackle, saying that, in the context of results-based management, UNEP was learning to track and measure the impact of its activities better.
39. Mr. Gilruth added that, on complex issues such as early warning, UNEP offered a variety of products aimed at reducing the complexity and facilitating the updating of information. Work was under way to examine all elements of the programme of work for the period 2012–2013 to assess potential for embedding science into UNEP strategies during that period.

#### **Item 5: Report of the subcommittees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

40. Introducing the item, the Chair thanked Ms. Regine Hess (Germany) for her collaboration and support in conducting the subcommittee meetings.
41. One representative raised the issue of incremental reform of international environmental governance, which, he said, could not be dissociated from the structural reform of UNEP, and expressed his Government's concern about the reform's financial implications that had not been reflected in the report. He welcomed the compromise reached by the Executive Director to enable UNEP to continue its work in the face of budgetary restrictions, and also expressed satisfaction with the quarterly report on the activities of UNEP, which was, in his opinion, presented in a better format than in previous reports. Another representative requested a more substantive report on the subcommittee meetings better to reflect the comments made during those meetings.
42. The Chair took note of the comments and the Committee endorsed the report before it.

#### **Item 6: Status of preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

43. Introducing the item, the Executive Director reported that overall preparations were well in hand and that the draft decisions and documentation were on track. Ms. Rosa Aguilar Rivero, Minister of Environment of Spain, had been designated as President of the Governing Council, and nominations were awaited for the vice-presidents and rapporteur. He provided an outline of the programme for the Global Ministerial Environment Forum and side events. He emphasized the efforts being made to achieve a largely paperless meeting and to provide real-time access to documents via the UNEP website. The Government of Qatar had previously donated laptops to the Ozone Secretariat and those would be available to participants requiring them. Preparations were proceeding in line with a green approach to the meeting. He expressed the need for further support from member States to ensure the participation of as many developing countries as possible, noting that funds for that purpose were raised separately.
44. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives commended the good progress in the preparations for the session and to welcome the focus of the ministerial consultations on preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. One representative particularly welcomed the inclusion of the green economy as one of the two topics of the consultations under the overarching theme of the contribution of UNEP to preparations for the Conference and suggested that the subject should not become mired in discussion of definitions. The economics of ecosystems and biodiversity should be an essential component of those discussions, together with the issue of sustainable consumption and production. Another drew attention to the importance of the decision on the UNEP Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme, which his Government would introduce. One representative urged the secretariat to disseminate the notes on preparations for the ministerial discussions as soon as possible as those formed the basis for the preparations of countries' delegations and for later discussions.
45. The Chair took note of the comments and, in keeping with customary practice, the Committee chose by lot Mauritania as the country that would begin the seating arrangements for the Council/Forum session.

### **Item 7: United Nations Office at Nairobi matters**

46. Introducing the item, the Executive Director reported that the new office building was virtually ready on schedule and within budget. The installation of communications equipment was currently taking place and staff would be occupying their new offices in January and February 2011. Staff temporarily located in other premises in Nairobi would reoccupy the buildings vacated by UNEP and United Nations Human Settlements Programme staff in April 2011.
47. With regard to parking space on the compound, he said that a new garage had been commissioned and was under construction, which would provide 300 new parking spaces. In addition, a study was under way to reorder and repaint parking lines in existing car parks to yield a further 150 spaces. Work on devising other methods of reducing traffic and congestion was continuing. The Government of Kenya had issued a call for tenders for the redesign of the approach roads to the Office and the provision of better pedestrian and cycle paths.
48. The International Criminal Court was operating independently of the Office, but would on occasions request logistical services and infrastructure support.
49. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination would meet at the Office, hosted by UNEP, on 1 April 2011 and further information would be provided thereon. As Director-General of the Office, he had been appointed by the Secretary-General to chair the Board's High-Level Committee on Policy.
50. In response to those remarks, one representative requested an update on the security situation on the compound. A number of others sought information on the progress at Headquarters in filling the post of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. In connection with a survey on the work of the Division of Conference Services circulated to the Committee, one representative called for an opportunity to discuss ways of improving the services provided.
51. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that there had been no significant new developments with regard to security. Recruitment of analytical staff in the Department of Safety and Security and additional uniformed security staff was under way. There was considered to be a continuing threat of terrorist attacks but the relevant policy had not changed. Some precautions were being taken as advised by the Government of Kenya in the light of the work of the International Criminal Court.
52. He had received no information on an imminent decision on the appointment of an Under-Secretary-General. He took note of the comment regarding the Division of Conference Services, while complimenting the Division on its performance and the contribution that it made to the Office's successful functioning.

### **Item 8: Other matters**

53. The representative of the Holy See informed the Committee of significant energy savings achieved following a major installation of solar panels undertaken recently by the Vatican.
54. In keeping with the financial rules of UNEP, the Chair sought the approval of the Committee for the acceptance of a donation to UNEP of \$500,000 from Hisense International Company Limited. The Committee approved the donation.

### **Item 9: Closure of the meeting**

55. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.25 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 December 2010.

# **Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme held on 3 February 2011**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Thursday, 3 February 2011, by Ms. Regine Hess, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, who took the chair in the absence of Mr. Daniel Chuburu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina and Chair of the Committee.
2. The meeting was attended by 57 participants from 84 countries and two observer missions.
3. In response to the announcement by the representative of Argentina that Mr. Chuburu had been recalled to Argentina at short notice to take up a post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Acting Chair invited the group of Caribbean and Latin American countries to nominate a new candidate for the post in the Bureau made vacant by Mr. Chuburu's departure.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda previously circulated to the Committee.

## **Item 3: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

5. Introducing the item, the Executive Director expressed his appreciation to the subcommittees for their constructive feedback on the programme performance report for the biennium 2010–2011, covering the period January–December 2010, in particular on the new reporting format, and noted that the programme implementation for 2010 was encouraging and mostly on track, with some adjustments to financing to fund staff appointments.
6. He drew attention to the significance of the decision to restructure the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination and to reallocate responsibilities for the implementation of Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects across divisions, which had been discussed at a meeting with GEF management and senior staff in Nairobi in January 2011. Participants had considered the strategic orientation of UNEP as a result of the fifth replenishment of GEF and significant progress had been made in strategic and practical terms and on the issue of UNEP activity at the country level.
7. He welcomed the good progress made at the second session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, held in Chiba, Japan, from 24 to 28 January 2011, and looked forward to the presentation of a further update at the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council.
8. On the issue of climate change, he drew attention to his meetings with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Bank, United Nations colleagues and the Secretary-General in January 2011, at which preparations for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention had been discussed. It was hoped that the seventeenth session would further cement the progress made by the negotiators over the past two years, although there was grave and widely felt concern about the outcome with regard to the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention. In its work UNEP was increasingly focusing on options for accelerated action on non-carbon-dioxide gases and the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council would afford an opportunity for member States to give further consideration thereto.
9. Turning to the first intersessional meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in New York on 10 and 11 January 2011, he said that preparations for the Conference were gathering momentum. He welcomed the strong engagement of the new President of Brazil and the attention being paid to the conference in the host country. The green economy had been widely discussed at the intersessional meeting and there had been further clarification of the risks and concerns involved and of how to maintain a growth path while moving towards greater sustainability. On an institutional framework for sustainable development, he said that greater awareness was emerging of the work of the Governing Council of UNEP and of options for international environmental governance, but at the same time there was growing concern in New York at the inadequate development of the institutional framework in relation to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Sustainable Development and development institutions more broadly. He noted that the executive coordinators for the Conference, Ms. Elizabeth Thompson (Barbados) and Mr. Brice Lalonde (France), had been appointed and were in New York.

10. He drew attention to the meetings that he had attended in Santiago in January 2011, including a meeting with staff of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and consultations with Mr. Lennat Bage, former President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and consultant for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; a meeting with Mr. Alfredo Moreno Charne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, who was participating in a panel discussion on the rising importance of regions in global governance for development and the first meeting of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions. He also drew attention to his meetings in Buenos Aires in January 2011 with Mr. Juan José Mussi, Minister of Environment of Argentina, and Mr. Alberto D'Alotto, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina. He said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the green economy and environmental governance had been key topics and there had been fruitful discussions thereon. The Santiago meetings had also afforded an opportunity for the regional economic commissions to consider their role in convening regional consultations and as regional think tanks in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In both capitals there had been a keen sense that Latin America needed to tackle issues of the green economy, including the social dimension and equity.
11. Turning to internal issues, he said that the Secretary-General had approved the urgent process to appoint a successor to the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, who had stepped down a few days previously, and he invited the submission of applications by the end of February 2011. He congratulated the Government of Brazil on its election as Chair of the Group of 77 and China. In conclusion, he informed the Committee that the UNEP offices had moved to the new office facility at the Girigi complex, expressing thanks to the United Nations Office at Nairobi for the very efficient relocation.
12. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives commended the Executive Director on his report and looked forward to the success of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. They also expressed gratitude to Mr. Chuburu and to the Deputy Executive Director for their work.
13. The representative of Spain welcomed the Spain-UNEP annual consultation for 2011 held on 21 January 2011 in Nairobi. He said that a unique opportunity lay ahead for UNEP to improve the quality of life and combat inequality as required by the Millennium Development Goals; success at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and decisions on mercury, green energy and biodiversity at the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council would provide the tools to do so.
14. The representative of Japan announced, in connection with the second session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, that the Executive Director of UNEP had accepted his Government's offer to host the diplomatic conference in 2013.
15. One representative requested more details of the meeting that had taken place in Buenos Aires.
16. One representative welcomed the Executive Director's remarks on the changes in the work of UNEP with regard to GEF, emphasizing its immense importance for all countries, and requested broader dissemination of information on the negotiations on mercury, the social and economic impact of an agreement on mercury, and on non-carbon-dioxide gases.
17. In his response, the Executive Director thanked the representatives for their comments. He clarified that his discussions in Buenos Aires had been partly of a bilateral nature but that preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the green economy had also been key elements. On the issue of non-carbon-dioxide gases, he said that a paper was being prepared for the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session on the state of scientific knowledge and options that the international community could consider in response thereto.

#### **Item 4: Report of the subcommittees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

18. Introducing the item, the Acting Chair drew the Committee's attention to the report of the subcommittees and the draft decisions being prepared by the Committee for consideration by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-sixth session, which had been distributed to it. The draft decisions reflected the progress made in the preceding six meetings of joint subcommittees I and II. She invited the Committee to endorse the report and to approve the draft decisions in their current form.
19. In the ensuing discussion, one representative noted that the draft decisions represented policy guidelines with an impact on the role of UNEP in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and its outcomes and therefore needed to be carefully negotiated. In his view the frequency of the subcommittee meetings and rate at which new versions of the draft decisions were distributed had allowed neither for informed participation in the discussions nor for adequate consultation with capitals. He proposed that the draft decisions should be forwarded to the Governing Council in their current form without implying agreement on their formulation. Furthermore, he requested that due consideration should be given in future preparatory meetings for sessions of the Governing Council to the holiday season in the southern hemisphere during the month of January.

20. The Acting Chair clarified that the Committee was requested to approve the draft decisions in their current form as the results of work carried out to date, including suggestions and amendments, as had been the practice hitherto, but not to adopt or endorse the decisions. The representative of the secretariat clarified the rules applicable to the role of the Committee and the preparation of draft decisions for consideration by the Governing Council.
21. A number of representatives endorsed the view that it was important to state carefully the draft nature of the documents, while others were of the opinion that the current practice was clear and that the Committee's role was stated in the rules pertaining thereto. A number of representatives proposed that the Committee should find a form of wording that was more acceptable with regard to the draft decisions.
22. The Committee endorsed the report of the subcommittees and agreed to forward the set of draft decisions of 2 February 2011 to the Governing Council for further consideration.

#### **Item 5: Preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

23. Introducing the item, the Executive Director expressed his appreciation to the Acting Chair and to Mr. Eiji Tanaka, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to UNEP, for leading the subcommittees' work. He acknowledged that the issue of guidance from capitals had meant that progress in the subcommittees had not gone as far as the Committee would have wished and emphasized that the compression of the Governing Council session from five to four days also presented a challenge. He urged member States to carry out as much work as possible bilaterally and informally to overcome the danger of disagreements becoming entrenched positions, and to make maximum use of the secretariat staff to prepare for the meeting.
24. Presenting his report, he expressed the view that ministers welcomed the opportunity for dialogue afforded by the Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The themes for the ministerial consultations were central to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and environmental sustainability, and the consultations were expected to provide a substantive input into preparations for the summit. He outlined events scheduled as part of the programme of the session and informed the Committee of nominations received for Bureau officers.
25. The representative of the secretariat described the facilities in place to conduct a paperless meeting, noting that access to documents and information would be provided through the UNEP website.

#### **Item 6: Other matters**

26. A number of representatives expressed their gratitude to Mr. Chuburu for his exemplary work as Chair of the Committee and expressed regret at his departure.

#### **Item 7: Closure of the meeting**

27. The Acting Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.55 a.m. on Thursday, 3 February 2011.

# **Minutes of the 114th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 15 March 2011, by Ms. Regine Hess, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 85 participants from 54 countries and one observer mission.
3. The Acting Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Zhang Lei, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of China; Mr. Beyene Russom, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Eritrea; Mr. Lodewijk Briet, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the European Union; Mr. Shemsudin Ahmed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia; Mr. Alexandre Vassalo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Portugal; Mr. Javier Herrera, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain.
4. She bade farewell to the following members who had recently left or would be leaving the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work, which had greatly assisted it in discharging its mandate: Mr. Daniel Chuburu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina; Mr. Zhang Yutian, Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of China; Ms. Margita Fuchsová, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic; Mr. Salim Omar Abdu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia; Mr. Eric van der Linden, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the European Union; Mr. Macharia Kamau, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kenya; Mr. Valery Egoshkin, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation; Mr. Nicholas Martin Cinto, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain.
5. The Acting Chair, on behalf of all the Committee members, expressed sympathy to the Government of Japan in connection with the recent earthquake and tsunami in the country.
6. The representative of Japan thanked the Acting Chair for the expression of sympathy.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

7. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in document UNEP/CPR/114/1.

## **Item 3: Election of officers**

8. Following the departure of Mr. Chuburu, the members of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries nominated Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico, for the office of Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the period until June 2011.
9. Mr. Campuzano was elected Chair of the Committee by acclamation.
10. Mr. Campuzano took the Chair.
11. Following the departure of Ms. Fuchsová, the members of the Eastern European group nominated Mr. Sergey Trepelkov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for the office of Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the period until June 2011.
12. Mr. Trepelkov was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee by acclamation.

## **Item 4: Adoption of the minutes of the 113th and the extraordinary meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 15 December 2010 and 3 February 2011, respectively**

13. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its 113th meeting, held on 15 December 2010, and the draft minutes of its extraordinary meeting, held on 3 February 2011, as set out in documents UNEP/CPR/114/2 and UNEP/CPR/114/3, respectively.

## **Item 5: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

14. The Executive Director expressed his condolences to the people and Government of Japan. He said that UNEP was following the situation in Japan closely through the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Atomic Energy Agency. The staff of the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre in Japan and their dependents were safe and assisting their Japanese counterparts. The Joint

Environment Unit of UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was on standby to offer assistance if requested.

15. In his report, the Executive Director drew attention to developments related to preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. The Government of Brazil had announced the dates of the Conference as 4–6 June 2012; it was fortuitous that the meeting would coincide with World Environment Day on 5 June. He said that he had attended a recent preparatory committee session in New York and had observed a new level of engagement and substance on the green economy since the previous session, in January 2011. The UNEP report *Towards a Green Economy* had been well received in New York as a timely framework for discussions. A discussion paper on the risks and challenges associated with the green economy, produced in collaboration with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, had also been published and would be made available to members. It was encouraging that discussions were focusing less on definitions and more on the activities in which the countries were engaged and on what the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development might deliver to assist in that, with an emphasis on priorities such as the financing of capacity development and technology transfer. The European Union had put forward the idea of a road map for the green economy, setting out support that would be forthcoming from the international community. Discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development was more alive than hitherto, although specific ideas on how to move forward were worryingly few; there was a need to accelerate work on broader issues relating to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the overall institutional architecture for sustainable development.
16. The discussions in New York had clearly emphasized the need to strengthen environmental governance in the context of sustainable development and many participants had referred specifically to the importance of strengthening UNEP in that context. There was growing support for recognizing the issue of environmental governance and including it in some form at the conference. The outcomes of the conference remained unclear, but a broad array of options for strengthening environmental governance was on the table. At the Stakeholder Forum and UNEP Consultation on International Environmental Governance and Sustainable Development Governance Towards Rio+20 held in New York on 6 March 2011, there had been an encouraging level of interest from civil society, including indications that Brazilian civil society would be playing an important role at the Conference.
17. He drew attention to meetings that he had attended with representatives of the Government of the United States of America and financial institutions in Washington, D.C. There was great interest among international financial institutions in UNEP work on the green economy. The International Monetary Fund, in particular, had shown interest in assisting member States with fiscal policy expertise. The World Bank had established a green development knowledge platform in which other financial institutions were seriously engaged. Similar interest had been displayed in the State Department and the Environment Protection Agency, which was likely to increase with the forthcoming visit of the President of the United States to Brazil.
18. He concluded that, although time for preparations was short, with the host country and key players in the international community taking the conference extremely seriously, it was increasingly likely that it would produce significant outcomes. He urged representatives to convey those sentiments to their capitals and to encourage active engagement in the development of the agenda for the conference.
19. He said that he had assumed the chairship of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, through which he would be involved in the consideration to be led by the Committee, on behalf of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, of a fairer, greener and more sustainable world. There was considerable interest among Board members in how UNEP green economy work could influence the future direction of the United Nations.
20. Turning to internal matters, he said that the successful candidate for the D-2 post of Executive Secretary of the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions would be announced shortly through the office of the Secretary-General. Interviews of candidates selected from some 160 applicants for the post of Deputy Executive Director of UNEP would take place in the coming weeks.
21. The Secretary-General had decided in the previous week that the entire United Nations would be required to cut its budget for 2012–2013 by 3 per cent. For UNEP that reduction was regrettable but not overly disruptive. Of additional concern was the recently published multilateral aid review of the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which had included an unsatisfactory performance rating for UNEP. While the review had been based on findings largely predating the introduction of results-based management in the organization, it merited further discussion within the United Nations system.
22. He drew attention to a forthcoming visit by the Secretary-General and members of the Chief Executives Board to the United Nations Office at Nairobi at the end of March 2011 to attend the inauguration of the new office building, followed by a meeting of the Board. Invitations to the inauguration would be sent to member States.

23. Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, gave a presentation on the work of UNEP on water, focusing on the *Africa Water Atlas* that had been launched during the third Africa Water Week, held in Addis Ababa in November 2010. The atlas highlighted the challenges facing Africa's water supplies together with solutions and success stories from across the continent.
24. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for his report and Mr. Thiaw for the interesting presentation. Several representatives welcomed the role of the atlas in raising awareness of water issues and highlighting what could be achieved in water management, describing it as a useful tool for decision makers.
25. One representative sought further information on a joint study by UNEP, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, mentioned by the Executive Director in his report, on the risks and challenges of the green economy. A number of representatives expressed interest in the Executive Director's meetings with representatives of the World Bank and other international financial institutions.
26. The representative of Brazil expressed his country's willingness to share experiences and cooperate with African countries through UNEP water programmes and South-South partnerships, citing the example of current cooperation between the national water agency and the Government of Kenya. Many countries experienced similar problems and Brazil was able to offer home-grown, low-technology solutions that were readily transferable. The *Africa Water Atlas* could prove very useful in exploring possibilities for South-South cooperation.
27. One representative drew attention to the sixth World Water Forum, to be held in Marseilles in March 2012. The outcomes of the meeting would contribute to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and were expected to focus on the importance of water for peace and international security, access to water and sanitation, and funding solutions.
28. One representative said that the impact of the additional demand on water to meet the Millennium Development Goals mentioned in the presentation on the atlas appeared a somewhat pessimistic projection considering the scientific and technological progress that could help to meet water-related challenges.
29. Responding to the comments, Mr. Thiaw said that the data cited in his presentation had been intended to draw attention to the consequences of a business-as-usual approach to water issues. He acknowledged that technology was improving rapidly and its positive impact on water use was increasing, but the results to date were limited in view of the growing demand for water.
30. The Executive Director thanked the representatives for their comments on the atlas; their contributions had reflected the richness of experience and ideas on tackling the challenges. He expressed the hope that the visual aspects of the book would add to its impact and stressed that the atlas was also an illustration of the vision underpinning the new UNEP programme of work and results-based-management approach.

#### **Item 6: Outcome of the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

31. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the experiment in conducting the meeting over four days rather than the usual five had been interesting. The intense programme of work had demonstrated what could be achieved in that time with good organization and preparation. The need for more time to interact had been highlighted, however, and it should not be assumed that a four-day meeting was the preferred option. The atmosphere at the session had been very positive and it had been rewarding to see member States using the opportunity to exchange views on the green economy and international environmental governance. The balance between plenary sessions and ministerial round-table discussions appeared to be welcomed by most delegations.
32. Turning to the decisions adopted by the Governing Council, he said that they reflected the work undertaken by UNEP over the past year and he thanked member States for that endorsement. With regard to the decision on the biennial programme of work and budget for 2012–2013, he said that he had envisaged a different reality for UNEP, an optimistic vision that had been tempered by the realities of the prevailing financial situation. While developments affecting some traditionally strong supporters of UNEP had harmed UNEP funding, he intended to deliver the full programme of work to the extent possible and to seek to maintain a balance between the organization's six priority areas.
33. The discussions on the decision on international environmental governance had been among the most intense, but they had resulted in a clear set of findings to be delivered to the General Assembly and to assist in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. A number of reports had been launched at the session, including the UNEP Year Book and the *Towards a Green Economy* report, and the international response had been tremendous. The reports were available in the six official languages of the United Nations, making their release in world capitals and dissemination more effective. He expressed appreciation for the excellent support afforded by the Committee at the session and its contribution to discussions.

34. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his report and for the secretariat's work during the session. Several representatives expressed satisfaction at the outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Council/Forum and welcomed the decisions adopted. A number of representatives also expressed appreciation to the Government of Kenya for its hospitality and to the Government of Spain for its presidency of the Governing Council.
35. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries, one representative expressed appreciation for the session's contribution to a convergence of views on international environmental governance and the green economy in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He welcomed the decisions that had been adopted, in particular that on the proposed biennial programme of work and budget, which contained forward-looking provisions to make the work of UNEP more sustainable; that to operationalize fully the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services; and those on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, chemicals and waste management and the world environment situation.
36. Another representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries expressed satisfaction with the outcome and decisions of the session, while pointing out that the intense preparations and discussions of the decisions had made it difficult for developing countries to follow and prepare adequately. It was therefore important to initiate preparations sufficiently in advance. Furthermore, there had been too many negotiating groups meeting simultaneously, thereby disadvantaging small delegations. She expressed regret that an opportunity had been missed to change the timing of the following two Governing Council sessions, which would coincide with the holiday season in many southern hemisphere countries, hampering their communication with capitals during the preparatory period.
37. One representative expressed appreciation for the efforts to conduct a paperless meeting; the experience had been mainly positive, a few technical problems notwithstanding.
38. Another representative said that the session had represented a significant opportunity to refine the role and voice of UNEP as an authoritative advocate for the global environment and recognized, in particular, the organization's efforts to encourage member States to engage in the green economy and support sustainable development. Another welcomed the presentation of the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome at the session, which had provided concise and specific input into the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
39. One representative said that, while his Government had taken steps to promote green growth by cutting fuel subsidies, developing countries had concerns regarding the implications of a transition to a green economy.
40. The representative of Brazil urged members to engage their capitals in dialogue to maintain the momentum of the sessions of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, emphasizing the importance that the Government attached to the participation of civil society and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure the success of the conference.
41. The Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments, taking note of the areas in which further work was required by UNEP. In the wake of the twenty-sixth session of the Council/Forum, UNEP would turn its focus to involving the wider environmental community and major groups and stakeholders in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He stressed the importance of adopting an ambitious approach to the Conference.

#### **Item 7: Tentative schedule of meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

42. The Committee approved the tentative schedule of meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in preparation for the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum, as set out in the document circulated to representatives.

#### **Item 8: United Nations Office at Nairobi matters**

43. Introducing the item, the Executive Director reported that the Government of Kenya had begun construction work on the access roads to the United Nations compound and some traffic delays were likely in the short term.
44. The Secretary-General had appointed Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde to the post of Director-General of the Office. She would take up her post in the coming two to three months.
45. Highlighting the extensive press coverage in the local media of the activities of the International Criminal Court, he reiterated that the Office was providing only administrative and logistical support for its operations. The Court was acting entirely independently.
46. The Office had been working closely with the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia to airlift to Kenya casualties among troops who had been injured in recent fighting in Mogadishu. He thanked the Government of Kenya for its support in handling that difficult situation. Heightened security at the Gigiri compound was in response to the situation in Somalia.

47. Following the Executive Director's report, one representative recalled a request made at the Committee's 113th meeting for a meeting with representatives of the Division of Conference Services to discuss its work. Such a meeting would be particularly useful before the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

**Item 9: Other matters**

48. One representative announced that the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference would be held in Honolulu, United States, from 20 to 25 March 2011.
49. The Executive Director said that the Government of India would host the 2011 World Environment Day celebrations. The UNEP Champions of the Earth awards for 2011 would be announced at a ceremony in New York on 10 May 2011.

**Item 10: Closure of the meeting**

50. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 15 March 2011.

# **Minutes of the 115th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Thursday, 23 June 2011, by Mr. Sergey Trepelkov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, who took the Chair in the absence of Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano, Permanent Representative of Mexico and Chair of the Committee.
2. The meeting was attended by 96 participants from 63 countries and two observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Wahidur Rahman, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh; Mr. Bart Ouvry, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Jaroslav Mandys, Chargé d'Affaires and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic; Ms. Paola Imperiale, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy; Mr. Japhet Isaack, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Namibia; Mr. Kim Chan-Woo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. Shah Nawaz Murji, Honorary Consul of Monaco in Nairobi; Mr. Alexander Makarenko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation; Mr. Kamal Ismail Saeed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Sudan; Mr. Mokhtar Chaouachi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tunisia.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left or would be leaving the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work, which had greatly assisted it in discharging its mandate: Mr. Diego Sadofski, Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina; Mr. Igor Haustrate, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Andrzej Bielecki, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Ms. Heli Sirve, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Ms. Emilia Van Veen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland; Mr. Nicolas Dasnois, Second Secretary and UNEP focal point of France; Ms. Regine Hess, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany; Mr. Pierandrea Magistrati, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy; Mr. Manzoor Chaudhry, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Mr. Lee Han-Gon, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. J. P. B. Dissanyake, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; Mr. Majok Guandong Thiep, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Sudan; Mr. Bengt Baedecke, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in document UNEP/CPR/115/1.

## **Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 114th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 15 March 2011**

The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its 114th meeting, held on 15 March 2011, as set out in document UNEP/CPR/115/2.

## **Item 4: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

6. In his report, the Executive Director drew attention to key processes related to environment and sustainable development over the previous three months. The eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had marked the end of a two-year cycle that had seen considerable UNEP involvement, including on sustainable consumption and production. While a virtual agreement on how to move forward on that topic had been reached at the session, a specific outcome had been lacking as a result of a political disagreement on a preambular recital. Although the scaling up of sustainable consumption and production work by the United Nations as a whole had been constrained, UNEP work on the issue would continue as it had in the previous biennium. Even though the Commission would not meet again until 2012, there was yet no indication from member States that they would move the discussion to an alternative forum such as the Economic and Social Council.
7. The preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 were gathering pace. Many member States shared the view, however, that the preparatory process was wavering in terms of a direction on summit outcomes; there were some tensions in the Bureau and the secretariat had struggled in terms of human and financial resources. He had visited Rio de Janeiro and met representatives of the Government, including the President, who had indicated that the summit was a key priority.

The deadline for member States to submit their contributions to shaping the outcome agenda was 1 November 2011. Among the related work under way, the President of the General Assembly had convened a debate on the green economy that was intended to highlight opportunities, cite precedents and raise questions for discussion. Consideration of the institutional framework for sustainable development had matured during the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council and there were various options for the location within the United Nations of an umbrella organization on the environment. He described various processes and platforms leading to the summit

8. Turning to internal matters, he said that a strategy group for the summit, chaired by Ms. Angela Cropper, the former Deputy Executive Director, had been established and would focus on developing what he termed an “ambition paper”, describing the outcomes that the summit could be expected to deliver. Task teams had been established on the green economy, emerging issues and international environmental governance. The emerging issues task team was focusing on the foresight process; consultations with some 25 scientists and a wider validation group of more than 400 scientists were under way to consider the way forward in terms of sustainable development working on the basis of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report. Draft chapters from that report, which represented a review of the state of the planet, had been released to government reviewers. He stressed that the UNEP work related to the summit was being undertaken without extra resources, which was unsustainable. Discussions were continuing with donors on ways of strengthening UNEP capacity.
9. Other recent important events included the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011, the outcome of which had lacked a specific way forward; the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, in June 2011; and a green economy summit hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea on 20 and 21 June 2011. The fiftieth anniversary of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had been celebrated in Paris at the end of May. The OECD report on green growth, launched at the event, outlined options for green growth building on the existing body of knowledge. It also focused on development indicators, while the UNEP green economy report was more directed at the developing-country dimension of the green economy, equity and poverty eradication. In view of the highly complementary nature of the two organizations’ work, it had been agreed that a joint task force would be established to enhance future cooperation.
10. The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, in April 2011, had been extremely successful. Mr. Jim Willis had taken up his position as Executive Secretary of the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention and the UNEP part of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention was under way in Geneva and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention would be held in Cartagena, Colombia, in October. Work on synergies between the conventions was extremely encouraging. The secretariats were concerned, however, that failure by member States to pay their contributions might disrupt their work programmes. As part of an intense period of outreach, he had attended the World Environment Day celebrations in New Delhi on 5 June; he commended Mr. Jairam Ramesh, the Indian Minister of Environment, the private sector and the media for their tremendous efforts in bringing the issue of the green economy to the fore in India.
11. Turning to future meetings, he stressed that there was significant cause for concern in the lead-up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Durban, South Africa, in November/December 2011. Progress on issues such as a green climate fund, climate technology centres and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD) could be expected at the session, but the possible demise of the Kyoto Protocol was overshadowing those positive prospects. While Governments struggled to reach the global consensus required to move forward, stakeholders from local and national governments and the private sector were proving remarkably resilient in making the transition to a low-carbon economy, which demonstrated that most people regarded that change as inevitable. A sustainable energy finance report, to be released shortly, demonstrated that, collectively, developing countries had overtaken developed countries in investments in renewable energy technology and national actions on mitigation. In the absence of a global agreement on climate change, the adaptation agenda was not being tackled as required and the most vulnerable people in society would be hit the hardest.
12. The preparatory processes were on track for the first session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011, and for the third session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, to be held in Nairobi from 31 October to 4 November 2011. The forthcoming seventeenth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union to be held in Malabo on 30 June and 1 July 2011 would be of enormous significance in defining common positions for Africa on important issues.
13. In terms of recruitment and staff movements, Ms. Amina Mohamed would assume the post of Deputy Executive Director at the end of July; Mr. Paul Akiwumi would leave, also in July, for the Global Environment Facility in Washington, D.C., and Mr. Michele Condotti would assume the post of Chef de Cabinet; Mr. Chris Kirkaldy

would take over from Mr. David Hastie as Director of the Budget and Financial Management at the United Nations Office at Nairobi in July or August and would be replaced by Mr. Christophe Bouvier, currently Director of the Regional Office for Europe. As part of UNEP support to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Mr. Surendra Shrestha had been seconded to Headquarters and Ms. Brennan Van Dyke had assumed the position of Director of Strategic Resource Mobilization and Special Initiatives. Recruitment had begun for four senior positions: the combined position of Director of the UNEP New York office and of the Environment Management Group; Director of the Regional Office for Europe; Director of the Regional Office for West Asia; and Director of the Division of Communication and Public Information.

14. A new programme information management system would enable UNEP to answer questions on virtually any UNEP activity at the push of a button. The system, which had taken one year to set up, represented a major investment.
15. The six-monthly report on the programme of work and medium-term strategy would be released in August. The lack of funding was extremely challenging and might impede delivery of the programme of work. A task team led by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director, UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, was considering the situation and would report on its findings in the coming weeks. The financial situation of UNEP remained of grave concern; contributions to the Environment Fund were currently projected to be under \$80 million for 2011. Although the budget was \$90 million, most of the activities set out in the programme of work could be delivered with \$85 million. He appealed to member States to provide further resources wherever possible to ensure that the latter figure was attained and difficult programmatic decisions avoided. In the light of the great progress on the medium-term strategy and programme of work, cutting back on activities would be extremely regrettable. A number of countries had made no pledges, while others had indicated that they would reduce their contributions to the Fund, making financing extremely unpredictable. In real terms, reductions of \$1 million or \$2 million from a country's contributions, while seriously impeding the work of UNEP, represented a political signal rather than genuine savings at the national level. On a more positive note, 19 countries, 14 of which were developing countries and a number were first-time contributors, had increased their contributions to the Environment Fund in 2011.
16. While he agreed generally with the recommendations of a recent audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of UNEP project delivery arrangements via partnerships, it was somewhat controversial in that it included a number of factually incorrect examples. He stressed that partnerships were the lifeblood of UNEP, with some 700 partnership agreements currently being managed by the organization. There were risks associated with working through partnerships, but most were highly successful, well managed and clearly documented. He was, however, keen to strengthen controls and due diligence for optimal management.
17. In closing, he drew attention to recent UNEP reports, including one entitled "Integrated assessment of black carbon and tropospheric ozone", which was a prime example of why member States accorded priority to UNEP publications in the programme of work. Reports related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development included the green economy report, which was available online and being downloaded in its thousands. From that report, synthesis reports for policymakers on topics such as forests and least developed countries were being prepared.
18. Mr. Thiaw gave a presentation entitled "UNEP's marine programme: facilitating a shared commitment to sustainable marine and coastal ecosystems", in which he provided an overview of the main threats and stressors to the world's oceans together with the UNEP response thereto, which focused on four main components: land-ocean connections, ecosystems for human well-being, reconciling use and conservation, and vulnerable people and places.
19. In the ensuing discussion, most of the representatives who spoke expressed their appreciation for the Executive Director's report, which was described as honest and comprehensive, providing key information on important considerations. Many expressed their satisfaction at the appointment of Ms. Mohamed as the new Deputy Executive Director, wishing her success and pledging to support her in that role. Several thanked Mr. Thiaw for his informative presentation.
20. A number of representatives expressed regret at the outcome of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which demonstrated, said one, the urgent need for the reform of international environmental governance. One pledged her Government's commitment to continue to support work on sustainable consumption and production, the session's unfortunate outcome notwithstanding. Another said that his Government saw the lack of an adequate outcome at the session as an extremely serious setback; it was crucial to ensure that a similar situation did not arise at United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He expressed the belief that a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production could be formally agreed upon at the 2011 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, in July 2011, the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in September, or the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in 2012. He sought clarification on options for the 10-year framework, including with regard to UNEP serving as the secretariat of the programmes, on the composition and selection of a board, and means of registration of programmes. One representative suggested that, while the lack of a decision at the nineteenth

session was regrettable, it was a clear sign that consensus on the matter was lacking; there were a number of sensitive aspects of the 10-year framework, including with regard to implementation.

21. Several representatives voiced support for increased dialogue and engagement between the secretariat and the Committee. One encouraged the substantial involvement of the Committee in international environmental governance discussions, including engaging colleagues in New York. One representative suggested that, to provide the Committee with adequate time to consider matters on the agenda of meetings, the Executive Director's report and other presentations should be circulated before meetings, so as to ensure sufficient input from capitals. It was to be hoped, said one, that working methods could be reviewed jointly by the secretariat and the Committee. A number of representatives highlighted the importance of tapping the potential of the Committee to move international processes forward.
22. Several representatives requested the secretariat to provide in a coherent and systematic manner updates on progress in the implementation of the 17 decisions adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session, which would serve the interests of good governance, enable a smooth flow of information between the secretariat and member States and be crucial in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. One sought clarification of an analysis of the legal, financial and structural consequences for the international environmental governance process of the five options set out in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance and on next steps.
23. One representative sought information on progress in optimizing relationships and achieving dialogue with the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements. Another highlighted the significance of the decisions that would be adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the African Union summit; it was important, he stressed, for representatives of African countries to express themselves clearly on matters such as international environmental governance.
24. A number of representatives encouraged UNEP to work with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on an institutional framework for sustainable development. One urged UNEP, as the voice of the environment within the United Nations, to cooperate with international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization and other United Nations entities.
25. One representative said that an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem service should be inclusive and encouraged UNEP to ensure that developing countries, especially those in Africa, were able to make key inputs at the forthcoming first session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform. A number of representatives expressed their satisfaction at the choice of Nairobi as the venue for the session. It was to be hoped, said one, that the pending issues for the platform's efficient and effective operationalization could be defined with legal clarity at the meeting.
26. A number of representatives expressed support for the paperless meeting concept, although one said that its implementation at the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council had been somewhat problematic.
27. With regard to the recent Office of Internal Oversight Services audit of UNEP project delivery arrangements via partnerships, one representative drew attention to positive examples of cooperation between UNEP and research institutes.
28. One representative sought clarification regarding the financial and human resources impacts of the closure of the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination.
29. One representative, noting the lack of UNEP Professional staff from Latin America, called for equitable geographical representation in that regard.
30. One representative sought clarification of the impact of declining financial resources on the ratio of post to non-post costs. He asked specifically whether more or fewer staff members were being paid from the Environment Fund than in February 2011.
31. Responding to the comments made, the Executive Director said that the integration of the staff and activities of the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination into the other UNEP divisions had been facilitated by the financial reality rather than driven by it. The new arrangement worked well as Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding allocations were attributed to specific countries and UNEP engagement was in transacting the financial and technical expertise required for projects. He commended staff members for the speed with which the transition had been handled. He highlighted that the GEF Chief Executive Officer had the previous week notified UNEP by e-mail – a means of communication that was remarkable in the circumstances – that management fees for projects over \$2 million would be halved. As an implementing and executing agency, UNEP could no longer charge more than 10 per cent of project costs. Against a backdrop of an increasing number of countries requesting UNEP to serve as implementing agency for projects, this development would make it difficult for UNEP to finance its role in GEF activities. In essence, UNEP was being priced out of the service provider market.

32. Delegations of authority and memorandums of understanding had been concluded with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Delegations of authority had also been signed with the Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. A team was being established to look at the implications described in the note by the Executive Director on the evolution of the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements that it administers (UNEP/GC.26/INF/21) submitted to the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session.
33. Discussions were continuing between the secretariat and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity on programme support costs; the administrative arrangement signed in Nagoya, Japan, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention remained incomplete in terms of delegation of authority and list of services.
34. He welcomed feedback on the interaction between the secretariat and the Committee, saying that he would endeavour to provide more information in advance of meetings to ensure that members could consult their capitals. While it might be possible to provide an abridged version of his regular report to the Committee, it was difficult to express in written form the amount of information that he was able to provide verbally. He had, however, taken on board the message that Committee was requesting more information in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and felt insufficiently engaged with the secretariat. Noting that constructive interaction was key to a successful relationship, he said that as Chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the Environment Management Group he viewed the Committee as an extremely important vehicle with which to engage member States. He sought clarification from the Committee members on their preferences for particular areas of focus for his regular report.
35. While he was unable to provide the ratio of staff to non-staff costs immediately, the issue was under constant review. Some 58 posts had been moved into non-recruitment mode. In closing, he noted that the UNEP website had recorded 2 million hits in May, a monthly record. Over 10,000 English-language copies and 4,000 Spanish-language copies of the UNEP green economy report had been downloaded.

#### **Item 5: Election of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the period 1 July 2011–30 June 2013**

36. The Committee elected the following members to the Bureau of the Committee for the period 1 July 2011–30 June 2013:
  - Chair: Mr. Geert Andersen (Denmark)
  - Vice-Chair: Mr. Kingsley Saka Abdul Karimu (Ghana)
  - Vice-Chair: Ms. Anna Grupinska (Poland) (July 2011–June 2012)
  - Mr. Sergey Trepelkov (Russian Federation) (July 2012–June 2013)
  - Vice-Chair: Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano (Mexico)
  - Rapporteur: Mr. Masoud Gharanfoli (Islamic Republic of Iran)

#### **Item 6: Other matters**

37. One representative highlighted the work of the Poverty-Environment Initiative, launched in 2005 to support country efforts to mainstream poverty and environment into national development planning. The Initiative had significant potential as a model for similar collaborative efforts. The Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had decided that its future work on the poverty-environment nexus would build on the Initiative model. It was the only fully joint UNEP/UNDP programme and afforded a unique opportunity for both organizations to develop their capacity for joint programming in line with the “one United Nations” approach. Its current programme cycle would expire in 2012. He sought clarification from UNEP on a number of aspects related to the Initiative. The midterm review, which was pending as a result of UNDP procurement procedures, would be key to assessing the Initiative’s impacts and would form the basis for discussions on its future. The review could also contribute to discussions on strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development.
38. Another representative sought clarification on arrangements for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council.
39. Responding to comments, the Executive Director stressed the importance that UNEP attached to the Poverty-Environment Initiative as demonstrated by the allocation of significant funding to it from the Environment Fund. The Initiative combined the country presence of UNDP with the poverty-environment expertise of UNEP. The objective of having a scaleable initiative had been successful as it was operational in over 20 countries. Financial and staffing concerns notwithstanding, he shared the view of Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, that the Initiative represented an extremely positive example of how the two organizations could work together. The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries was another such example. He welcomed the forthcoming midterm review, which would

clarify the way forward. He said that he would prepare a briefing note on the Initiative to respond fully to questions thereon.

40. He explained that, while a number of countries had expressed interest in hosting the twelfth special session of the Governing Council, it might be advantageous to hold it in Nairobi. An announcement would be made in due course.
41. In keeping with the financial rules of UNEP, the Chair sought the approval of the Committee for the acceptance of a donation to UNEP of 655,000 euros to extend the partnership towards funding for the Tunza Programme for Children and Youth for a further three years (2011–2013). The Committee approved the donation.

#### **Item 7: Closure of the meeting**

42. The meeting was declared closed at 12.25 p.m. on Thursday, 23 June 2011.

# **Minutes of the 116th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.25 a.m. on Thursday, 22 September 2011, by Mr. Geert Aagaard Andersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 101 participants from 62 countries and 1 observer mission.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Georgios Loizou, Deputy Permanent Representative of Cyprus; Ms. Sofie From-Emmesberger, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Ms. Kaarina Airas, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland; Mr. Malek Hossein Givzad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Mr. Humam Luai A. Abdulmuhsen, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq; Mr. Gil Haskel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Joost Reintjes, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; Mr. Wajid Hassan Hashmi, Acting High Commissioner and Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Mr. Thambiraja Raveenthiran, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; Mr. Ricardo Rosa, Deputy Head and Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain; Ms. Katarina Zinn, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden; Ms. Rosemary Semafulu-Mukasa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Uganda.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work, which had greatly assisted it in discharging its mandate: Mr. Ricardo Garcia Diaz, Chargé d'Affaires and Permanent Representative of Cuba; Mr. Jacob Keidar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Maor Elbaz-Starinsky, Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel; Ms. Laetitia Van den Assum, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; Mr. Masroor A. Junejo, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Mr. Sergio Roman Carranza Forster, Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain; Ms. Agnes Kalibbala, Deputy Permanent Representative of Uganda.
5. The Chair drew attention to the steps taken to improve the functioning of the Committee following discussions within the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with the Committee. The measures included the advance circulation of meeting documents to facilitate discussions; the convening of Bureau meetings ahead of Committee meetings; and a proposed summary report of Committee meetings, in the form of an informal brief from UNEP, to be produced shortly after meetings to improve the flow of information. It was also proposed that longer-term substantive issues would be included on the agenda of Committee meetings in addition to items related to the current work programme.
6. A number of representatives commended the Chair and the Executive Director for introducing the improvements in the Committee's working methods.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

7. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in document UNEP/CPR/116/1/Rev.1.

## **Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 115th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 23 June 2011**

8. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its 115th meeting, held on 23 June 2011, as set out in document UNEP/CPR/116/2.

## **Item 4: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

9. The Executive Director drew attention to his most recent report on recent developments in the work of UNEP, highlighting issues of political significance for UNEP and the Committee over the preceding three months.
10. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, was the main focus of many continuing international environmental discussions. Momentum for the Conference was building, with various preparatory and related meetings being held across the globe, including a recent high-level dialogue on the institutional framework for sustainable development, held in Indonesia, a high-level symposium on the Conference with a particular focus on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction, held in Beijing, and a forthcoming dialogue on the green economy and inclusive growth, to be

held in Delhi, India, in early October. The deadline of 1 November 2011 for formal submissions by stakeholders on the preparatory process for the Conference was approaching, and discussion was likely to be required on how they would be made available. A preparatory meeting for the Conference would be held at Headquarters in New York in mid-December, at which the first contours of the Conference's politically-focused outcome document were likely to emerge and negotiations thereon would begin in earnest. The Conference was generating considerable interest among major groups and stakeholders. Lacking, however, were potential Conference outcomes that would produce clear results and respond to expectations and substantive needs.

11. He drew attention to the Secretary-General's speech to the General Assembly the previous day, in which the Secretary-General had set a clear agenda for his second term and emphasized the priority that he accorded to the Conference. UNEP was continuing to provide substantive input to the preparatory process, including in the form of reports, such as that on the green economy, and summaries thereof, in partnership with other United Nations entities. Since the release of the synthesis of the green economy report in early 2011, a global peer review had been undertaken and the full report would be published in December.
12. From his experience as chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, he was able to report that considerable system-wide momentum was building towards the Conference. A focused statement from the Committee on the matter would be made available in the following two months. The work of the Principles Advisory Group, which he was chairing at the Secretary-General's request, was continuing apace. UNEP was working through the Environment Management Group to bring United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, multilateral environmental agreements and the World Bank together to work on system-wide issues for consideration at the Conference. The issue management group on the green economy and a system-wide perspective had attracted a great deal of interest, with 29 United Nations entities contributing to a report on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction.
13. Regional processes that would feed into the Conference were under way. The fourth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment had taken place in Bamako in September and participants had considered the green economy in the context of Africa, the institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance. Consideration of the green economy theme for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had progressed significantly, with specific issues, such as trade barriers and conditionalities, emerging as topics for further discussion at the Conference. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization were providing helpful analysis in that regard.
14. At a recent regional consultation convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, a lengthy discussion had taken place on the appropriate translation into Spanish of the term "green economy", with several representatives expressing a preference for "economía ecológica" rather than "economía verde". He voiced a preference for the latter, suggesting that the former was a much narrower interpretation of the green economy concept. UNEP was increasingly receiving requests from countries to engage with them on the green economy; in that regard, he emphasized the importance of UNEP providing an analysis of how the green economy could benefit countries and provide opportunities at the national level.
15. Two main options for the institutional framework for sustainable development were emerging: either reconfiguring the Economic and Social Council or replacing the Commission on Sustainable Development with a council on sustainable development along the lines of the Human Rights Council. The notion of strengthening international environmental governance and UNEP had received almost universal endorsement. Various options being considered included strengthening UNEP in its current form, upgrading it through a General Assembly process or establishing a new entity, such as a United Nations environment organization. Significant further consideration of the options available and their implications in governance and procedural terms was required, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was the appropriate political forum for those discussions. He urged members and capitals to examine carefully the outcomes of regional consultations.
16. Turning to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Durban, South Africa, at the end of 2011, he noted that intense preparations were under way with significant work being carried out on the design of a new green climate fund, which might be ready for endorsement or adoption at the session. There was great concern regarding the future of the Kyoto Protocol with no consensus emerging on how to move forward on that issue; the Government of South Africa was engaged in vigorous discussions in that regard. The challenge in Durban would be to maintain international confidence and commitment to continue working under the Convention towards a global legally binding agreement on climate change. On a positive note, climate change actions were being implemented at the municipal, state and national levels worldwide and there was a clear sense that the transition to a low-carbon economy was an inevitable reality. Nevertheless, current actions would not suffice to meet the maximum 2° C global warming target of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
17. He drew attention to reports that were of particular importance to the work programme of UNEP before going on to describe its intense preparations for a number of meetings, including the first session of the plenary meeting to

determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011, and the third session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, to be held in Nairobi from 31 October to 4 November 2011.

18. The development of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report was on track, involving UNEP, countries, scientists and other stakeholders. A summary for policymakers would be ready by the end of 2011.
19. He drew attention to the open thematic debate of the Security Council on “Maintenance of international peace and security: the impact of climate change”, held on 20 July 2011, at which UNEP had made a presentation. While it remained a matter of debate whether the Security Council had the prerogative to tackle climate change as it related to security, he welcomed the debate that had been generated, as it had highlighted the security and geopolitical implications of climate change.
20. He outlined significant changes in the management of the UNEP secretariat, including a number of new appointments. Ms. Amina Mohamed, the new Deputy Executive Director, had expressed regret at being unable to attend the current meeting due to the demands of her new position; she had assumed her new role with energy and commitment and would doubtless be a tremendous asset to UNEP.
21. He renewed his commitment to striving to meet the Committee’s expectations with regard to the provision of information and documentation and reinvigorating the collaborative process.
22. Although the financial situation was less than optimal, there had nevertheless been a slight improvement during the second year of the current biennium. Contributions for 2010 had totalled some \$79 million, while around \$84 million had been provided in 2011. He thanked the member States that had increased their contributions to UNEP following outreach to capitals, which included Belgium, Denmark and Germany, and appealed to countries in a position to do so to contribute further. He commended the secretariat on its handling of the financial situation, ensuring minimal disruption to the programme of work. No staff members’ contracts had been terminated prematurely, but staffing levels would be reduced in 2012 by more than 60 positions, which had implications for the future of UNEP. The financial outlook for 2012 remained fairly bleak.
23. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives commended both the Chair and the Bureau for setting goals to improve the Committee’s working methods and its relationship with the secretariat. One said that, as a subsidiary body of the Governing Council, the Committee should play an active role in the management and policy outreach of UNEP. Another said that well-focused discussions in the Committee could make a strong contribution to the functioning of UNEP.
24. Many representatives welcomed the Executive Director’s report, saying that it would be useful in gaining a clearer understanding of the overall activities of UNEP and in preparing for upcoming events and meetings, in addition to improving the Committee’s function and ability to provide substantive support to the secretariat. A number noted, however, that they had received the report only the previous evening and had therefore had insufficient time to consider it fully; they requested that the Executive Director’s regular reports should be provided at least one week in advance of meetings.
25. One representative suggested that, in the future, such reports might be structured in accordance with the agenda items of the Committee’s meetings to facilitate consideration of the large quantity of information presented. Another said that additional documentation, such as the regular financial report that had previously been distributed quarterly, would also be useful for the Committee.
26. One representative said that the United Nations focus on the nexus between climate change and security was important, with several representatives welcoming the Security Council’s invitation to UNEP to make a presentation at its debate. One representative sought more information on the presentation and possible linkages between the Council and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.
27. One representative, drawing attention to forthcoming environmental meetings in Brazil, India and South Africa, stressed the need for the leaders of those countries, which had large competitive economies and were well placed to broker global deals, to engage in active diplomacy and set ambitious goals.
28. Several representatives underscored the importance of the upcoming Durban conference. One suggested that a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol alone could not resolve the climate crisis and must be matched by a legally binding agreement between all major emitters. It was important to be realistic about what could be achieved in Durban, but it was crucial at the very least to develop a road map for the post-Kyoto transition period. He stressed the importance of maintaining the Protocol’s important mechanisms, such as quantified targets and market mechanisms. Another representative underscored the importance of raising the general public’s awareness of greenhouse-gas emissions and national, regional, and global initiatives complementing the objectives of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Yet another emphasized the importance of a transparent and inclusive process in Durban.

29. One representative sought clarification of the term “blue carbon” in the context of a forthcoming meeting organized by UNEP on that topic. His Government was opposed to including the term for discussion in Durban since consensus was lacking on it.
30. A number of representatives underscored the importance of forthcoming meetings on mercury and biodiversity and ecosystem services. One highlighted the need for political awareness and access to information on those subjects. Another said that his region would welcome a meeting to provide information on the platform, and another expressed disappointment that a promised briefing on the platform would not be taking place. A third expressed regret that some regions had not benefited from adequate preparatory consultations on the platform, which would, he suggested, have a negative impact on the outcome of the forthcoming meeting. He requested UNEP to ensure broad consultations in all regions to allow for informed participation by all member States.
31. Many representatives highlighted the importance of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and a number commended the secretariat on its preparations for the Conference. One said that UNEP contributions and technical support, including the green economy report, were extremely useful for member States and other stakeholders in preparing submissions for the Conference by the 1 November deadline. Another said that the various external reviews of UNEP should be discussed at the Conference.
32. One representative said that a trend had emerged of pitching the environment against sustainable development; she stressed that environment was one of the three pillars of sustainable development and that international environmental governance and sustainable development should be dealt with in an integrated manner. Another concurred on the need to strengthen the environmental pillar, while also stressing the importance of considering its nexus with the economic and social pillars of sustainable development; the Conference would provide an appropriate forum to do so.
33. One representative said that there was broad acknowledgement that the environmental pillar had been weakened in relative terms and should be strengthened. The establishment of a United Nations environment organization would require sustainable financing and a clear mandate; regardless of whether such an organization was established, UNEP must be strengthened. One representative noted that his Government had commissioned a legal study to consider how best to strengthen UNEP within the current organizational framework. It was hoped that the study would produce clear recommendations.
34. One representative said that the Executive Director’s comments on international environmental governance had been more nuanced than his written report with regard to the existing degree of consensus on institutional reform and the possible establishment of an environment organization. Another concurred that the suggestion of near universal consensus on international environmental governance was optimistic or one-sided; discussions were continuing and their outcome had yet to be decided. A third stressed the importance of making full use of the work already carried out on international environmental governance in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
35. One representative commended UNEP for its work on the green economy, stressing the need to demonstrate to countries the genuine benefits of adopting such an approach. He requested that UNEP should release the Executive Director’s report in a timely manner and disseminate it widely to ensure its optimal use in the lead-up to the Conference.
36. One representative thanked the Government of Kenya for hosting a Horn of Africa crisis summit in Nairobi at the beginning of September 2011, drawing attention to the importance of considering the implications of climate change for regional security, migration patterns and famine, among other things. Another said that solutions to the crisis in the Horn of Africa must be sustainable.
37. One representative said that the situation in Somalia affected everyone and that he looked forward to receiving the report thereon.
38. One representative urged the Executive Director to continue to cooperate closely with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure a mutually satisfactory conclusion to the process of appointing the Executive Secretary and to avoid negative repercussions for the Convention’s activities. Another sought clarification regarding the advertisement of the post of Executive Secretary, saying that there was broad support for the leadership of the incumbent and the extension of his contract to ensure the Convention’s stability. The administrative arrangements did not set out a clear procedure for nomination; the consequent ambiguity should, he suggested, benefit the incumbent.
39. One representative said that he had understood from a working group meeting that the ratio of post to non-post expenditures supported by the Environment Fund had reached 74 per cent. He emphasized that such a large expenditure on staff at a time of declining resources for the Environment Fund posed a profound risk to UNEP and its programme of work and precluded curtailing expenditures. He sought clarification on the number of posts currently financed by the Environment Fund relative to the situation in February 2011, at which time the

Governing Council had expressed its concern in that regard or, if those figures were not available, relative to December 2010.

40. One representative requested clarification regarding the impact on UNEP of financial difficulties and mismanagement at the UNEP outposted Athens office as revealed by a recent audit. He asked whether the funds used had come from the Environment Fund or derived from programme support costs and sought clarification of the justification for the use of those funds and plans to recover them. Another said that he awaited with interest the outcome of discussions on the difficulties experienced in the Athens office.
41. One representative said that his Government, as a core contributor to UNEP, attached great importance to evaluations and assessments of UNEP and to transparency and the adequate provision of information on financial management. Member States did not intend to micromanage UNEP but needed information to enable them better to support the organization.
42. Representatives also raised a number of additional issues. One requested information on the outcomes of recent meetings of relevance to the Committee, including the fourth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Bamako; another expressed gratitude to UNEP for highlighting issues pertinent to countries in the Pacific islands, which served as a barometer with regard to ocean and ocean resource degradation caused by climate change; one welcomed the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding between UNEP and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; another thanked UNEP staff in Geneva for their assistance to Governments; and one requested a copy of a recent study on the implications of the nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan.
43. A number of representatives drew attention to past and future meetings relating to the environment. Referring to the dialogue on the green economy and inclusive growth, to be held in Delhi in early October, one representative stressed the importance of ensuring that economic growth served to eradicate poverty, without which it was meaningless.
44. Responding to comments, the Executive Director thanked members for their feedback. He acknowledged the importance of ensuring that his reports were transmitted to the Committee well in advance of its meetings, while stressing the need to establish which information the Committee needed due to the considerable work involved in compiling such reports.
45. Noting that the role of UNEP was to link science and policymaking, especially as it was often difficult for policymakers to sift through the masses of science available and pinpoint areas for action, he said that the Governments of Mexico and Sweden, with support from others, had convened a ministerial meeting on short-lived climate forces in Mexico in September 2011, focusing on substances such as black carbon, methane and tropospheric ozone, which afforded a key opportunity to cut greenhouse-gas emissions and were implicated in the development agenda with a direct benefit for climate change mitigation.
46. The green economy synthesis report, which was already being discussed at the global level, was available online; the full report would be available in December 2011. It was to be hoped that the Delhi dialogue on the green economy and inclusive growth would be a further step in affirming inclusiveness in discussions on how to tailor environmental policies to respond to social and economic needs.
47. He stressed that a United Nations environment organization, were it established, would encompass or replace UNEP. While consensus was lacking on the organizational format of the future international environmental governance structure, there was near consensus on the need to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development.
48. All member States represented at the Security Council debate had clearly affirmed the primacy of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in the effort to deal with climate change. The speeches and summaries of statements made at the debate were available online and UNEP would provide links to any reports that it did not publish as requested by the Committee.
49. He expressed surprise that reports containing the ratio of post to non-post expenditures had been made available since he had not reviewed them before their release as required, and noted that the figures quoted were not current. He sought guidance from the Committee on the frequency and breadth of formal financial reporting required from the secretariat and requested the Chair of the Bureau to review the matter in conjunction with the Committee.
50. On the difficulties experienced in the UNEP Athens office dealing with the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, he said that some two and a half years earlier, a change in management had been initiated followed by a systematic review of all aspects of the office's work. He stressed that, rather than the difficulties being related to misuse or mismanagement of funds, they had arisen as a result of a system failure caused by some countries failing to honour their pledges and entries being carried over to successive years with expenditures being authorized against funds that had not been received. The system error had not been identified by local managers, UNEP or the United

Nations Office at Nairobi. An investigation into the matter was under way and he would report to the Committee on the financial implications of the situation.

51. He said that he had been requested by the Office of the Secretary-General to put in place a procedure for the appointment of the Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as the term of the incumbent would expire on 31 December 2011, and to consult the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the matter. The recently revised administrative arrangements entered into by the Executive Director and the Executive Secretary and endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session called for an open and transparent process for the appointment of the Executive Secretary but made no mention of extensions of appointments. The Secretary-General had expressed the opinion that it was fitting to apply the same procedure to extensions as to initial appointments, and thus to advertise the position, for which the incumbent could apply alongside other candidates. The Executive Director had consulted the Bureau on 18 August but had received no response to date, which was delaying completion of the appointment.
52. He said that a report on Somalia would be made available as soon as it was released by the Secretary-General. He undertook to provide information as requested on the recent meetings of AMCEN and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The term “blue carbon” referred to the significant carbon storage that occurred in oceans.
53. One representative urged the Executive Director to continue to consult the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
54. Another representative said that quarterly financial reports had been extremely valuable to the Committee and that financial reports should be made available at least twice a year before Committee meetings. He reiterated his request to the secretariat to provide the total number of posts currently funded from the Environment Fund.
55. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that he would strongly object if his performance were to be measured by the number of posts that he had cut in UNEP, and that it was not his understanding that the Governing Council had called for any specific number of cuts. He emphasized the difficulty of dealing with the broad mandate of UNEP with volatile funding and within the limits of staffing capacity. While he respected the need to deliver a reduced ratio of staff to non-staff expenditure and was committed to doing so, it was not possible to manage high demands and significant obligations in the face of continuous pressure to cut jobs. Drawing attention to budgetary constraints in 2011, he stressed that, while member States had all wanted UNEP to deliver more, the financial crisis had not been factored into the equation.
56. The Committee took note of the Executive Director’s report.

#### **Item 5: Status of preparations for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

57. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to the briefing note that was before the representatives, which set out the organization of work, tentative schedule and documentation for the session. He recalled that the focus of the session was on ministerial interactions with an emphasis on policy. The session would have the overarching theme of emerging environmental issues, which could also include sustainable development; there was still scope for developing the working titles. The session would also coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP, which would be reflected in the programme together with the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The participation of representatives from major groups would follow the normal procedure of previous years, with them able to participate in discussions.
58. The representative of Spain, speaking as President of the Bureau of the Governing Council, briefed the Committee on the meeting of the Bureau held in Madrid on 21 June 2011 and endorsed the statement by the Executive Director that discussions at the special session should concentrate on ministerial discussions, particularly in the light of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
59. One representative thanked the Executive Director for the opportunity to discuss the agenda of the session, which would be particularly significant in the lead-up to the Conference, and endorsed the call for sufficient space for ministerial discussions on the subject; she also expressed the hope that there would not be an excessive number of decisions emanating from the session. Another voiced concern that work on the drafting of the outcome document of the session would duplicate the drafting of the outcome document of the Conference; rather than spending time on such a document, a Chair’s summary would be more appropriate for the Governing Council session.
60. The Executive Director took note of the comments. The programme of the session would be developed, he said, and further information would be appearing shortly on the UNEP website.

**Item 6: Briefing on the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011**

61. Introducing the item, Mr. Neville Ash, Chief, Biodiversity Unit, Department of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP, gave an overview of the preparations, agenda and organization of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011. He noted that the number of countries and organizations registered hitherto showed an increase of 30 per cent in participation compared to previous discussions on the platform. He encouraged Governments to submit their credentials for the meeting as soon as possible. The documentation for the meeting was available on the website and further information would be uploaded as available. He drew attention in particular to the documentation setting out the legal basis for the platform's operationalization. It was anticipated that two sessions of the plenary meeting would be required for the platform to become fully operational and the date of the second meeting, expected to take place early in 2012, would be communicated when it was decided.
62. In the ensuing discussion, all the representatives who took the floor called for the platform to be made fully operational as soon as possible. Several underscored the importance of the necessary legal basis to ensure that the platform would work effectively, but emphasized that the legal discussions should not hamper its full operationalization. A number of representatives stressed that political consensus on establishing the platform had been reached in Busan, Republic of Korea, and that the plenary meeting should therefore build thereon and focus on its operationalization, avoiding legal complications and further delays in the commencement of its work. One representative expressed the hope that the two plenary sessions would complete the negotiation process begun in Busan.
63. One representative appreciated the effort of UNEP at the first plenary session of IPBES. The government of Japan would support its establishment by holding the International Science Workshop on Assessments for IPBES in July 2011 co-hosted by South Africa and United Nations University. Japan had submitted the report of the workshop to the secretariat and would contribute to the progress of the discussion on scientific assessment by holding a side event at the IPBES plenary.
64. Another representative emphasized that the platform should respond to the needs of policymakers and support their efforts to improve policymaking on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services; moreover, any institutional arrangements made and procedures established should guarantee its role and functioning.
65. One said that an essential issue was whether the platform had yet been established that she looked forward to the advice of the Office of Legal Affairs being made available. Another important task was to define the criteria for bids to host the platform's secretariat; an innovative proposal had been made for a pool of staff to be nominated by interested institutions and she looked forward to the opportunity to discuss the matter at the plenary meeting. She emphasized that biodiversity issues differed from the global challenge of climate change in that biological diversity resources were subject to national jurisdiction; the platform should therefore not necessarily mirror the model of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
66. Another representative noted that the working paper on the legal basis for the platform provided several options and said that it would not be appropriate for the plenary meeting to devote time to their analysis; instead a group of friends of the Chair or similar mechanism might be used to facilitate a common understanding of the legal issues. Regarding the possible establishment of two subsidiary bodies of the platform, he requested clarification on the participation of developing countries in those bodies, emphasizing the importance they placed on the discussion of capacity-building, including technology transfer. Another representative endorsed the view that capacity-building for developing countries was essential to enable them to participate in discussions and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity. That view was endorsed by a third representative, who cautioned that a strong capacity-building element should be closely tied to the platform's mission and objectives and should not stray from it.
67. The representative of Kenya expressed thanks to the Government of Norway for helping to host the African regional consultations on the platform, which were scheduled to take place in Nairobi two days before the plenary meeting.
68. In his response, Mr. Ash said that the outcome document of the Busan meeting was the basis for the preparation of the first session of the plenary and for the way forward. The documentation for the session was not exhaustive and elements of the work programme and issues such as capacity-building would be further developed for the second session. Further advice from the Office of Legal Affairs on the legal options would also be made available.

### **Item 7: Other matters**

69. The Executive Director announced that the Republic of Korea would host the International Green Energy Expo in March 2012 and the Secretary-General had tasked UNEP with coordinating the United Nations presence at the event.
70. He reported briefly on the Environment Management Group meeting that he had recently chaired in New York, saying that tremendous progress had been made in the interaction of UNEP and the promotion of environmental issues across the United Nations system and highlighting the work of the special issue management groups on a number of issues.
71. He invited nominations for the 2012 Champions of the Earth awards.

### **Item 8: Closure of the meeting**

72. The meeting was declared closed at 12.50 p.m. on Thursday, 22 September 2011.

# **Minutes of the 117th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.25 a.m. on Monday, 19 December 2011, by Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, who took the Chair in the absence of Mr. Geert Aagaard Andersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark and Chair of the Committee, who was unable to attend.
2. The meeting was attended by 80 participants from 53 countries and 1 observer mission.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Leenknecht Pieter, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Ferdinand Montcho, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Benin; Mr. Raul Rodriguez Ramos, Head of Mission and Permanent Representative of Cuba; Mr. Thomas Solve Lid Ball, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway; and Ms. Louise Matthias, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contributions to the Committee's work, which had greatly assisted the Committee in discharging its mandate: Mr. Andrzej Bielecki, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Edouard O. Ahogbele, Permanent Representative of Benin; Mr. Andras Kocsis, Deputy Permanent Representative of Hungary; Mr. Chijioke Wilcox Wigwe, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria; Mr. Harald Noreik, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. George William Kayonga, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Rwanda; Mr. Kosit Chatpaiboon, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand; and Mr. Matthew Fliermans, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America.
5. The Chair, on behalf of all those present, expressed sympathy to the Government of the Philippines in connection with the recent typhoon in that country and to the Governments of the Czech Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea following the deaths of former President Mr. Václav Havel and President Mr. Kim Jong-il, respectively.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

6. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in document UNEP/CPR/117/1.

## **Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 116th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 22 September 2011**

7. The Committee adopted, as orally amended, the draft minutes of its 116th meeting set out in document UNEP/CPR/117/2.

## **Item 4: Report of the Executive Director**

### **A. Presentation on the International Resource Panel**

8. A representative of the secretariat gave a slide presentation on the International Resource Panel. He provided an overview of the Panel, saying that it had been launched in 2007, met twice a year and comprised 30 expert members and a 30-member steering committee with balanced representation from developing and developed countries alike. The Panel's objective was to improve knowledge and bridge the gap between science and policy with the goal of improving environmental sustainability. It aimed to provide independent, coherent and authoritative environmental assessments of policy relevance focusing on the sustainable use of resources and their environmental impacts over their full life cycle to contribute to a better understanding of how to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and unsustainable use of resources. The Panel's work was well integrated into the UNEP programme of work and the preparation of the medium-term strategy, thereby strengthening the organization's scientific base and providing support to its subprogrammes, especially that on resource efficiency. He described the Panel's focus and methodology and its priorities, including metals and mineral flows; water, land and soil; biofuels; and cities.
9. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives praised the Panel's work. One stressed the importance of integrating the Panel's conclusions into international activities such as the negotiations at the intergovernmental meeting on the fifth Global Environment Outlook report to be held from 29 January to 1 February 2012 in the Republic of Korea, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in June 2012 in

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Another sought clarification of the Panel's collaborative partnerships and the decoupling process.

10. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the importance of decoupling and resource efficiency as key concepts for the green economy. She suggested that UNEP should use the Panel's findings in designing its programme of work; that the Panel's reports should be forwarded to the Governing Council to support its consideration of the green economy; and that UNEP should ensure that the Panel's work was adequately disseminated for use in the preparation of policy, including for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
11. One representative said that the Panel's activities closely related to what was known as the "three Rs" (reduce, reuse, recycle) philosophy for sustainable development. Another drew attention to the Panel's valuable work on fossil fuels and called for it to be highlighted in the lead-up to the Conference to facilitate progress in that sector, particularly with regard to subsidies, reform, pricing and fiscal policy.
12. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that a focal point from the Division of Early Warning and Assessment attended Panel meetings to facilitate coordination with the Global Environment Outlook process. The Panel was supporting work on the green economy and sustainable consumption and production for the Conference, including by preparing a special summary for policymakers. Close cooperation between UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) included monthly meetings and the development of joint programmes on transport and on buildings. While the international community was not sufficiently involved in the decoupling process, there were interesting cases of absolute and relative decoupling that should be replicated and scaled up.
13. The Executive Director said that the Panel's work constituted an outstanding example of focused, high-quality scientific analysis tailored to policymakers in a useful format. The Panel's reports had been extremely popular in both the public policy arena and the private sector, providing new ways of analysing information and considering trends that were central to defining future economic pathways. He commended the members of the Panel, which had gained a global reputation for cutting-edge analysis.

## **B. Report of the Executive Director**

14. The Executive Director drew attention to his written report to the Committee, explaining that its format matched the UNEP subprogrammes.
15. On climate change, he congratulated the Government of South Africa on successfully hosting the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in November and December 2011. While the outcome of the session had not involved specific action on emissions, it had been generally positive, particularly with the establishment of a green climate fund as an important building block for international cooperation on climate change. He acknowledged the leadership demonstrated by the European Union in negotiations at the session. A UNEP report on bridging the emissions gap, which had attracted much attention in Durban, outlined in simple terms the need to maintain emissions below 44 gigatonnes annually by 2020 whereas current annual emissions totalled some 50 gigatonnes and were rising. Current scientific knowledge on climate change, while imperfect, had not been questioned at the session and extremely forceful arguments had been put forward by authoritative entities that immediate action was crucial, both for remaining within global warming targets and for economic reasons.
16. He drew attention to two UNEP climate-related reports that had been launched before the seventeenth session. The first, on near-term climate protection, clean air benefits and actions for reducing short-lived climate forcers, highlighted the importance of acting without delay on black carbon, methane and tropospheric ozone to derive multiple benefits. Several countries had requested assistance from UNEP in relation to pilot initiatives for practical implementation of the report's recommendations and it was to be hoped that more would follow suit. Given that the short-lived climate forcers discussed in the report accounted for some 30 per cent of global emissions and did not persist in the atmosphere once phased out, such action could have a dramatic impact on global warming. The second, entitled "HFCs: a critical link between protecting climate and the ozone layer", tackled the increase in the use of hydrofluorocarbons in response to the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances, which could, if unchecked, negate the positive impact of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
17. On resource efficiency, a report on the green economy entitled "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication" had been launched in Beijing in November 2011 as a substantive contribution to the world debate on that topic. In the wake of the outcome on sustainable consumption and production at the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had not been able to reach a consensus, there appeared to be growing interest among some countries in including the topic in discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The UNEP Finance Initiative was proving to be an extraordinarily successful partnership, providing a bridge between the financial sector and public policy discussions. Its work was currently focused on the development of specific guidelines to enable the financial sector to play a more proactive role on issues such as climate change, grappling, for instance, with the future of the

Green Climate Fund and attracting investment from the financial sector, including in developing countries where the cost of borrowing and interest rates were often prohibitive.

18. Turning to disasters and conflict, he said that UNEP had assisted many countries with emergency response activities. It had been agreed that the scope of work of the joint UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit in Geneva, which was widely considered to be an outstanding example of inter-agency cooperation, should be expanded. A post-conflict environmental assessment report for the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been initiated, which, it was to be hoped, could guide a future strategy for the engagement of the international community with local authorities. A post-conflict environmental assessment report for Rwanda had been finalized and transmitted to the country's Government and was influencing national policies and international donor engagement. An environmental assessment of Ogoniland prepared by UNEP had elicited positive responses from the Government of Nigeria, the oil industry and non-governmental organizations as a remarkable contribution to efforts to resolve a 20-year impasse. The conclusions of the Nigerian Government's special commission on the implementation of the report's recommendations were awaited. He urged the Committee not to lose sight of that situation.
19. On ecosystem management, the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services would be held in Panama City in April 2012 to finalize the operationalization of the platform. He drew attention to the plight of the forests of the Congo Basin, the second most important tropical forest in the world; the greatest threat was not massive commercial logging but the need for fuel. He appealed to partners to ensure that instability in the Congo Basin countries did not prevent investment in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. It was crucial to engage international financing in that part of the world, creating incentives to preserve forests of tremendous significance for humankind.
20. On governance, he drew attention to products being derived from the preparatory process for the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, including a report on megatrends. The fifth report would be available in May 2012 in advance of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, providing an authoritative overview of the state of the Earth. The Global Environmental Alert Service was a new UNEP product in the form of a monthly bulletin, on the value of which he requested feedback from the Committee. A recent meeting with donors on the Poverty-Environment Initiative had elicited a positive overall assessment. Nonetheless, financial constraints were threatening to impede implementation of the Initiative's activities, requiring renewed commitment from donors. A systematic evaluation of the implementation of the medium-term strategy was being undertaken by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network. Two new task forces had been established, on the medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2017 and on the programme of work for the period 2014–2015, respectively. Preparations were under way to facilitate the engagement of the Committee in the development of the medium-term strategy.
21. He drew attention to several successful international meetings, UNEP reports and recent appointments as outlined in his written report, noting that several recruitment processes had been left in abeyance owing to a lack of suitable candidates and financial uncertainty.
22. In closing, he stressed that UNEP was committed to fulfilling its normative and scientific mandates. It had assumed a highly visible and respected role in the development of scientific reports and feedback on implementation activities had been extremely positive. Further reporting systems would be developed in the future. UNEP continued to disappoint some countries as a result of its lack of capacity to respond to high demand, which was frustrating for all those concerned. Nevertheless, of those countries contributing to the Environment Fund for the first time in 2012, two thirds were developing countries, and contributions by countries with economies in transition had also risen, signalling increasing confidence in the value and quality of UNEP work.
23. In the ensuing discussion, most representatives thanked the Executive Director for his report, which was widely described as exhaustive. Several expressed appreciation for his written report. One, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the practice of producing a written report for Committee meetings should be maintained, suggesting that elements of his oral report relating to results and impacts should be included in the written version. She stressed the need for the timely availability of documents to ensure the Committee's adequate engagement in discussions.
24. A number of representatives welcomed the outcome of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference in Durban, congratulating the Government of South Africa on hosting the meeting. One said that, while the outcome had been far from perfect, the major emitters had all accepted the need for a global legally binding agreement and the development of a road map towards such an agreement for all the parties to the Convention. Another, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the important UNEP contribution to the meeting in the form of assessments and forward-looking scenario-setting and encouraged UNEP to continue with such activities in cooperation with the Convention and other relevant organizations. A third said that progress had been made at the session towards the establishment of a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies would participate, including through the

establishment of a new subsidiary body known as the “Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action”.

25. One representative stressed the importance of bridging the gap between the outcome of climate negotiations and the expectations of the international community. He suggested that UNEP should focus on areas in which it enjoyed a comparative advantage such as scientific expertise and practical implementation. Another expressed thanks to the Government of South Africa for the excellent preparatory work for the session, which had allowed the adoption of decisions that provided continuity to the Cancun Agreements and allowed for progressive steps to be taken by the international community in a unified manner. He highlighted as extremely positive the approval of the Green Climate Fund, the establishment of a permanent committee to improve consistency in the use of financing and the approval of a work programme on long-term finance, among other things. While his Government would have liked to see a higher level of ambition reflecting the urgency of the climate change issue, he recognized that the process was difficult and politically sensitive.
26. A number of representatives expressed thanks to UNEP for its contribution to work on the green economy. One suggested that future related activities should focus on assisting countries to implement and promote the concept through capacity-building, making full use of its comparative advantage in that regard. Another said that there was a need for UNEP to collaborate with international centres of excellence on the green economy, such as the Global Green Growth Institute in the Republic of Korea, in order to broaden its interventions and better respond to countries' expectations.
27. One representative highlighted the importance of the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes, including its significance for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, the continuing negotiations on mercury and the twelfth special session of the Governing Council. She said that the Governing Council at its twelfth special session should accord the Conference a strong mandate to discuss an integrated approach to financing options. She urged UNEP to organize a meeting on possible further synergies in financing in the field of chemicals and wastes.
28. Another representative called for the acceleration of work in the context of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury to ensure the conclusion of the committee's work by 2013; he stressed the need for further consideration by experts of the topics of products and processes, and emissions and releases.
29. A number of representatives expressed disappointment that work on the medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2017 had not begun earlier, given that the strategic framework and programme of work, both of which should be based on the medium-term strategy, would be finalized definitively prior to the strategy's adoption by the Governing Council in 2013. One said that, while the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development might potentially influence the substance of the medium-term strategy, it would have been desirable for the first draft of the strategy to be submitted to the Governing Council at its twelfth special session. A number of representatives highlighted the need for the Committee to be closely involved in the elaboration of the medium-term strategy. One expressed the hope that the Committee and the Governing Council would be engaged in the process being developed by the task team on programme management and implementation to strengthen the allocation of resources to subprogrammes. In addition, he said that he looked forward to the annual report on the implementation of the programme of work, the most recent iteration of which had been received by the Committee 18 months previously.
30. One representative, recalling the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Tropical Forest Ecosystems held in Brazzaville in April 2011, sought clarification regarding an agreement to be signed in the margins of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development between tropical forest States. He urged UNEP and other partners to facilitate the successful elaboration of such an agreement by organizing preparatory meetings, including one before the tropical forests meeting to be held during the forthcoming twelfth special session of the Governing Council.
31. Another representative highlighted as a major achievement of UNEP its contribution, in the form of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, to the global phase-out of lead in petrol. An independent assessment of the Partnership had described the high quality of staff provided by UNEP as a primary determinant of its success. He commended UNEP and the Partnership, emphasizing that the phase-out of lead in petrol marked only the beginning of the Partnership's work; it was continuing to assist countries to make a transition to low-sulphur fuels and cleaner vehicles. He sought clarification regarding other partnerships and initiatives through which UNEP collaborated with other United Nations entities.
32. One representative thanked UNEP for its work on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and looked forward to progress being made before the second session of the plenary meeting. Another, underscoring the value of the Poverty-Environment Initiative, expressed the hope that the challenges facing it would be overcome. A third sought the Executive Director's appraisal of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

33. One representative drew attention to the value of the Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative. Another noted that a meeting on that subject would be held in margins of the twelfth special session of the Governing Council.
34. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that UNEP was committed to supporting the Congo Basin countries in preserving their forests, including through South-South cooperation, and implementing the outcomes of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Tropical Forest Ecosystems. On climate change, he emphasized his deep concern that the Durban Platform would not survive if the climate negotiation process were unable to prove that its actions were compatible with reducing emissions by 2020. If a legally binding climate agreement was not to be completed before 2020 it was crucial that actions to be taken in the meantime to reduce emissions were clarified.
35. UNEP was engaged in discussions on an overall partnership agreement on the green economy with the Global Green Growth Institute and would be launching a green economy knowledge platform in collaboration with the Institute, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in February 2012 in Mexico. He expressed his satisfaction with the intermediate outcomes of the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes.
36. Turning to the question of procedural delays, he stressed the importance of making full use of the lessons learned during the first two years of implementation of the current four-year medium-term strategy before elaborating the following one. To obtain the annual United Nations regular budget contribution to UNEP, which was equal to approximately 4 per cent of the total annual income of UNEP, it was necessary to conform to the procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. For that reason, there had been a suggestion that the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council should be held later than usually scheduled, in 2013, to minimize the impact of relevant timelines. Nevertheless, he did not consider the fact that work had not been initiated earlier on the new medium-term strategy as a failure of the secretariat given the need for the document to be based on the current strategy and informed by the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
37. He concurred with comments made regarding the success of the global phase-out of lead in petrol and suggested that more work on phasing out harmful substances should be undertaken. The sustainable building and construction initiative constituted part of a central platform of cooperation between UNEP and UN-Habitat, to which both organizations were committed and which included joint work on various initiatives and reports. He stressed that UNEP was involved in collaborative efforts with many other United Nations entities.
38. He highlighted issues hampering the progress of the mercury negotiations, namely, compelling reasons related to cold chain considerations for the use of a mercury compound in vaccines distributed in developing countries, differing views among dentists on the use of mercury in dental work and the potential impact of a legally binding instrument on mercury on the economic growth of some countries that continued to use mercury in industries such as coal-fired power plants. It was important to consider specific realities and concerns to avoid the failure of the negotiations.
39. With regard to the Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative, he noted that the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative for the Africa region would be launched in the margins of the twelfth special session of the Governing Council.
40. He said that UNEP had participated in the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, which was not a UNEP-administered convention. Questions concerning the financing of and political focus on the Convention were outstanding. Work through the Environment Management Group aimed to ensure United Nations system-wide support for the Convention.

#### **Item 5: Funding and staffing reports**

41. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the funding and staffing reports were not available for the current meeting as to date it had been impossible to gather complete and comprehensive data for the current biennium. In the future, sufficient time should be allowed after internal reporting deadlines to ensure that funding and staffing reports were based on comprehensive data. He therefore suggested a modification of the reporting cycle to allow for the production of the biannual funding and staffing reports later in the year, possibly in March and September. In the absence of some data, his presentation would focus on trends. Owing to currency fluctuations and the loss of Environment Fund contributors, among other things, the expected overall Environment Fund income from contributions for the biennium 2010–2011 was \$162 million against an approved budget of \$180 million. A reserve of some \$14 million had been carried over from the previous biennium, of which around \$2 million had been released to ensure that critical parts of the programme of work could be implemented. The overall expenditure for the current biennium was therefore expected to be \$164 million. A reserve of roughly \$12 million would be carried over to the coming biennium. Staff expenditure was expected to total around \$116 million, which would be below the 70 per cent threshold of total expenditure. That figure should in the future be managed downwards to meet the Governing Council's expectations.

42. With regard to trust fund and earmarked contributions, while the planned budget was \$228 million, \$266 million had been allocated because of a dramatic increase in earmarked contributions from the projected \$66 million to \$108 million. Those earmarked contributions were always welcome but signalled a shift away from the Environment Fund and long-term commitments to contributions earmarked for specific projects. Trust fund contributions were down from \$162 million to \$152 million, mainly as a result of currency fluctuations. The total income of UNEP for the biennium was expected to be \$448 million against a total expenditure of \$437 million.
43. Because of tighter budgeting in 2010 an extra \$85 million had been made available in 2011 in addition to the \$90 million that had already been allocated for that year, which allowed for the implementation of some parts of the programme of work that had hitherto been abandoned. The staffing table had been reduced by 58 posts to comply with the \$61 million staff cost ceiling for 2012.
44. The precautionary approach to budgeting had proved largely successful but had affected the overall efficiency of UNEP. As a result of the uncertain economic situation, he had issued an allotment ceiling of 80 per cent of the budgeted amount to the various divisions to avoid overspending, which could be revised upwards in April 2012 depending on contributions received.
45. The Committee took note of the information provided.

#### **Item 6: Report of subcommittees**

46. The Chair drew attention to a report on the work of subcommittees that had been circulated to the Committee.
47. Responding to a request for clarification, the Chair said that comments made in subcommittee meetings would be taken into account in draft decisions to be forwarded by the Committee to the Governing Council at its twelfth special session.
48. The Committee took note of the report.

#### **Item 7: Status of the preparations for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

49. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the preparations for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council were progressing as planned, with most of the pre-session documentation finalized. The only area of uncertainty concerned high-level participation as a result of conflicting dates of global events, among other things. He requested that all representatives should seek to persuade their environment ministers to attend the session, as it marked the fortieth anniversary of UNEP and was the last session before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He drew attention to a number of side events and meetings, including the thirteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, which would take place on 18 and 19 February 2012.
50. In the ensuing discussion, representatives considered the form of the outcome document of the session. One emphasized the importance of a strong political message in the form of a ministerial declaration or President's summary to give impetus to strengthening the role and mandate of UNEP in the overall international environmental governance system. Another said that he did not support a ministerial declaration or negotiated outcome for the special session as experience at previous sessions had demonstrated that such outcomes required lengthy negotiations that detracted from more important discussions between ministers.
51. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, encouraged UNEP to share more information on preparations for the session, especially with regard to ensuring adequate ministerial participation in the ministerial dialogues. She requested that draft decisions should be distributed to the Committee well in advance of the sessions at which they would be discussed.
52. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the proposal by UNEP to hold a special event to mark the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the establishment of UNEP. She said that the event should connect the history and development of UNEP with its potential future role, feeding into ministerial discussions and allowing the review of lessons learned and aims for the future.
53. A third representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for the number of decisions to be taken at the session to be minimized and recommended that draft decisions should be merged or collated in an omnibus decision where possible to streamline negotiations.
54. One representative drew attention to the continuing process at the United Nations Secretariat in New York to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. She suggested that, in the light of that process, the twelfth special session might not be an appropriate forum for considering the themes for the Conference and suggested that any discussion of them at the session should be reflected in a President's summary rather than in a decision or formal statement of the Governing Council. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that the special session afforded an excellent opportunity to prepare for the

Conference, including through policy discussions on topics such as sustainable consumption and production, the green economy and the strengthening of UNEP.

55. Responding to the comments made, the Executive Director said that the secretariat would prepare for either form of outcome document, but it behoved the Committee to reach agreement on the matter. The drafting of a ministerial declaration would have to begin well in advance of the session. Turning to preparations for the Conference, he said that, while there was a need for the Governing Council to be aware of the preparatory process in New York, discussions by the Governing Council could not be suspended pending its outcome. He suggested that it was implausible to request ministers of environment to refrain from expressing their views and that parallel discussions in the Governing Council and the Secretariat were compatible.

### **Item 8: Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

56. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the official submission process that had ended on 1 November had yielded significant input. Preparations for the Conference were progressing. There was an urgent need for political leadership from Governments.
57. During the official submission process, interesting proposals had been made regarding the sustainable development goals that might be reflected in one focal area of the outcome document. Many countries wished to focus on the green economy and poverty eradication. Most submissions by member States and other stakeholders had called for the strengthening of international environmental governance and UNEP, with many countries specifically requesting that UNEP should be upgraded to a specialized agency of the United Nations.
58. The Committee took note of the information.

### **Item 9: Other matters**

59. No other matters were discussed.

### **Item 10: Closure of the meeting**

60. The meeting was declared closed at 12.25 p.m.

## **Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 7 February 2012**

### **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 7 February 2012, by Mr. Geert Aagaard Andersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 110 participants from 65 countries and 2 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. David Krivanek (Germany) and Mr. Michael Mlynar (Slovakia).
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contributions to the Committee's work: Mr. Dimitri-Michael Loundras (Greece); Mr. Milan Zachar (Slovakia); and Ms. C.N. Msadabwe Lambart (Zambia).

### **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda that had been circulated to the Committee.

### **Item 3: Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

6. The Executive Director drew attention to his written report, to the annual report of UNEP that would be issued in the coming days and to the recent programme and performance report covering expected outputs and accomplishments under the various subprogrammes.
7. He said that the accounting period for UNEP would close formally at the end of March 2012. The figures set out in the aforementioned reports, although provisional, were expected to be reasonably accurate. The end of 2011 marked the end of the first two-year period of the current four-year medium term strategy, and the reports were the first attempt by UNEP to report on the results of the delivery of the programme of work. He expressed his satisfaction that, in the light of the new ways of planning, budgeting and reporting and against a backdrop of global financial uncertainty, of 21 expected accomplishments, 15 had been fully achieved, 5 had been partially achieved and 1 had been insufficiently met. The term "partially achieved" meant that 80 per cent or less of the expected accomplishment had been delivered; the five such classifications were a result of financial uncertainty, the consequent need for a precautionary approach to initiating implementation of some activities and overambitious planning. There was overwhelming evidence that the delivery of the programme of work had been performed with clearer focus. Of 150 active projects, 115 were being monitored under the new system, with the remainder being projects that had predated the current biennium and therefore lacked the indicators required for the results-based management framework. It was to be hoped that 80–90 per cent of projects would be monitored by the end of 2012.
8. He welcomed the fact that the integration of the portfolio funded by the Global Environment Facility that UNEP transacted on behalf of member States had allowed the Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination to be dissolved and the portfolio to be integrated across the organization, a process that had taken four years from conception to completion, with the first benefits now becoming apparent. UNEP had made a significant investment in regional offices to strengthen its strategic presence and enhance delivery of the programme of work, thereby responding to the goals set forth in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. While the outcome of the programme of work 2010–2011 had been overwhelmingly pleasing, some important lessons had been learned and task teams established to take corrective action where required. There had been significant recognition in the international policy arena of the contribution of UNEP in providing state-of-the-art scientific analysis to inform policymaking that in many cases had led to important environmental initiatives being launched at the national or international levels.
9. Turning to financial matters and recent trends in contributions, he said that, while the Governing Council had approved an overall budget for the biennium of \$180 million, there had been a 10 per cent shortfall in contributions to the Environment Fund. Overall, performance had been realistic in the context of uncertain financial times. Environment Fund income for 2011 had totalled \$81.1 million, as opposed to the \$90 million budgeted. Estimated expenditures of the Environment Fund in 2011 totalled \$85.6 million. The difference between income in 2011 (\$81.1 million) and estimated expenditures (\$85.6 million) in 2011 had been covered by drawing upon the accumulated fund balance of the Environment Fund. Owing to the fact that there was a positive fund balance in

2010, it was expected that the overall fund balance of the Environment Fund as at 1 January 2012 would be approximately the same as that at 1 January 2010. An unexpected increase in earmarked extrabudgetary funding meant that total income achieved for the biennium was \$200 million. While that represented a positive reflection of member States' confidence in the work of UNEP, the resources were not fungible, as they were tied to specific activities, projects or regions. A more balanced income would be optimal. The response by UNEP to the financial crisis had proved appropriate: various measures to contain cost increases had been taken, including the reduction of 58 staff positions. That, although pragmatic, was frustrating in terms of implementation of the programme of work.

10. He drew attention to recent evaluations and audits of UNEP, the underlying message of which had been that reforms were gaining traction within the organization and that it was moving in the right direction. It was premature to measure the impact of reforms in some areas, while in others there was room for improvement, particularly with regard to the financial relationship between UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the forging of synergies between the environment portfolio and the broader development and poverty alleviation agendas. He expressed his satisfaction that the head of a United Nations Evaluation Group independent peer review of the UNEP Evaluation Unit had described many aspects of its work as examples of best practice in the international system.
11. He invited the Committee to review the final report of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing, launched at the eighteenth ordinary session of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2012. At the session, explicit decisions had been adopted relating to Africa's priorities with regard to the theme of the green economy, to be considered at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and calling for the upgrading of UNEP to a specialized agency in response to current deficiencies in the international environmental governance system. The decisions represented African States' positions in the lead-up to the Conference. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kenya for hosting a lunch at the session to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of UNEP.
12. The eighteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, hosted by the Government of Ecuador in Quito at the end of January 2012, had seen the launch of the region's perspective on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the first meeting of the environment ministers of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Differing views on the green economy had emerged, particularly with regard its ideological foundation. The discussions had successfully contributed to the opening up among parties to divergent views. He looked forward to discussions among member States at the forthcoming twelfth special session of the Governing Council, which would help to raise awareness of the various regional positions and activities relating to the green economy.
13. In the ensuing discussion, most representatives thanked the Executive Director for his report and one welcomed the written report, which had provided an overview of the work of UNEP. Another expressed appreciation for the emphasis on performance reporting and planning and results-based management.
14. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, strongly encouraged UNEP to continue to focus on results-based management and to report regularly on the delivery of the programme of work with particular emphasis on activities' results and impacts. He requested that as part of the programme and performance report more detailed information should be provided on staffing and expenditure. With regard to recent reporting, coherence could be improved by presenting the outcomes of the subprogrammes in a comparable manner. A number of representatives suggested that project information monitoring systems should be incorporated into reporting on subprogramme performance.
15. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed regret that the Committee's consideration of the medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2017 had begun only recently in tandem with preparations for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council, limiting the Committee's substantive input as a result of time considerations. He welcomed the establishment of the UNEP-live platform and the publication of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, of which the summary for policymakers constituted an important document. He encouraged UNEP further to improve the Global Environment Outlook process as a significant contribution to the science-policy nexus. He sought more information on the recent third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Pollution, held in Manila in January 2012. Another representative endorsed the priority accorded to wastewater, nutrients and marine litter at that session.
16. One representative, noting that both existing options on international environmental governance in the zero draft of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development referred to the need to boost support for UNEP, highlighted the importance of providing predictable financing to ensure implementation of the programme of work. Another suggested that the recent financing trends were not related to the uncertain global financial situation, given that extrabudgetary contributions were increasing.
17. One representative drew attention to the gap in the programme and performance report between the rate of successful implementation of projects and the level of success achieved in the implementation of subprogrammes. He said that efforts should be made to ensure the rigour of reporting methodologies. He looked forward to working

with the secretariat and the Committee to ensure that the forthcoming medium-term strategy and programme of work would be realistic and achievable.

18. One representative expressed appreciation for the high quality of the work performed by the Evaluation Unit. He commended UNEP on the recent review of the Unit, which had provided a clear demonstration that UNEP had realized the importance of evaluation as a tool for strengthening programme delivery.
19. One representative welcomed the progress made by UNEP on the green economy and asked that its efforts should be reflected in the Executive Director's report to the Governing Council at its twelfth special session. Suggesting that discussions on the green economy were not necessarily focused on ideological aspects, he called for deeper discussion of the political aspects of the concept in the light of the need to eradicate poverty and generate employment. Underscoring the complementarity of the three pillars of sustainable development, he expressed concern that the green economy concept might displace achievements made towards sustainable development since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. It was to be hoped that discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would harmoniously resolve existing concerns.
20. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that it was expected that project information monitoring systems would be in place by the end of 2012 to reflect some 90 per cent of UNEP activity, the exception being older projects that were incompatible with the systems. While self-assessments could be overly positive, data sets did not always provide a true reflection of progress. Work was under way to tackle that problem.
21. While the interpretation of the recent financial trends was problematic, it did seem that they were related to the global financial situation, given that the reduction in contributions to the Environment Fund could be tracked to three or four countries, one of which had reduced its contribution from \$7 million to zero and two of which were known to be facing significant financial difficulties. The overall decrease in the volume of financing notwithstanding, other countries had increased their contributions to the Environment Fund partly as an expression of satisfaction with UNEP work. In an important demonstration of support, over the course of the previous biennium an additional 20 countries, three quarters of them developing countries, had contributed to the Fund.
22. The third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting had been remarkably successful, reinvigorating the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, which, he noted, constituted an interesting example of how international action could be achieved without requiring the negotiation of a legally binding instrument. He expressed the hope that that type of concerted international action would gather momentum.
23. In closing, he said that the green economy concept was not intended to diminish the concept of sustainable development agreed upon in 1992. It was important that the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should provide added momentum for moving the sustainable development agenda forward.

#### **Item 4: Report of the subcommittees**

24. The Chair drew attention to the report of the subcommittees that had been circulated.
25. One representative requested that draft decision 7 on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and waste cluster should be deleted from the decisions to be forwarded to the Governing Council for its consideration at its twelfth special session, suggesting that it duplicated decision 26/12, which had the same title. A number of representatives opposed that suggestion, however, requesting that the draft decision should be retained and forwarded together with the other decisions to the Governing Council for its consideration.
26. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that the secretariat should facilitate meetings to enable discussion of member States' positions on the draft decisions in advance of the twelfth special session to expedite proceedings at the session.
27. The Committee approved the onward transmission to the Governing Council for consideration at its twelfth special session of the seven draft decisions contained in document UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1.

#### **Item 5: Preparations for the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

28. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to the most recent version of the provisional timetable for the session of the Council/Forum, which was before the Committee. He noted in particular that it would be an intensive session, given that it would last only three days. Member States had shown great interest in organizing special events during the session, but it was unfortunately impossible to accommodate them all as a result of the brief time available. Delegations from some 100 countries, including over 50 ministers, had already confirmed their attendance.
29. Outlining the programme of the Council/Forum, he highlighted the special events organized to mark the fortieth anniversary of UNEP, noting that several distinguished speakers would be in attendance, including former

executive directors. A half marathon would be organized in partnership with the Paul Tergat Foundation to extend the celebration of the occasion to the people of Kenya beyond the United Nations compound. The summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, which had been approved by member States at a meeting in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, from 30 January to 1 February 2012, would also be launched at the session. The main theme of the ministerial consultations would be the state of the environment, and it was anticipated that a key outcome of the session would be a ministerial message on environmental change and its implications for the future of the planet that would be transmitted to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He urged the Committee to engage with the major groups and stakeholders who would be meeting before the Council/Forum session; such interaction was always appreciated.

30. In the ensuing discussion, most representatives thanked the Executive Director for his report, in particular the draft programme for the ministerial consultations. One, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that member States had high expectations of the session, as it afforded an opportunity to recommit themselves to tackling policy issues, in particular the green economy, and would feed into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; it was hoped that the session would produce a strong political message to the Conference in support of the strengthening of UNEP.
31. A number of representatives voiced interest in receiving additional information on the ministerial programme. One wished to know how the outcomes of the round-table discussions would feed into further consultations. Another, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed regret at the short time available for discussion of the draft decisions and for preparation of member States' positions thereon, requesting that the draft decisions should be negotiated by the Committee of the Whole rather than by a drafting group so that all would be able to participate. A number of other representatives endorsed that view.
32. Regarding the outcome of the Forum, one representative said that it was inopportune for ministers to send a message regarding matters on the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, suggesting instead that the Forum should afford an opportunity to exchange views on the Conference agenda to enable Governments to formulate their positions and convey them through their delegations in New York. A number of representatives concurred that the contents of the ministerial discussions should be factually reflected in a President's summary and not in a document elaborated by rapporteurs or friends of the President that would require the political involvement of Governments.
33. The representative of Kenya gave a brief summary of his Government's preparations for hosting the session and of security measures being put in place.
34. One representative, drawing attention to the difficulties experienced by small delegations in following all the parallel events, requested that the secretariat should prepare a concise daily report on special events taking place so that all member States would be aware of what was happening. The Executive Director agreed to that request, while pointing out that there were no events overlapping with the formal working hours.
35. Responding to other comments made, the Executive Director clarified the role of rapporteurs and friends of the President in capturing the points made during the round-table discussions and incorporating them into the President's summary. He emphasized that it behoved member States to determine what form the outcome of the session should take, and urged the Committee to continue deliberations on the matter ahead of the session in a spirit of diplomatic consensus-building. Regarding the organization of the work of the Governing Council, he said that decisions pertaining to the most appropriate way of conducting its work lay with the Bureau and the President. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Kenya for its excellent cooperation and acknowledged the high level of attention and service traditionally accorded to UNEP on the occasion of the session.

### **Item 6: UNEP preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

36. Introducing the item, the Executive Director gave a brief overview of progress on three main tracks in the preparations for the Conference: the preparatory committee meetings; preparations for the UNEP presence in Rio de Janeiro and UNEP assistance to the multilateral environmental agreements in their interaction with the Conference; and preparations for World Environment Day, to be hosted by the Government of Brazil.
37. He said that UNEP was also continuing work on substantive analysis of issues, for which it had earned considerable respect in recent years, for example its examination of such issues as the green economy and trade, gender and the links between population dynamics and the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction, which would contribute both to the Conference and to the broader debate on sustainable development. UNEP was also continuing to engage with major groups and stakeholders. In that context, he noted that there was a degree of scepticism regarding conferences among civil society and urged both UNEP and the host country to engage civil society in the preparatory process.
38. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that there was what he termed "summit fatigue" in areas of public opinion, stressing the importance of raising the Conference's profile. He called upon Governments and

UNEP to promote its objectives and urged the Committee to recommend the highest possible attendance by Governments. Another, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the Conference afforded a historic opportunity to renew political commitment to sustainable development and poverty eradication and to initiate a profound worldwide transition towards a sustainable future. He urged all member States to work together to achieve an ambitious and forward-looking outcome document.

39. One representative requested further information on the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, which was due to take place in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro and was also of crucial importance.
40. In his response, the Executive Director described the initiation of the World Congress on Justice project and the importance of involving the judiciary in the sustainable development agenda; all was on track for the event and it was hoped that it would feed into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. He also noted the importance of the role of the business community and civil society in the sustainable development process, and urged Governments to consider those groups and their participation ahead of the Conference.

#### **Item 7: Other matters**

41. The representative of Japan informed the Committee that UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi had given permission for his country to mount, on the margins of the Governing Council session, an exhibition of photographs of the earthquake and tsunami that had affected Japan in 2010 and the reconstruction efforts.
42. Another representative requested that damaged flagpoles on the United Nations compound should be repaired before the session. The Executive Director undertook to follow up on the request.
43. The representative of the Republic of Korea said that his Government would host a luncheon for ministers during the session.

#### **Item 8: Closure of the meeting**

44. The meeting was declared closed at 11.45 a.m.

# **Minutes of the 118th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. The 118th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was opened at 9.35 a.m. on Wednesday, 14 March 2012, by Mr. Geert Aagaard Anderson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to UNEP and Chair of the Committee.
2. The meeting was attended by 77 participants from 53 countries and 1 observer mission.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members of the Committee: Ms. Mariam Ahmed Goumaneh, Permanent Representative of Djibouti, and Mr. Yukihiro Haisa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan.
4. He bade farewell to the following members, who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contributions to the Committee's work: Mr. Aden Houssein Abdillahi, Permanent Representative of Djibouti, and Mr. Eiji Tanaka, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan.

## **Item 2: Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/118/1).

## **Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 117th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 19 December 2011, and the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2012**

6. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its 117th ordinary meeting, held on 19 December 2011 (UNEP/CPR/118/2), and the draft minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2012 (UNEP/CPR/118/3).

## **Item 4: Report of the Executive Director**

### **A. Presentation on the activities of the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements**

7. A representative of the secretariat gave a slide presentation on the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA), demonstrating the features of the portal. He provided an overview of the initiative, emphasizing the importance of InforMEA as a common platform for a number of multilateral environmental agreements. Co-chaired by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and UNEP, the initiative was one of the largest environmental knowledge management projects in the United Nations system, with 14 global and regional multilateral environmental agreement secretariats collaborating to bring together information on some 30 global and regional treaties, hosted by four different United Nations agencies. InforMEA was filling an information gap and assisting parties, in particular those with limited resources, in keeping track of obligations, participating in various forums and contributing to decision-making and to a strong body of international law. Membership in the initiative was growing and interest was being expressed by other bodies, including the European Environment Agency. Steps were being taken to expand the scope of InforMEA; the previous steering group meeting had agreed, among other things, to develop a virtual college providing introductory and specialized courses on the provisions of the multilateral environmental agreements covered by the initiative. InforMEA had a small budget and staff, and additional funding to expand its datasets and make it a more powerful tool was needed.
8. In the ensuing discussion, all who took the floor welcomed InforMEA as a very useful tool. One representative congratulated UNEP for setting up the initiative and said that it was a good example of how resources could be pooled effectively and of how UNEP could implement valuable projects.
9. One representative suggested that the number of multilateral environmental agreements covered by InforMEA was low relative to the number of agreements in existence and asked whether instruments and arrangements other than conventions, such as the Man and Biosphere Programme and the International Tropical Timber Agreement, could be included in the database. Another representative asked what criteria determined inclusion in the database, given the large number of agreements in existence. A third speaker said that InforMEA and the Tematea portal for biodiversity-related conventions complemented one another.

10. One representative called for a clear statement of the purpose of the portal and the relationship between the portal and individual multilateral environmental agreements; he proposed that the portal should provide an overview of the agreements it covered, with links to their home pages to provide more detailed information.
11. One representative expressed interest in the courses to be offered and asked whether InforMEA was involved in or was planning partnerships with other bodies engaged in similar activities, including the United Nations University and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.
12. A number of representatives expressed regret that the database was in English only and called for texts to be made available in all official United Nations languages and in other languages. Another stressed the importance of allocating funds for that purpose.
13. The representative of the secretariat thanked the speakers for their suggestions. He said that collaboration with the United Nations University, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was being considered, as was the inclusion in the database of other instruments, including the International Tropical Timber Agreement. There was also scope for the inclusion of regional conventions in the future. Participation in the initiative was voluntary, requiring only agreement on the management of data to allow it to be harvested. Areas of development included the use of other languages, for which funding was actively being sought, the availability of courses for advanced users and future collaboration with the Tematea portal.

## **B. Report of the Executive Director**

14. Introducing the item, the Executive Director welcomed the responses to the InforMEA initiative, which he said was illustrative of the many activities in which UNEP was engaged aside from its work on major policy issues. Such initiatives constituted a part of the proposed programme of work but were dependent on the availability of resources. He expressed the hope that the relatively modest investment made to establish the worthiness of the project would attract more support for it and facilitate, for example, the expansion of the database to include more documents in languages other than English.
15. Turning to his detailed written report to the Committee, he briefly drew attention to a few aspects relating to the implementation of the programme of work since January 2012.
16. The second biennium of the current four-year medium-term strategy had begun well in terms of the implementation of the programme of work, with the organization on track in dealing with some of the resource and budgetary challenges that it faced. He stressed, however, that the 80 per cent budget ceiling imposed on the budget for the current year would affect the programme of work, and division directors had been asked to identify areas of the programme as candidates for suspension or cancellation. Conclusions on the areas to be suspended or cancelled would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.
17. He cautioned that the core personnel and operational structure of the organization were being severely stretched; given the number of major meetings being held, including the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as the medium-term strategy and strategic framework planning processes and the results of a number of evaluations that had to be dealt with, the belt-tightening was beginning to have an impact on quality and the ability to deliver on commitments made. He expressed the hope that, with the support of member States, it would be possible to come close to the Environment Fund budget figure approved by the Governing Council for the current biennium. The extra-budgetary outlook, on the other hand, was favourable, and he expressed appreciation to the Government of Norway for extending its programmatic framework financing of more than \$30 million to the current biennium, providing a significant boost to UNEP in terms of its ability to implement the programme of work.
18. He cited a number of overseas missions that he and the Deputy Executive Director had carried out in the previous three months: attending the third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the Conference of the Parties of the Barcelona Convention, the Amsterdam Conference of the Global Reporting Initiative and the eighteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, among others. Their participation in such events reflected the importance that they attached to areas that were central to the programme of work and to political engagement with ministers worldwide.
19. Turning to the medium-term strategy and strategic framework, he said that some dissatisfaction had been expressed with the timelines. He accepted some responsibility for that, but pointed out that the strategy had had to be put in place sooner than planned owing to the schedule of the Committee on Programme and Coordination, which had not been foreseen. The process had been compressed, resulting in intense exchanges and short deadlines. Nevertheless, he expressed the view that it was not necessary to rewrite the current medium-term strategy fundamentally and that it was feasible to proceed with the review and update of the strategy for the next four years in the way that had been proposed. He assured the Committee that its input would be sought until the deadline for submission of the medium-term strategy in June 2012 and expressed satisfaction at the fact that most of the

necessary work had been successfully accomplished in just three months, committing himself and the secretariat to working with the Committee to resolve the remaining issues in the coming months.

20. He then turned to UNEP partnerships; they were covered in detail in the report, which testified to a partnership approach to working across a wide range of issues, including short-lived climate pollutants and hydrochlorofluorocarbons. He said that there were extraordinary opportunities for UNEP to act as a catalyst in providing the scientific information that allowed partnerships within the United Nations system and among member States to develop initiatives in such areas. He said that such partnership initiatives were like a web in which UNEP played a connecting role, citing as an example the Global Adaptation Network, a successful initiative involving many United Nations entities and providing the Asia-Pacific region with a forum for scaling up knowledge and implementation capacity on adaptation. Similar initiatives were planned for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Africa. He also highlighted as an example the role of UNEP in the Sustainable United Nations team that was working across the United Nations system on a series of issues related to sustainability. It was, however, another of the areas that was facing the challenge of resource constraints, and difficult decisions would have to be made in the coming months regarding what was clearly a very successful service provided to the United Nations.
21. Looking ahead to the focus of activities in the coming months, he highlighted the importance of the implementation of the programme of work, the further refinement of reporting to the Committee and the need to redouble efforts to raise additional funding for the programme. Preparations for the Conference on Sustainable Development were also playing a significant role, and a number of critical issues were to be followed up, for example the implementation of the Ogoniland environmental assessment report and the need to raise awareness of the UNEP green economy report ahead of the Conference on Sustainable Development.
22. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives thanked the Executive Director for his presentation and for providing his written report ahead of the meeting.
23. A number of representatives welcomed the continuing preparation of the medium-term strategy and strategic framework documents, stressing the importance of the full involvement of the Committee. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed regret that the deadlines for the process had been unclear but welcomed the opportunity to discuss the current draft of the strategy prior to its formal submission to the United Nations Secretariat and its final review by the Committee on Programme and Coordination. Another said that his Government had urged a cautious approach during the negotiation of the programme of work, in particular with regard to financing and the expected income for the Environment Fund, and that that approach had proved to be realistic. He expressed regret that parts of the programme of work would now have to be cancelled or deferred and called for the Committee to be involved in such decisions, in particular with regard to expected outcomes that had been negotiated among member States.
24. One representative expressed appreciation of the web metaphor for the partnerships built by UNEP in the 40 years of its existence and for the important role the organization played in the United Nations system. Referring to the decision on international environmental governance adopted at the previous session of the Governing Council, he called for UNEP to formalize partnerships by means of memorandums of understanding so as to strengthen the network of partnerships in the coming years and boost the advisory role of UNEP on environmental matters. It was important to define roles clearly, coordinate efforts and avoid overlap in the implementation of the programme of work.
25. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that there had been an exponential growth in the partnership approach to working in recent years; by virtue of the organization's mission and as a result of the success of working in a community of institutions, that approach had become a characteristic feature of UNEP. The quality of the strategic focus of partnerships was more important than their number, however. He undertook to prepare a review on memorandums of understanding signed and an assessment of their role in facilitating work. He also stressed the United Nations system-wide engagement of UNEP, as demonstrated in the hosting of the Environment Management Group, which had become remarkably successful, and in the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group. He undertook to provide more information on both the bilateral and system-wide involvement of UNEP, as well as an updated time frame for the preparation of the medium-term strategy and strategic framework.
26. In closing, he turned to financial matters, noting that in the previous year UNEP had achieved a net increase in resources, despite funding difficulties and the competitive environment that it faced. He was committed to achieving the best possible results with the resources available. The programme of work was always subject to the availability of resources, as was the case in any voluntarily funded institution. The precautionary approach taken in the previous year had meant that the organization was able to enter the new biennium with a cash balance in the Environment Fund of just over \$10 million, which would help to provide a cushion against uncertainties.

## **Item 5: Funding and staffing reports**

27. The Executive Director introduced financial and staffing reports entitled “Execution of the budget of the United Nations Environment Programme for the biennium 2010–2011” and “Human resources management report, UNEP, 2011”, respectively. He noted that the financial report was a slightly modified version of the report presented at the recent twelfth special session of the Governing Council. The human resources report provided information about the staffing of UNEP; there were 1,151 posts, of which 317 were dedicated to the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats that it was responsible for administering. Gender parity in staffing had almost been achieved, with the notable exception of some senior management posts. Noting that UNEP currently employed staff from 125 countries, he urged members to read table 4 of the report in conjunction with annex 3 in order to gain a more balanced view of the diversity of country representation with regard to staffing. Notwithstanding recent efforts to enhance equality in terms of gender and geographical representation in recruitment, further improvements were required.
28. One representative welcomed the financial report. Saying that it marked the first time in a year that UNEP had presented financial information to the Committee, she expressed the hope that it represented a renewed commitment by UNEP to involve the Committee in financial matters.

## **Item 6: Report of subcommittees**

29. The Chair presented the report of the subcommittees, outlining recent work carried out at two meetings, held on 15 February 2012 and 8 March 2012.
30. The Committee approved the report of the subcommittees.

## **Item 7: Outcome of the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

31. Introducing the item, the Executive Director noted that the timing of the twelfth special session, which had been held in the period leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, had defined the session. Interest in the session had been signalled by broad and high-level participation. In the wake of the session, it had been heartening to hear feedback from representatives of major groups and stakeholders, who had thanked UNEP for facilitating their most extensive and exemplary participation in a session of the Governing Council to date. Discussions had been complex, in large part owing to the need to balance consideration of environmental issues with discussion of the issues to be raised in Rio de Janeiro. The special session had proved highly successful in terms of content.
32. The fortieth anniversary of UNEP had provided an opportunity to reflect on the challenges encountered over the years in strengthening the organization’s ability to deliver on its mandate. Feedback from former Executive Directors on the evolution of UNEP to date had been extremely positive.
33. Some ministers had expressed the need for a Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum structure that would allow sufficient time for interaction among ministers and for addressing broad issues. While the agenda of the special session was enormous and complex, it would be important to find ways to optimize time management at future sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.
34. Discussions on international environmental governance had proved inconclusive and there was some confusion regarding the outcome required of the forthcoming Rio Conference in order to strengthen the international framework for sustainable development. There was considerable divergence of views, for instance, on possible means of transforming the Commission on Sustainable Development and UNEP. Much depended on whether the views held at the global level could coalesce to provide a way forward with the participation of a substantial number of countries. It was also important to understand the implications of the proposed sustainable development goals, in particular with regard to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the Millennium Development Goals.
35. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the Executive Director for his presentation and for the written reports, which were described as extremely helpful. All of the representatives who spoke thanked the Executive Director and UNEP staff members for their efforts to ensure the success of the twelfth special session and its outcome. One representative thanked those staff members who had worked behind the scenes to support the presidency of the Council and commended the participation of member States. A number of representatives praised the excellent organization of the panels for the ministerial consultations during the session. One representative commended as exceptional the work of the chair of the drafting group.
36. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, described the session as well prepared and well attended, allowing for fruitful and high quality consultations. The panel and round-table sessions had been conducive to interactive discussions and opportunities had been provided for informal meetings, allowing for greater understanding of the positions of member States and exploration of areas of common interest.

37. One representative welcomed the adoption of decisions on work by UNEP on sustainable consumption and production, international environmental governance, the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes, the world environmental situation and enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group.
38. A number of representatives welcomed the ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of UNEP. One representative expressed disappointment, saying that the statement lacked clarity regarding the need to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development in relative and absolute terms.
39. A number of representatives expressed appreciation for the enhanced participation of major groups and stakeholders at the session, which, said one, should be replicated at future sessions and should be met with increased interaction by member States with such stakeholders. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for an open and inclusive negotiation process allowing for the full participation of all stakeholders in the preparations for and proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
40. The decision to host the session in Nairobi had been extremely positive, said one, enabling many developing countries to participate more actively in the proceedings. While the three-day session had been intensive, its outcome had been fruitful.
41. A number of representatives highlighted the amount of time and energy that had been taken up in the consideration of draft decisions at the session. It was to be hoped, said some, that future special sessions would not involve the adoption of decisions, in accordance with the purpose of such sessions. One representative suggested that if decision-making was required, it should be limited to the adoption of a single omnibus decision.
42. A number of representatives expressed satisfaction at the attendance of former executive directors of UNEP, which had provided an interesting opportunity for reflection on the development of UNEP and its potential.
43. Several representatives emphasized the importance of providing interpretation to enhance participation at the various meetings held during a session. One representative requested a summary of side events during the session, while another asked that summaries of ministerial consultations, including round-table discussions, be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations.
44. Responding to comments, the Executive Director thanked the members for their feedback. He said that summaries of side events at the session had been written and made available during the session and that they would be republished on the website forthwith. He said that further consideration would be given to translating summaries of round-table discussions; as always, such activities were subject by financial constraints. There had been much discussion about the need to avoid the adoption of decisions by the Governing Council at its special sessions. Nevertheless, draft decisions continued to be submitted by member States. If necessary, the Council could adopt a decision in that regard.
45. He expressed gratitude to the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies and its Chief for the timely provision of documentation for the session and increased efficiency in the operation of a paperless meeting, to the host country for facilitating protocol arrangements and to the presidency of the Council for guiding the session with clarity and humour.

## **Item 8: Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

46. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to a preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was to be held the following week at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At the meeting, the focus of which would be parts 3 to 5 of the zero draft of the Conference outcome document, a UNEP team would endeavour to bring to bear the science embodied in such works as the fifth Global Environment Outlook report and what was being referred to as the “megatrends” report, “Keeping track of our changing environment: from Rio to Rio+20”. He highlighted a series of briefing papers on various topics related to the green economy, which were available on the UNEP website.
47. UNEP would participate in more than 15 side events at the Conference. As part of the UNEP contribution to linking the legal community to sustainable development processes and policies, the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability would be launched in New York at the end of March 2012; the second preparatory meeting for the Congress would be held in April. In the coming days, UNEP would focus on inter-agency dialogue on sustainable consumption and production, which was likely to be an important topic in Rio de Janeiro, and would work with the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations Development Programme, among others, on capacity-building for African negotiators in the lead-up to the Conference.

48. The logistical arrangements for the UNEP delegation to the Conference were being organized with the host country; plans were afoot to set up a space in the park opposite the main venue, where UNEP could interact with Conference participants, provided that that could be done without drawing on programmatic resources. The UNEP Rio strategic team was meeting every few days and was organizing some 20 events of relevance to the themes of the Conference. In closing, he highlighted the fact that, in the days preceding the Conference, the Government of Brazil would host events in connection with World Environment Day, to be celebrated on 5 June 2012, including the Champions of the Earth awards on 4 June.
49. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, stressed the importance of clarity on elements to be agreed upon in Rio, including clear operational targets and specific activities in priority areas related to the transition to a green economy in the context of sustainable energy and water, sustainable land management and ecosystems, oceans and resource efficiency, among other things. International environmental governance must be strengthened as part of the international framework for sustainable development. He expressed strong support for the strengthening of UNEP, including its upgrade to a United Nations specialized agency for the environment.
50. The representative of Brazil said that the World Environment Day celebrations in Rio de Janeiro would offer an opportunity to celebrate the Champions of the Earth 2012 and to launch the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, and would also provide a focal point for global celebrations of the Day.
51. One representative expressed the hope that discussions on the zero draft would be concluded at the preparatory committee meeting in Rio de Janeiro immediately preceding the Conference. Another representative said that the zero draft should be more ambitious and more action-oriented in order to leave its mark in the world. He outlined five crucial policy drivers for change that should be taken into account in Rio: ensuring full gender equality and the empowerment of women; seeking new and innovative financing and unleashing the capacity of the private sector; ensuring sustainability and sustainable energy; valuing natural capital and ecosystems as part of development; and ensuring food and nutrition security.
52. One representative emphasized the need to avoid drawing resources from the programme of work to fund UNEP participation at the Conference.

#### **Item 9: Other matters**

53. The representative of Indonesia drew attention to difficulties that his delegation had experienced in obtaining grounds passes for access to the United Nations Office at Nairobi compound. He outlined an incident during which an allegation had been made by a high-ranking member of the Office's secretariat that a grounds pass had been acquired illegally by a delegation member. He requested a formal response from the Office regarding the incident, together with a full explanation regarding the maximum number of grounds passes allowed for each embassy.
54. The Executive Director expressed his regret that such a difficult situation had arisen and pledged to resolve the matter.

#### **Item 10: Closure of the meeting**

55. The meeting was declared closed at 12.25 p.m.

# **Minutes of the 119th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1**

### **Opening of the meeting**

1. The 119th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 29 May 2012, by Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano Piña, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to UNEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee.
2. The meeting was attended by 81 participants from 59 countries and 1 observer mission.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members of the Committee: Ms. Amanda Davies, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia; Ms. Minatata Samate, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso; Mr. Gonzalo Fernandez, Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile; Ms. Corinna Enders, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany; Mr. Eleftherios Kouvarutakis, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Greece; Mr. Sunu Mahadi Soemarno, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Ms. Batilda S. Burian, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania; and Ms. Mary Mildred Zambezi, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Zambia.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work: Mr. Paul Dziatkowicz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia; Mr. Matthias Radostics, Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Ricardo Alen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile; Ms. Anna Grupinska, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland; Ms. Siri Walt, Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland.
5. The Chair announced that as elected by the 115th meeting, Mr. Sergey Trepelkov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, would take over the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Eastern European Group for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.
6. The Chair expressed condolences to the people and the Government of Kenya in connection with an explosion that had occurred in the capital city the previous day.
7. In his opening remarks, Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, welcomed members, thanking them for their participation at the meeting, which was the last such meeting before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in June 2012. He stressed the significance for the future of UNEP of the Conference and other events to be held over the coming month and thanked member States for their feedback on preparations for the Conference.

## **Item 2**

### **Adoption of the agenda**

8. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/119/1).

## **Item 3**

### **Adoption of the minutes of the 118th meeting**

9. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its 118th meeting, held on 14 March 2012 (UNEP/CPR/119/2).

## **Item 4**

### **Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

#### **A. Report of the Executive Director**

10. Introducing item 4, the Executive Director drew attention to his written report, which had been circulated. He noted that the theme for World Environment Day, celebrated on 5 June, was "Green economy: does it include you?", which fed into the continuing discussions around the world on that concept. UNEP had been conducting a worldwide mobilization campaign for the day, including awareness-raising by its goodwill ambassadors. It would be preceded by an event to be held on 4 June to celebrate the Champions of the Earth awards, which were given in recognition of environmental leadership, activity and innovation.
11. Final preparations were under way for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Considerable effort was being focused on reaching agreement on the outcome text for the Conference. Given that agreement had

been reached on only 5 per cent of the text, the Secretary-General had convened high-level meetings with senior advisers throughout the United Nations system to express his concern and to try to build momentum to ensure that the international community took advantage of the once-in-a-generation opportunity that the Conference represented. It was extremely important that the majority of the text should be agreed upon prior to the high-level segment of the Conference; informal meetings were continuing in New York, and agreement would be sought in advance of the final preparatory committee meeting to be held in Rio de Janeiro. The Co-Chairs of the Conference had produced a new draft text. His reading of that text was that the wording on the green economy had been diluted; the part dealing with the international framework for sustainable development reflected an attempt to maintain the two options of strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council and upgrading the Commission on Sustainable Development to a Council on Sustainable Development, although efforts to secure the latter option had lost some traction. Several options remained under discussion with regard to international environmental governance, with group positions being maintained and strong views expressed. An upgrade of UNEP remained possible; it was crucial that any decision adopted on the matter in Rio de Janeiro should be as specific as possible and not refer the matter to the General Assembly for consideration. Lack of progress on international framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance would be extremely disappointing.

12. Despite the continuing financial crisis and consequent constraints in predicting financial flows and rebalancing Environment Fund resources and unrestricted budgetary resources, the implementation of the programme of work was generally proceeding according to plan. There had been some unexpected developments, including the suspension, owing to the extremely difficult political situation in Mali, of a UNEP flagship ecosystem project focusing on the restoration of Lake Faguibine. The turn of events was especially distressing given that the project had provoked much interest and had recently secured funding of some \$7 million from a regional institution in West Africa. On a more positive note, as a result of the UNEP environmental assessment of the Gaza Strip, the Union for the Mediterranean had accorded top priority to the implementation of a proposal for the construction of a desalination plant to relieve pressure on the water aquifer that supplied communities in the area. UNEP was awaiting with great anticipation the response of the Government of Nigeria to the UNEP environmental assessment of oil contamination in Ogoniland, which had been recognized by experts, Governments and civil society as a unique contribution to trying to resolve the continuing dilemma in that region. It was to be hoped that a key decision on implementation of the report's findings was imminent.
13. Turning to climate change, he said that sessions of the subsidiary bodies to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been held in Bonn from 14 to 25 May 2012, with ambiguous progress in terms of follow-up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Durban in 2011. A great deal of clarity was still required on decisions adopted in Durban. It was to be hoped that progress would be forthcoming on the implementation of decisions at the eighteenth session, to be held in Doha in 2012. In the context of the tender process for a climate technology centre and network, a key outcome of the seventeenth session, UNEP had brought together a consortium of 14 institutions, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and a number of centres of excellence, in a proposal that the evaluation committee had deemed to be of the highest quality. The UNEP initiative to increase focus on short-lived climate pollutants had attracted interest from many countries, with around a dozen joining the initiative together with the World Bank and the European Commission and half a dozen further countries expressing an interest in doing so. The Group of Eight countries had also agreed to support the initiative, which was expected to evolve as a complementary set of activities on global warming. He stressed that action on short-lived climate pollutants did not require a legally binding treaty but could be addressed through national and regional legislation, with major benefits for human health and the environment. Such action was intended to ensure that global warming did not exceed a 2 degree Celsius rise. Without concurrent action on carbon dioxide, however, the initiative would be futile.
14. On resource efficiency, there was an increasing demand for country advisory services. A green economy scoping process was under way in Kenya, for example, and UNEP was engaged in discussions with UNIDO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to consider how best they could jointly meet demand for services in partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute, of the Republic of Korea.
15. In the midst of the continuing ebb and flow of the global financial crisis, the International Labour Organization (ILO) had released figures that showed a record high rate of unemployment in Europe, with as much as 50 per cent of young people unemployed, together with extremely high structural unemployment in developing countries. A report on green jobs prepared jointly by UNEP and ILO, which would be released in the coming days, provided an overview of existing green economy jobs and described the potential of the green economy to create between 10 million and 60 million new jobs. In terms of the broader green economy, he drew attention to The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) partnership, for which UNEP hosted the secretariat, and, in particular, a report for business and enterprise that had been finalized recently. The partnership's outreach to Governments, businesses and civil society was continuing and was having a significant impact. In that regard, he highlighted the

wealth accounting and valuation of ecosystem services partnership initiated by the World Bank and the continuing consideration by States Members of the United Nations of the virtues of economic environmental accounting.

16. Turning to the mercury negotiations, he emphasized the importance of progress at the forthcoming fourth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, to be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 27 June to 2 July 2012. Without sufficient progress, it would not be possible to launch the new instrument as proposed at the conference of plenipotentiaries to be held in Minamata, Japan, in 2013. He noted that intensive discussions were under way with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund on the issue of mercury in the cold chain in developing countries.
17. A new director of the Regional Office for West Asia, Mr. Iyad Abumoghli, had been appointed. UNEP was continuing to operate on a restricted Environment Fund budget of some \$80 million for 2012, as opposed to the budgeted \$90 million. While a number of countries had maintained or increased their contributions to the Fund, some had frozen their contributions or reduced them considerably. Significant financial resources had been made available as extrabudgetary funding. He thanked the Governments of Norway and Sweden for providing unrestricted programmatic funding in support of the programme of work. Currency fluctuations had added to the financial uncertainty, given that some 70 per cent of UNEP funding was derived from the European region. The precautionary approach had worked well, however, with only very few activities needing to be deferred. Nevertheless, he appealed to any Government in a position to do so to provide additional funding.
18. UNEP had continued to engage with other entities in the United Nations system. The Deputy Executive Director had recently returned from New York, where she had participated in the seventeenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South cooperation, presenting a new UNEP platform for such cooperation. He drew attention to his work as chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, including in the development of system-wide positions on matters of importance. In closing, he said that an annex to his written report would be circulated providing an overview of UNEP work over the previous 18 months in support of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

## **B. Presentation on the fifth Global Environment Outlook report: environment for the future we want**

19. A representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report, to be launched on 6 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He expressed his gratitude to member States and Governments for their assistance and participation in the process of developing the report through the high-level intergovernmental advisory panel and the Science and Policy Advisory Board (SPAB), among others, and, in particular, for their engagement in delivering a negotiated summary for policymakers.
20. In the ensuing discussion, most representatives thanked the Executive Director for his comprehensive report. Several representatives expressed the hope that copies of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report would be circulated to Committee members.
21. One representative suggested that, while the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development had provided a forum in which to take stock of previous negotiations and enable agreement on Agenda 21, the forthcoming Rio conference represented a starting point for renewed political commitment to sustainable development. It was to be hoped that agreement could be reached in Rio on sustainable development goals as a sound beginning for that process.
22. Another representative, recalling the history of global United Nations conferences and environmental negotiations, asked to what extent the green economy concept was accepted around the world. In the light of previous lengthy environmental negotiations, it might take a decade, he suggested, for the concept to be widely embraced. He urged UNEP to redouble its efforts to create awareness of the green economy and to clarify misgivings that countries might have, providing practical solutions to their problems. He commended the inclusion in the draft outcome document for the Rio summit of a global green growth and economic platform for the sharing of valuable lessons and experiences among countries.
23. One representative said that there was a divergence of opinion regarding the green economy concept in the draft outcome document for the Conference. The Group of 77 and China had suggested that the concept of an "inclusive green economy" should be included to ensure that the social pillar of sustainable development was incorporated in the document. There was significant concern that the green economy should not be used as an instrument for erecting commercial barriers.
24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed the hope that continuing negotiations in New York on the draft outcome document would overcome the many daunting challenges ahead, leading to a strengthened UNEP that was empowered to carry out its challenging mandate in the twenty-first century.
25. A number of representatives said that they looked forward to the first plenary meeting of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and to the resolution of outstanding issues impeding the platform's operationalization. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries,

expressed the hope that matters related to the rules of procedure would be settled and the platform's link to the United Nations clearly established at the first plenary meeting. Capacity-building, including strengthening national and regional centres of excellence, should rank high on the platform's work programme, he said. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, congratulated Germany for winning the bid to host the platform's secretariat.

26. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed progress in the preparation of the medium-term strategy 2014–2017 and expressed support for the seven priorities outlined therein. It was to be hoped that greater emphasis would be placed on adaptation to climate change and he expressed support for the inclusion of the seventh priority, "Environment under review" and the specific reference in that regard to capacity-building. The medium-term strategy should fully embrace results-based management. He stressed the need to increase focus on the impact of activities in countries, noting that the new programme of work and budget should provide greater clarity with regard to degrees of implementation. He commended UNEP for its support for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and called for greater emphasis on regional activities. To that end, he urged UNEP to consider setting up a regional strategic framework to help deliver its programme of work more effectively in the African region. Underlining the importance of the timely provision of documents, he said that he looked forward to further discussions on the medium-term strategy.
27. One representative thanked development partners for their generous contributions, which had enabled UNEP to continue to implement its programme of work, urging those in a position to do so to increase their contributions. In that regard he thanked the Government of Belgium, in particular, for its contributions to the Environment Fund in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. He emphasized the importance of stable and predictable funding and urged the Executive Director to take into account the complex modalities required to gain access to Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding and increased competition for such funding. Another representative said that her Government had discussed the issue of GEF fee restructuring with UNEP and was in favour of seeking a deferment of a decision on the matter in the GEF Council to ensure adequate consideration of the implications of such restructuring. She stressed the importance of the quality of consultation by the main stakeholders on projects during implementation and of disseminating information and underscored her reluctance to see any reduction of activities in those areas as a result of reduced transaction fees.
28. Many representatives expressed their appreciation for the presentation on the fifth Global Environment Outlook report. One representative said that her Government had presented to the secretariat in February 2012 a list of comments and requests for amendments to the report, of which only some had been accepted. She drew attention to a number of issues that she said required further amendment in the report, relating to biofuels treatment, deforestation and soybean production and sources of data.
29. One representative expressed his satisfaction that e-waste had been recognized as a growing problem in the fifth Global Environment Outlook report. He sought clarification regarding UNEP activities related to e-waste and asked whether updated information on e-waste could be broken down by region in the sixth report. Another representative drew attention to the significant opportunities afforded by the recycling of precious metals in e-wastes and highlighted the importance of emphasizing the positive side of environmental problems.
30. The representative of Nigeria said that his Government had established a technical committee to consider further the next steps in implementing the UNEP environmental assessment of Ogoniland.
31. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed his gratitude to UNEP for its support in enabling countries to gain access and accreditation to the Adaptation Fund and called for continued efforts in that regard.
32. The representative of Japan drew attention to the activities of the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre, including its joint mission with the Post-conflict and Disaster Management Branch to the Tohoku region of Japan at the end of February 2012 to exchange experiences on managing post-disaster debris, given the significant challenge to reconstruction posed by the massive amount of debris generated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in that country.
33. One representative sought clarification regarding the reallocation of resources that had been intended for the Lake Faguibine project in Mali.
34. One representative said that in view of the hard economic times facing European countries, requiring increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the public sector, UNEP should focus on those projects where it had a comparative advantage, including cost effectiveness. He suggested that UNEP had not been conceived as an implementing agency but rather as a normative one.
35. Individual representatives expressed the view that the micromanagement of UNEP by member States should be avoided, that the Executive Director should be able to subsidize projects from the Environment Fund at his

discretion and that if UNEP won the tender for climate technology centre and network it would enhance capacities to embrace green technologies for green growth.

36. Individual representatives also asked for more information on a report on green jobs prepared by UNEP and the International Labour Organization; a recent report by the Department of Management on the provision by the United Nations Office at Nairobi of administrative services to UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); the operational workplan 2012–2013 of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities; and means of participating in the activities of the UNEP South-South Cooperation Unit.
37. Responding to comments, the Executive Director recalled a recent meeting of the pan-African forum on e-waste organized by UNEP and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, attended by ministers from across Africa. He said that the UNEP draft programme of work for the forthcoming biennium reflected growing demand from countries for activities related to the regulation of and legislation pertaining to schemes for recycling e-waste. At present, Africa was constrained by the need for highly technical machinery to extract chemicals from e-waste; accordingly, UNEP would focus on facilitating access to appropriate technology. The Republic of Korea had introduced a law on extended producer responsibility some years previously that had significantly enhanced recycling rates within a 12-month period. UNEP was working to raise public awareness of recycling opportunities and to deter people from keeping or throwing away their old mobile phones. The International Resource Panel had found that for some metals used in the global economy, greater stocks existed above the ground, discarded in people's drawers and rubbish dumps, than below ground. He highlighted the need for regulation, creating incentives for recycling and correcting fiscal distortions that rewarded mining rather than recycling. He commended the Government of Brazil for achieving a remarkable increase in recycling rates. Examples from around the world demonstrated that recycling of e-waste was economically viable as well as environmentally friendly.
38. The green economy concept had rapidly gained recognition around the world during the previous two years. It was to be hoped that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would increase the momentum and chart a way forward in that regard. Further consideration needed to be given to the potential strategic contribution that UNEP could make to the green economy, including a new proposal to work in concert with a green economy knowledge platform, donor agencies and national planning institutions in a so-called "thought network".
39. He acknowledged concerns relating to access to GEF funding, highlighting the importance of distinguishing between the various funds managed by UNEP. While UNEP assisted in transacting GEF funds that were allocated to individual countries, they should never be seen as financing the programme of work. He said that the secretariat had expressed its concern to GEF with regard to the continuing fee restructuring process. The GEF Chief Executive Officer had invited a number of entities to provide input on a new proposal for GEF fee structures, which included a 10 per cent transaction fee for implementing agencies that was widely viewed as extremely problematic. Given the demands of the GEF Council with regard to accountability, monitoring and reporting, and the cost of project overheads, such a fee was unrealistic. He urged member States with representatives in the GEF Council to make their views on the matter known to the Council and called for any decision thereon to be deferred owing to the current lack of consensus. He noted that while the number of GEF implementing agencies had increased, ostensibly to provide countries with greater choice, the GEF Chief Executive Officer had repeatedly prevented countries from choosing UNEP as their preferred implementing agency.
40. Responding to individual queries and comments, he said that the International Environmental Technology Centre, which was celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2012, was an anchor institution for waste response strategies and an extremely important resource for UNEP; that if the political situation in Mali stabilized, the Lake Faguibine project would continue and, if not, project resources would be directed to alternative activities in that region; that a critical assessment of all comments received on the fifth Global Environment Outlook report and rationale are reflected in the report as necessary; and that UNEP would continue its work in relation to the Adaptation Fund. He drew attention to a meeting of the Group of 77 and China on South-South cooperation to be held on 7 June 2012.
41. He said that he would make available the information requested by representatives. The report carried out by the Department of Management had been initiated by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; he was awaiting her feedback in that regard and would then forward that analysis to member States together with the UNEP response thereto.

## **Item 5**

### **Report of Subcommittees**

42. The Chair presented the report of the subcommittees.
43. The Committee endorsed the Chair's report of the subcommittees.

## **Item 6**

### **UNEP preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

44. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that a group of UNEP partners, including Eye on Earth, a foundation of Chinese ecological entrepreneurs, Microsoft and Siemens, were sponsoring the cost of the UNEP pavilion at the Rio summit. A large number of side events would be convened or co-convened by UNEP in the pavilion's auditorium. UNEP was involved both in activities related to the negotiations at the conference and in the trade fair on sustainable development that would proceed it. It was providing support to enable the participation of young people from around the world; the junior board members of TUNZA, the UNEP youth programme, would be present in Rio and participating in events. The World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, to be held immediately prior to the conference, was attracting a great deal of interest.
45. At present there were three negotiation tracks for Rio: the first on the green economy, the second on the international framework for sustainable development and the third on sustainable development goals. There was general agreement that sustainable development goals could carry a strong message forward from the conference; however, it was likely that any decision on sustainable development goals would focus on the form they might take in the future. He cautioned that any such decision in Rio would be scrutinized by the public and should not be perceived as being vacuous. Countries could sign up for a number of initiatives in Rio, including the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, which was the product of two years' hard work facilitated by UN-Energy. The initiative, to which the Secretary-General was committed, was being questioned by a handful of countries with strong fossil fuel connections. The Secretary-General was also advocating a system-wide upgrade of action on global oceans and would be releasing a global oceans compact in the following weeks to tackle challenges in the regulatory framework in that regard and ensure more effective United Nations system-wide action. While the United Nations Law of the Sea had constituted the framework for action on oceans to date, a stalemate had been reached that must be overcome.
46. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized that the Conference represented a once-in-a-decade opportunity that must be grasped fully to ensure a focused, ambitious outcome that went beyond the launch of a set of processes. She stressed the need for long-term planning, immediate action and accelerated implementation. Speeding up the transition to an inclusive green economy as a means of achieving sustainable development required clear operational targets, goals and specific actions with agreed time frames contributing to a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development. Goals and targets should be adopted in Rio. Given that the national resource base underpinned national, economic and social development, targets should be defined for key areas such as water, the marine environment, land use and ecosystems, sustainable energy and resource efficiency, including waste. Goals should focus on facilitating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and contribute to the post-2015 framework and to the development of sustainable development goals. Greater control of the three dimensions of sustainable development was required, especially in the United Nations system. Increased civil society and private sector participation was required in the institutional framework for sustainable development with effective monitoring of agreed outcomes. A double upgrade of the institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance was needed, with significant structural changes in the United Nations. A key objective in that regard was the upgrade of UNEP into a specialized agency located in Nairobi, with a revised and strengthened mandate, universal membership and adequate and predictable financial contributions providing a stronger platform for ministers of the environment to set the global environmental agenda and operating on an equal footing with other United Nations agencies. Slow progress recorded in the so-called "informal informals" in New York represented a warning that member States must heed, seizing the opportunity to ensure an optimal outcome for the Conference.
47. One representative asked, given the progress in results-based management, whether an analysis had been undertaken to measure how UNEP participation in the Conference would contribute to the implementation of its programme of work. He sought clarification regarding the extent of UNEP participation in the Conference, whether Environment Fund resources were to be used in that regard and the total cost of such participation.
48. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted with concern the slow pace of negotiations in New York on the draft outcome document. He urged member States to do their utmost to resolve pending issues.
49. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said while no results-based management framework for UNEP participation in the Rio summit had been developed, the key themes of the Rio summit were extremely relevant to the UNEP programme of work. The participation of UNEP staff members was focused around key special and side events, such as the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, as well as on providing support to the secretary-general of the Conference and responding to requests for advice from member States. UNEP participation numbers would be made available. He stressed the need to distinguish between staff members of UNEP, partner institutions, multilateral environmental agreements and those based in Brazil or Panama. The participation of staff from multilateral environmental agreements and partner institutions was facilitated but not undertaken in its entirety by UNEP.

50. The Executive Director drew attention to a report entitled Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2012 produced by UNEP and Bloomberg New Energy Finance. The report had become an international point of reference for investment, providing cutting-edge analysis on ways in which investors were dealing with barriers to investment in renewable energies. Despite the challenges, a record level of investment had been seen in renewable energies, which was extremely positive for the negotiations on climate change and those to take place in Rio. In Germany during the previous week, solar production of electricity into the national grid, generated by photovoltaic panels on roofs across the country, had exceeded the equivalent of the combined capacity of 20 nuclear power stations. The entry onto the global market of photovoltaic panels from China had been partly responsible for a decrease in their cost of up to 75 per cent.

### **Item 7**

#### **Other matters**

51. Drawing attention to the scheduled date of the 120th meeting of the Committee on 5 September 2012, which would be difficult for members attending the World Urban Forum in Naples, to be held from 1 to 7 September, one representative emphasized the importance of enhanced coordination between UNEP and UN-Habitat with regard to the scheduling of meetings.
52. The Executive Director concurred with the concern expressed and pledged to work to resolve such problems.

### **Item 8**

#### **Closure of the meeting**

53. The meeting was declared closed at 12.20 p.m.

# **Minutes of the 120th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme**

## **Item 1**

### **Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 26 September 2012, by Mr. Luis Javier Campuzano Piña, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Vice-Chair of the Committee, who took the Chair in the absence of Mr. Geert Aagaard Anderson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark and Chair of the Committee, who was unable to attend.
2. The meeting was attended by 101 participants from 60 countries and three observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new Committee members: Mr. Nabil Tibourtine, Deputy Permanent Representative of Algeria; Mr. Nibigira Ezechiel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi; Mr. David Angell, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Canada, and Mr. Jamie Bell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Mr. Jose Miguel Castiblanco Munoz, Chargé d'Affaires and Permanent Representative of Colombia; Ms. Wanja Michuki, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya; Mr. Ismail Bin Haji Salam, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Ms. Mireya Marlene Dominguez Guilbot, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Solomon Akintola Oyateru, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria; Ms. Alice Tipping, Deputy Permanent Representative of New Zealand; Mr. Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan; Mr. Marek Ziolkowski, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland; Mr. Sechang Ahn, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania; Ms. Yamina Karitanyi, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Rwanda; Mr. Khaled Ali N. Al Qhtani, Deputy Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia; Mr. Ivan Zivkovic, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia; Mr. Jozef Bandzuch, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia; Mr. Lukas Ruettimann, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland; Mr. Ittiporn Boonpracong, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand; Mr. H. Avni Aksoy, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Turkey; and Ms. Lynette Poulton Kamakura, Permanent Representative of the United States of America.
4. He bade farewell to the following members who had recently left the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee's work: Mr. Mourad Amokrane, Deputy Permanent Representative of Algeria; Ms. Emmerence Ntahonkuriye, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi; Mr. David Collins, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative, and Mr. Richard Le Bars, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Ms. Maria Victoria Diaz de Suarez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia; Mr. Tonatiuh Romero, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Ms. Wendy Hinton, Deputy Permanent Representative of New Zealand; Mr. Jongseon Jeong, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Ms. Katarina Leligdonova, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia; and Mr. Tuncer Kayalar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Turkey.

## **Item 2**

### **Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in document UNEP/CPR/120/1 and Add.1

## **Item 3**

### **Adoption of the minutes of the 119th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 29 May 2012**

6. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of the 119th meeting, as set out in document UNEP/CPR/120/2.

## **Item 4**

### **Report of the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

#### **A. Report of the Executive Director**

7. The Executive Director welcomed the new permanent representatives and deputies, who were joining the Committee at what he described as an important stage in the history and evolution of UNEP.

8. Introducing the item, he drew attention to his written report, providing an overview of programmatic achievements and management developments since June 2012, and notes on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, which had been circulated in advance to members.
9. In his statement, the Executive Director provided an update on implementation of the outcomes of the Conference and their implications for the work of UNEP, focusing in particular on the significance of paragraph 88 of the outcome document for the future of the organization.
10. The outcome of the Conference would remain an unfulfilled hope for many, but it nevertheless provided significant momentum for the implementation of many elements of the sustainable development agenda, especially with regard to the environment; in paragraph 88, the outcome document validated and supported UNEP as an organization, and it also endorsed the mandate of UNEP in areas ranging from the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns to the green economy, chemicals and oceans.
11. The concept of sustainable development goals had been at the forefront of attention at United Nations Headquarters in recent weeks and was possibly the most significant conceptual innovation to emerge from the Conference. The implementation of the Conference call for the constitution of a core group of 30 Member States to work on the development of the concept, however, had not progressed owing to failure to agree among regional groups on the apportionment of seats within the group. He hoped, however, that Member States would reach agreement in New York in the near future on constituting the group.
12. Other decisions of the Conference called for the launch of a series of processes, in addition to that of the sustainable development goals. Many of those related to the post-2015 development agenda. The Secretary-General had announced the establishment of a high-level panel to address the global development agenda beyond 2015, focusing on the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document, which had held its first meeting in New York. In addition, the Secretary-General had appointed an assistant secretary-general as a focal point to bring together the various processes in preparation for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review; a number of secretariat teams had been established and UNEP had been requested to provide some staffing input. Two further processes called for in the Conference outcome document were likely to begin in early 2013, namely, discussion of the establishment of a high-level forum to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development and the process to address the financing of the sustainable development agenda.
13. Turning to issues of direct relevance to UNEP, he outlined in more detail the process of implementing paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document, which he believed would be relatively straightforward and quick. In his view there was unexpected and significant consensus on how to move forward, with most Member States considering that discussions in the Second Committee of the General Assembly could yield results by the end of 2012. There was broad consensus that the decision regarding paragraph 88 should stand as it was and that no elements thereof should be reopened. The enactment of paragraph 88 by the end of the year would have implications for the forthcoming session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which would become the first universal membership constituted governance meeting of UNEP. The most significant changes for UNEP would be the necessary adjustment to the rules of procedure and the need to obtain additional budgetary resources for the enlarged attendance, and those had been discussed by the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The facilities of the United Nations Office at Nairobi had been reviewed and found to be suitable.
14. With regard to other elements of the Rio+20 outcome document relevant to UNEP, he singled out the 10-year framework, noting that a decision had yet to be made on the Member State forum to which it would report. On the green economy, he said that significant initiatives were under way to address the issue of bringing together the United Nations system at the country level under the United Nations Development Group and to provide support for the green economy discussion. Those and other initiatives were indicative of the Secretary-General's commitment to make sustainable development a key issue of his second term in office.
15. Turning to financial matters, he expressed his satisfaction that, despite the difficult financial climate, Member States appeared to acknowledge that a significant increase in the regular budget should be made available to UNEP, indicating a very positive authorizing environment and the desire of Governments to follow through on the decisions adopted at Rio+20. He recalled the scenario note that he had presented to the Committee, proposing an increase of some \$30 million annually to the regular budget. The Secretary-General had also made it clear that the increase in the regular budget called for at Rio+20 would be honoured, subject to Member State approval, to strengthen the work of the secretariat on the sustainable development agenda. He expressed confidence that the budget increase would be incorporated in the financial scenarios currently under consideration. In a tight budgetary situation, however, UNEP would need to consider where it would be able to meet demands for investment and how to respond to calls for staff deployment, and make disciplined choices accordingly.
16. In that connection, he drew attention to the other major area of work to be undertaken, namely, the medium-term strategy, programme of work and budget for 2014-15. He expressed appreciation for the constructive feedback received from member States and said that the proposals drawn up seemed to be on track, pending clarification of certain elements and completion of work on the budget prior to submission to the Advisory Committee on

Administrative and Budgetary Questions in November 2012. The authorization of an annual budgetary increase for UNEP presented a unique opportunity to restructure the organization's financing so that its function, governance, core structure and key elements of its mandates would be secured by the regular budget; the Environment Fund could return to its original function of implementing programmatic initiatives and enabling UNEP to engage with partners both outside and within the United Nations system, thereby leading to a more stable and programmatically focused finance structure.

17. The financial situation in the first year of the current biennium was causing concern, however, with a shortfall in terms of new income of \$18 million as of September 2012. Some key Member States in Europe had significantly reduced their contributions and that was having a destabilizing effect. UNEP had relied for too long on a Europe-focused financing basis and there was a need for more diversification. Other European countries had increased their contributions to UNEP, however, for which he expressed gratitude. The secretariat was considering the utilization of some cash reserves to bridge the shortfall and the adoption of further austerity measures, such as reduced staff recruitment, while safeguarding programme implementation and avoiding staff redundancies; a second phase of precautionary measures would have to be put in place in the coming weeks. Member States continued to contribute to extrabudgetary funds, which had performed better than anticipated. The Environment Fund was an expression of political support for UNEP and he therefore urged member States to consider further contributions.
18. Among forthcoming events, he highlighted the eleventh meeting of the conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Hyderabad, India, and the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Doha, and he also drew attention to a number of UNEP activities related to climate change as outlined in his written report.

## **B. Presentation on environmental education and training at UNEP**

19. Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, Chief, Environmental Education and Training Unit, provided an overview of UNEP environmental education activities, which had their genesis in the first Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, held in Tbilisi in 1977 and chapter 36 of Agenda 21. He drew attention to the mandates for UNEP to engage in environmental education, including those set out in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Tbilisi+35 Communiqué, entitled "Educate today for a sustainable future", and various decisions of the Governing Council. Having realized the potential of environmental education to contribute to development, the knowledge economy and the sound management of natural resources, among other things, the Senior Management Team had developed a strategy to position environmental education and training as a cross-cutting core service in the UNEP programme of work with an initial focus on higher education and universities.
20. He highlighted, in particular, the Global Universities Partnership on Environment for Sustainability (GUPES), which was intended to promote the integration of environment and sustainability concerns into teaching, research, community engagement, the management of universities and participation in sustainability activities within and beyond universities. The Unit focused on the three pillars of education, training and networking through key partnerships, including as part of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development interagency steering committee in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other United Nations agencies. He also highlighted strategic partnerships with the Tongji Institute of Environment for Sustainable Development, the Eye on Earth Special Initiative on Environmental Education and the World Environmental Education Congress. The Unit was located in the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation and was funded from a modest Environment Fund allocation, while leveraging significant resources through external partners.

## **C. Discussion**

21. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the Executive Director for his written and oral reports, and several also expressed appreciation for the presentation on environmental education and training at UNEP. A number of representatives welcomed in particular the detailed summary of UNEP contributions to Rio+20, which one speaker described as valuable for reference and as an overview of all aspects of the organization's work. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, also expressed appreciation for the remarks of the Executive Director on funding and austerity.
22. Many representatives expressed support for the outcomes of the Conference on Sustainable Development and appreciation of the contribution of UNEP to the Rio+20 process, and several called for a continuing dialogue between the secretariat and the Committee on those matters. One representative noted that the implementation of some of the outcomes, such as universal membership, could be tackled relatively quickly and in a straightforward manner, while others would require more time and consideration. She called on the Executive Director to keep the Committee informed on those and on the timescales involved, and to work with the members on fleshing out proposals that were being developed. She identified, in particular, the consolidation of the headquarters functions of UNEP; how UNEP would be moving forward and the implications thereof; the strengthening of the delivery of

regional offices and how that would be operationalized; and the implications for staffing, as areas where more information would be useful.

23. There was widespread support for the strengthening and upgrading of UNEP, described by one speaker as a historic phase in the life of the organization, and representatives looked forward to the adoption of a resolution to that effect at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. One representative requested the secretariat to provide updates on the proceedings in New York during the sixty-seventh session. A number of representatives urged UNEP to take advantage of the favourable climate prevailing in New York. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the programme of work and budget of UNEP for 2014-15 should fully reflect the vision of the organization set out in the document, entitled "The future we want", adopted at the Conference. It was important, he said, for the various options for a governance structure with universal membership to be well analysed in preparation for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council of UNEP. The adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution establishing universal membership in the Governing Council and a secure and increased financial footing would contribute positively to UNEP fulfilling its functions as the leading global environmental authority.
24. A number of representatives stressed the importance of close cooperation between Member States and UNEP. One speaker said that such cooperation had made possible the successful outcomes of Rio+20, and he urged the Committee to work closely with the secretariat to exchange views on future models for UNEP in preparation for the Governing Council session; there were important challenges to face, for example organizational aspects of the Council itself and the ability of UNEP to carry out its medium-term strategy and programme of work, and time was short.
25. One representative sought clarification on the transformation of UNEP, asking what aspects of the organization would be different under the new structure and how the changes would affect UNEP activities. Another questioned whether the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council would operate under the proposed new structure. One representative asked what initiatives the secretariat would take on the issue of implementing universal membership and whether proposals and scenarios would be presented to the Committee if by the time of the twenty-seventh session the Governing Council were to have universal membership. Another called for dialogue among member States on the issue of operationalizing universal membership in close consultation with colleagues in New York.
26. One representative welcomed the general atmosphere of consensus in New York on the political decision to upgrade UNEP and noted the corresponding need for close coordination in Nairobi between the UNEP secretariat and the Committee. In the light of the important decision to be taken at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, he proposed that the Executive Director convene an extraordinary session of the Committee to consider the consultations taking place in New York. Some representatives supported that suggestion.
27. The representative of Brazil, as the host country of the Rio+20 Conference, thanked all those who had taken part in the Conference and made it possible for the important outcomes to be achieved. She said that the work of UNEP in the next biennium had to be carried out in the light of the Rio+20 outcomes, which were the result of a long process of consultations and consensus-building. She stressed certain issues that remained to be more clearly addressed in the programme of work, including poverty eradication as a matter of urgency; the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns; the launch of the sustainable development goals; and the strengthening of UNEP through universal membership, among others. She outlined a number of comments on the subprogrammes in the current draft of the UNEP programme of work that had been discussed in the technical group and undertook to provide those comments and proposals in writing to the secretariat.
28. In the context of the UNEP programme of work, one representative highlighted the great importance that his Government attached to capacity-building for developing countries and called for capacity-building to be better reflected in the work programme as a cross-cutting issue in all the subprogrammes. Capacity-building should also be one of the national priorities for all countries and should address the needs of developing countries, focusing on the empowerment of national institutions and organizations.
29. A number of representatives expressed appreciation for the work of UNEP on the green economy. One praised the competence and experience that UNEP had gained through a number of initiatives in that area and urged greater coordination and coherence among those initiatives, including the Poverty-Environment Initiative, the 10-Year Framework and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy. He also said that UNEP should participate in the implementation of paragraph 66 of the Rio+20 outcome document in the area of capacity-building in the context of the green economy. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, supported an inclusive green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the key tools for achieving sustainable development. He reiterated the commitment among the group to achieving a just, global transition to an inclusive, equitable green economy in collaboration with other international parties, in particular UNEP. Another congratulated UNEP on firmly establishing the concept of the green economy in the international community in the four years since the concept had been launched. Acknowledging that making the transition to a green economy

would be tough for some countries, he sought further information on the Partnership for Action on Green Economy initiated by UNEP in response to Rio+20.

30. A number of representatives referred to the development of sustainable development goals and their relationship to post-2015 development goals. One said that the decision to develop sustainable development goals was one of the most important outcomes of Rio+20; it would be a challenging task in which member States and the United Nations should work closely together, and he was pleased to note that UNEP was ready to contribute expertise and experience on the environmental dimension of that work.
31. A number of representatives called for enhancing synergies among multilateral environmental agreements and for a stronger role for UNEP in engaging with them.
32. One representative recalled the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, also held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, and said that the Congress objectives should be further developed and should play a part in the work of UNEP.
33. One representative said that his Government attached great importance to the follow-up to the Rio+20 decision on gender, equality and empowerment of women, which were crucial for sustainable development. He urged UNEP to strengthen efforts to ensure that gender considerations were fully taken into account in all policies and projects. In that context he welcomed the idea of the Gender and Environment Outlook Report as proposed in the programme of work.
34. One representative drew attention to the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and sought the support of the parties in reaching an outcome that would focus on biodiversity issues from the development perspective, including the early implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing, to create an enabling environment for developing countries that would allow them to benefit from their biodiversity resources. He also sought more details on the South-South Cooperation Exchange Mechanism.
35. On the issue of finance, a number of representatives shared the concern of the Executive Director about the budget deficit. One representative supported the streamlining of voluntary contributions to make them more predictable, stable and strategically useful. Another raised the possibility of the involvement of private or corporate partners, while at the same time appealing to Governments to contribute. One representative urged UNEP and member States to take advantage of the political will expressed in Rio de Janeiro, in particular with regard to the financial stability of UNEP, despite the difficulties faced by some donors, and called on all parties to ensure that UNEP was able to carry out its mandate.
36. The representative of the United States of America informed the Committee that her delegation had received official authorization for her Government's pledge letter and that funds would be transferred to UNEP as quickly as possible. She commended the Executive Director for his efforts hitherto to tackle the almost impossible task of producing a clear, focused budget against the background of pending decisions both in New York and Nairobi. She sought further clarification on the proposals to change some funding categories, moving expenses and different projected incomes from extrabudgetary or trust funds to the regular budget and Environment Fund, and more information on the impact on the ground of some of those changes, for example on posts, personnel and programme delivery.
37. The representative of Japan clarified his Government's provision of direct access funding for countries in the Asia-Pacific region as mentioned in the Executive Director's report under climate change activities. The Ministry of the Environment of Japan had agreed with the UNEP Asia-Pacific regional office to cooperate in capacity-building to enable Asia-Pacific countries to have direct access to the Adaptation Fund. The Government of Japan had contributed a first instalment of \$330,000 in 2012 under a five-year programme.
38. One representative congratulated UNEP and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on the constructive outcome of the fourteenth session of the Conference, held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in September 2012. She expressed the hope that the key flagship programmes identified in the Arusha declaration would also be incorporated into the programme of work of UNEP. Others stressed the importance for African and other developing countries of the strengthening of regional offices to enable them to better respond to the needs of member States, as stated at the Ministerial Conference.
39. Several representatives expressed appreciation for the extensive and informative report on environmental education and training at UNEP, and a request was made for the presentation to be posted on the UNEP website. A number of representatives emphasized the importance of extending environmental education to the primary and secondary level, rather than focusing solely on tertiary education. One drew attention to the UNEP Tunza programme for environmental education for children and youth, calling for it to be expanded to have global outreach; another said that for many countries where populations were predominantly young, investment at the level of primary and even kindergarten levels was very important and would yield more long-term results.
40. Responding to comments, the Executive Director thanked members for their substantive feedback. He said that it was striking that while there was broad agreement on the importance of environmental education, it remained in its

infancy in many curricula around the world. Providing environmental education as an integral part of the global education system posed a significant challenge. In considering the possible provision of environmental education at the primary and secondary levels, it would be important to examine the mandate of UNESCO as the lead agency of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, while UNEP focused more at the tertiary level, where its knowledge products were more relevant. One of the secrets of UNEP success had been working according to its strengths, through partnerships, such as GUPES and involvement with networks, universities and tertiary institutions, providing knowledge, expertise and information in accessible formats.

41. Noting that African support for UNEP had never been stronger than at present, he thanked the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for hosting the fourteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which had been very well attended, and drew attention to the recent convening in Nairobi of the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability had highlighted the positive impact that justice systems could have in efforts to achieve sustainable development. Turning to the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, he stressed that negotiations were at a critical juncture, requiring serious attention from member States to ensure that significant political hurdles were overcome at the fifth session, to be held in Geneva in January 2013.
42. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had provided UNEP with a licence to respond to the interests of countries in further developing the green economy concept, for which demand was now overwhelming. With regard to divergences of opinion on phrases or terms used in international negotiations, he said that UNEP would respect internationally agreed terminology, but stressed that, for example, framing the discussion on the green economy in terms of poverty alleviation would be misleading. The green economy concept was relevant for developed and developing countries alike such that poverty alleviation would not always be the main aim in its implementation. The global green economy would be driven by a series of nationally led processes with the members of the international community learning from each other.
43. The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), initiated jointly with the International Labour Organization and working with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, was intended to serve as a framework for providing knowledge and expertise to support countries, through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other processes. Responding to questions on the linkages between the PAGE initiative and work on sustainable consumption and production, the green economy and resource efficiency, he said that, in view of the expanded mandate of UNEP, accorded to it by Member States at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the secretariat was considering how best to proceed; it was important to take incremental steps. UNEP would provide a central voice for the environment within the United Nations system, requiring a higher level of coordination, exploitation of synergies and direction-setting in the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to enable member States to work more effectively. The trust fund of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, for example, would require a distinct identity in the programme of work but must interact with other aspects of UNEP work. It was important to deploy more effectively the range of services required by countries, including facilitating national dialogues and the elaboration of development strategies, and accommodating requests for expertise on matters such as transport or building efficiency. He said that his vision for UNEP in the light of the outcome of the Conference was one of strengthened capacity to respond to country needs on the basis of its strategic presence model, making regional offices the platform for implementation. In a move to reinforce that strategic presence, it was possible that new regional or subregional offices could be opened for underserved areas. The discussion on the future evolution of UNEP would continue at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council and over the coming years.
44. Responding to the suggestion that the Governing Council might be interfering with the sovereignty of the conferences of the parties to multilateral environmental agreements, he said that the sovereignty of conferences of the parties was indisputable. Ministers of the environment must, however, provide guidance to ensure that decision-making under the various instruments became more coherent. The problematic relationship between certain multilateral environmental agreements and UNEP as their host secretariat had been exaggerated. While he accepted the need to resolve outstanding administrative and fiduciary issues, he urged members not to be overly preoccupied with such matters. A more uniform and harmonized system must be implemented and it was crucial that Governments communicated in a transparent manner in the various forums in which they participated. He noted that there was a contrast between demands for synergies and economic efficiency on the one hand and the ring-fencing of instruments from other aspects of national systems by government representatives. Cooperation and coordination among the chemicals and waste instruments had demonstrated the attainability of synergy among multilateral environmental agreements. Those environmental agreements had been established to deliver meaningful environmental governance rather than to focus on reporting formats and programme support costs. In that regard, when United Nations entities were requested to host secretariats, it was necessary to abide by the rules by which the Secretary-General managed the United Nations.
45. Turning to the relationship between the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable development goals, he suggested that the former focused specifically on development, poverty alleviation and sustainable development

for a particular group of countries, while the latter would make up a global framework to hold every nation accountable in moving to greater sustainability. That said, it was clear that Member States were leading the discussion on the sustainable development goals, and UNEP would endeavour to contribute its expertise to that discussion. He cautioned that, given the challenges faced in achieving consensus in Rio, it was likely that agreeing on the substance of the sustainable development goals in the allotted time frame could be problematic.

46. UNEP had been successful in obtaining private sector funding for parts of its programme of work, such as the UNEP Finance Initiative, which was virtually funded by the pooling of resources from financial institutions and was continuing to strengthen partnerships with the private sector. Members would be receiving a request for authorization of a new partnership with a Chinese enterprise for the Champions of the Earth awards.
47. Universal membership in the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would not present a significant logistical challenge for the twenty-seventh session. The existing format for sessions comprising concurrent meetings of the committee of the whole and ministerial meetings would be maintained. Further discussions on the matter would take place at the twenty-seventh session, and the implications of universal membership could be discussed further with the Committee members if required. The secretariat was committed to sharing information and engaging with the Committee.
48. Ways of consolidating UNEP headquarters functions in Nairobi were being reviewed, and members would be kept abreast of any developments in that regard. It was unlikely, however, to equate to a mass relocation of staff to Nairobi, which would be prohibitively expensive, apart from anything else. It was crucial to avoid programmatic disruption through an intelligent and structural process.
49. He thanked members for their support for the Clean Air Coalition and the International Resources Panel and drew attention to various other UNEP initiatives, including the launch in early September of the South-South cooperation exchange mechanism in New York, which was intended to facilitate the sharing of experiences, best practices and knowledge, and “Beyond the GDP” activities with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the World Bank.
50. He said that, without prejudging any decision by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, if the consortium led by UNEP were to be awarded the mandate to establish a Climate Technology Centre, the role of UNEP would be as convenor and anchor of the consortium, with activities distributed at various sites globally.
51. In closing, he said that the Global Environment Outlook and Global Chemicals Outlook reports had garnered considerable respect for UNEP from the international community. The recent translation into Chinese of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report and its publication, entirely financed by a Chinese entrepreneur who had attended the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, attested to that.

## **Item 5**

### **Report of subcommittees**

52. The Chair presented the report of the subcommittees.
53. The Committee approved the report of the subcommittees, as well as the process suggested by the Chair, namely, entrusting the subcommittee with the task of continuing and concluding consideration of the proposed biennial programme of work and budget for 2014-2015 and submitting on its behalf the outcome of its work to the Executive Director for prompt onward transmission to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

## **Item 6**

### **Status of preparations for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

54. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to a document entitled “Preliminary proposed structure and organization of the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: 19 September 2012”. He said that discussions had been continuing with Member States, including the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, regarding the optimal duration of the twenty-seventh session. Recalling that the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in February 2012, had been a three-day session, he stated that the twenty-seventh session, which would be a regular session, could be held for four days instead of the usual five. That would allow for a two- or three-day high-level segment, which was the maximum amount of time that most ministers could devote to such a meeting. Deliberations under way in the General Assembly would have an impact on the decision taken regarding duration. A theme of a post-United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would be appropriate for the ministerial-level discussions. Other topics to be discussed would be the green economy, sustainable consumption and production and the UNEP contribution to the sustainable development goals. It was to be expected that additional draft decisions would be submitted to the secretariat in advance of the session. In accordance with recent

practice, the fourteenth Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum would be held prior to the session. The enhanced engagement of major groups and stakeholders in sessions of the Governing Council, as called for in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was a topic of considerable interest.

55. In the ensuing discussion, one representative expressed the hope that summaries of side events and ministerial discussions at the session would be published on the UNEP website, in particular for the benefit of small delegations whose members were unable to attend all the events and meetings on offer. He said that while he recognized that the selection of the group of the friends of the chair was at the discretion of the President of the Governing Council, it was to be hoped that the group would be open-ended at the twenty-seventh session to enable optimal and broad participation.
56. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the importance of the consideration by the Committee of existing draft decisions for the session in a timely manner to ensure that the future consideration of additional draft decisions, including those based on developments in the General Assembly, could be accommodated.
57. The Executive Director urged the regional groups to submit their nominations for the new Bureau of the Governing Council by 1 December 2012, rather than by the previously set submission date of 17 December 2012, to ensure a strong functional Bureau with members from all regional groups at the outset.
58. The Chair noted that the current Bureau was lacking members from two regional groups, in one case owing to the lack of a process to substitute representatives who were unable to continue to represent their regions. This matter must be addressed in the new rules of procedure for sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Informal consideration of such issues among members might also be beneficial, he suggested.

### **Item 7**

#### **Other matters**

59. There were no other matters.

### **Item 8**

#### **Closure of the meeting**

60. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.50 p.m.
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