



# General Assembly

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**Ad hoc open-ended working group established  
pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277  
Organizational session  
New York, 5–7 September 2018**

## **Report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018 entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”\***

### **I. Organizational session**

#### **A. Opening and duration of the session**

1. The ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018 entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment” held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 7 September 2018. The ad hoc open-ended working group held five meetings.

#### **B. Agenda and organization of work**

2. The organizational session was opened on 5 September 2018, by the co-chairs<sup>1</sup>, Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, and Francisco Duarte Lopes, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, who made opening statements. The President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session also made an opening statement

3. At its first meeting, on 5 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group adopted its agenda, based upon the provisional agenda and annotations (A/AC.289/1), as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and other organizational matters.
3. General discussion.
4. Agenda for the substantive sessions.
5. Information on documents to be considered by the substantive sessions.
6. Financing of the activities of the ad hoc open-ended working group.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the proceedings of the session.
9. Closure of the session.

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

<sup>1</sup> Appointed by the President of the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 72/277.

4. At the same meeting, on 5 September 2018, the co-chair (Portugal) recalled that in accordance with rule 161 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the rules of procedure of the Main Committees of the Assembly, as well as the relevant provisions of resolution 72/277, would apply to the sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group.
5. Also at the same meeting, the ad hoc open-ended working group approved its programme of work, as contained in the conference room paper circulated in English only (A/AC.289/CRP.1), on the understanding that it would be updated as necessary during the session.
6. At its first, second and fifth meetings, on 5 and 7 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group heard statements in the general discussion under agenda item 3 by representatives of Egypt (on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China), the European Union, India, Madagascar, Senegal, the Holy See, Costa Rica, Monaco, the Philippines, El Salvador, Ecuador, Argentina, Japan, Algeria, China, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Colombia, Qatar, Thailand, Armenia, Panama, the Russian Federation, Kenya, the United States, Uruguay, Canada, Peru, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Morocco, Georgia, Nigeria, and United Arab Emirates.
7. At its second and fourth meetings, on 5 and 6 September 2018, in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 72/277, statements under agenda item 3 were made by non-governmental organizations on behalf of Global Ecovillage Network, All Win Network, Institute of planetary synthesis and the commons cluster major group, the International Center of Comparative Environmental Law, Plastic-free Peru, and World Blockchain Organization.
8. At its second meeting, on 5 September 2018, under agenda item 5, the ad hoc open-ended working group heard an update from the Director ad interim of the United Nations Environment Programme of the New York Office on the preparation of the technical and evidence-based report of the Secretary-General that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation, that had been requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/277.
9. At its third meeting, on 6 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group heard a statement under agenda item 6 by the Director ad interim of the United Nations Environment Programme of the New York Office indicating that, as requested by resolution 72/277, two voluntary trust funds have been established by the Secretary-General, one to support the process, including the Secretariat's functions, and the other to assist developing countries in attending the sessions of the open-ended working group.

### C. Attendance

10. Representatives of the following Member States of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies attended the session:  
 Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, the European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Viet Nam.
11. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented:  
 International Chamber of Commerce, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Organization of la Francophonie, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
12. The following specialized agencies were represented:  
 International Fund for Agricultural Development.
13. The following United Nations organs and bodies were represented:

United Nations Environment Programme, and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

14. Thirty-eight non-governmental organizations were represented.

## **D. Documentation**

15. The ad hoc open-ended working group had before it the following documents:

- (a) Provisional agenda and annotations for the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (A/AC.289/1);
- (b) Provisional agenda and annotations for the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group (A/AC.289/1/L.2);
- (c) Outline of the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018 entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment” (A/AC.289/1/L.1);
- (d) Proposed programme of work of the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (A/AC.289/CRP.1; conference room paper circulated in English only);
- (e) Informal paper of the Co-Chairs on the duration and number of the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 (circulated in English only); and
- (f) Informal paper of the Co-Chairs on the provisional agenda and annotations thereto for the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 (circulated in English only).

## **II. Decisions**

### **A. Duration and number of the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group**

16. At its fourth meeting, on 6 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group agreed on the duration and number of its substantive sessions (decision 2018/1), on the basis of the non-paper of the Co-Chairs on the duration and number of the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group, circulated in English only, and as orally revised. For the text of the decision, see the annex to the present report.

### **B. Agenda and organization of the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group**

17. At its fifth meeting, on 7 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group agreed on the provisional agenda and annotations thereto for its first substantive session (decision 2018/2), on the basis of the second revised non-paper of the Co-Chairs on the provisional agenda and annotations thereto for the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group, circulated in English only. For the text of the decision, see the annex to the present report.

### **C. Report of the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018 entitled, “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”**

18. At its fifth meeting, on 7 September 2018, the ad hoc open-ended working group adopted the draft report for the organizational session (A/AC.289/L.1), and entrusted the co-chairs, in collaboration with the secretariat, with its finalization.

19. At the same meeting, on 7 September 2018, the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, made a statement, requesting the Secretariat to consult with the relevant environmental secretariats and conventions on the existing arrangements that allow Groups to conduct internal pre-sessional coordination meeting a day before the beginning of the ad hoc open-ended working group substantive sessions. The representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, further requested that before and during the ad hoc open-ended working group’s substantive sessions sufficient time be allocated for the Group coordination meetings. The Director ad interim of the United Nations Environment Programme of the New York Office indicated that, arrangements for the travel of representatives from developing

countries would be made in accordance with the applicable regulations and rules of the United Nations.

20. At the fifth meeting, on 7 September 2018, the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group was closed by the co-chair (Portugal).

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**Annex****DECISIONS ADOPTED AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION****Decision 2018/1****Duration and number of the substantive sessions of the Ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277**

The Ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277,

*Taking* into account relevant provisions of resolution 72/277, including regarding the timing of the first substantive session and the time frame in which the working group should complete its work, as well as views expressed by participating States, the need to avoid as far as possible conflicts with dates of related meetings, the desirability of holding one session back-to-back with the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the need to have a number of sessions that provides the working group with the time and space for a comprehensive discussion on substance that enables it to carry out its work and deliver on what was requested by the General Assembly, the need to have enough time “in-session” to allow for an fruitful exchange of views and be efficient in the way it carries out discussions, and the need to allow sufficient time between sessions for consultations,

*Decides* that substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group be held as follows:

1. The first substantive session from 14 to 18 January 2019;
2. Unless otherwise decided by the ad hoc open-ended working group, a substantive session of 3 to 5 days duration, beginning on 18 March 2019; and
3. Unless otherwise decided by the ad hoc open-ended working group, a substantive session of 3 to 5 days duration, beginning on 20 May 2019.

**Decision 2018/2****Provisional agenda and annotations thereto for the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277**

The Ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 decides on the following provisional agenda and annotations thereto for its first substantive session:

**Provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Financing of the activities of the ad hoc open-ended working group.
4. General statements.
5. Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General.
6. Provisional agenda and dates for the second substantive session.
7. Other matters.
8. Closure of the first substantive session.

**Annotations****1. Opening of the session**

The opening and the conduct of the first substantive session will be presided over by the two co-chairs of the ad hoc open-ended working group, who have been appointed by the President of the General Assembly: the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali, and the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Francisco Duarte Lopes. A high-ranking official of the United Nations Environment Programme will make a statement at the opening of the first substantive session.

**2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work**

The provisional agenda for the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group has been prepared in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/277. The organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group decided upon the agenda for the first substantive session, while the immediately preceding substantive session will decide on the agenda for each following substantive session. The respective substantive sessions of the working group will decide upon their own programme of work.

**3. Financing of the activities of the ad hoc open-ended working group**

The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to discuss matters relating to the financing of its activities.

**4. General statements**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277, the ad hoc open-ended working group is open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations and all members of the specialized agencies.

Delegations will have an opportunity to deliver statements of a general nature concerning the agenda items under consideration at each substantive session in accordance with its programme of work.

**5. Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General**

By paragraph 1 of its resolution 72/277, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session in 2018 a technical and evidence-based report that identified and assessed possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation.

By paragraph 2 of the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the report of the Secretary-General. In the same resolution, it decided that the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group would be held at least one month after the submission of that report.

The Secretariat will introduce the report of the Secretary-General before its consideration by the ad hoc open-ended working group.

**6. Provisional agenda and dates for the second substantive session**

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277, the ad hoc open-ended working group is to consider the report and discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, as appropriate, and, if deemed necessary, the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument, with a view to making recommendations, which may include the convening of an intergovernmental conference to adopt an international instrument, to the Assembly during the first half of 2019.

At the conclusion of its session, the ad hoc open-ended working group will consider and adopt the draft agenda, in line with resolution 72/277, and dates of the following substantive session.

**7. Other matters**

Delegations may wish to discuss any other matters related to its work in accordance with its programme of work.

**8. Closure of the first substantive session**

The substantive session will be closed once the ad hoc open-ended working group has concluded its work.

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