



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

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### Draft report

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#### Addendum

### Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

#### Programme 11 Environment

1. At its 7th meeting, on 16 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 (A/79/6 (Sect. 14)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2024/6).

#### Discussion

2. Delegations expressed support for the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and commended the comprehensive proposed programme plan, which would play a paramount role in helping Member States to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Several delegations underscored the crucial role played by UNEP in addressing the intertwined crises and reiterated support for its efforts to create a healthy and sustainable environment in focusing on areas such as climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, pollution and waste, digital connectivity and environmental governance. A delegation stated that tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution required coordinated and enhanced international cooperation with a sense of urgency, while another delegation stated that the programme plan provided a clear picture of the goals accomplished and the challenges faced. Yet another delegation pointed out that the work of UNEP was at the forefront of global efforts to address pressing environmental needs. In commending the work of UNEP, a delegation stated that it valued the expertise and support that UNEP gave to Member States with regard to environmental sustainability, as well as its contribution to the achievement of mandated activities for the realization of environmental standards.



3. A delegation indicated that it attached great importance to the presence of UNEP in Nairobi and advocated for and promoted the strengthening of the role UNEP played as the leading global environmental authority and as a champion for global environment policy. The delegation further advocated for the consolidation of the headquarters functions of UNEP in line with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. A delegation shared the view that UNEP had a crucial role to play in supporting Member States in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes to strengthen the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, and also to address the crises of climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste, through transformative multi-stakeholder actions that targeted the root causes or the drivers of climate change. The same delegation expressed its support for the crucial work of UNEP and for addressing the challenges faced during its efforts to achieve the deliverables and performance indicators outlined in the programme plan. The delegation sought further information on the challenges faced in each of the seven subprogrammes to which the Committee should pay attention.

5. A delegation appreciated the updating of the language of the programme plan to reflect intergovernmentally agreed language. The delegation further stated that the work of the Committee should focus more clearly on the actual improvement of the programme narrative rather than becoming entangled in political discussions.

6. A delegation pointed out that UNEP should continue to announce its actions to address the interconnected and multifaceted crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and persistent pollution. The delegation recognized the contribution of the actions of UNEP to environmental multilateralism, as the past few years had been marked by truly significant achievements, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, and the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste. The same delegation added that the challenges ahead for the international community were to, by end of the year, establish a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, as mandated by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 5/14 and to set up a new science-policy panel to manage chemicals and waste and prevent pollution, as mandated by the Assembly in its resolution 5/8. The delegation reaffirmed its support for UNEP as it continued to trace the pathway of enhanced synergies, cooperation and collaboration to implement the commitments under the multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments, thereby contributing to effective implementation of international financial environmental policies and agreements delivering global environmental benefits for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Further, the delegation expressed support for advocacy by UNEP for enhanced transparency with regard to the obligations of countries under the Paris Agreement, and urged UNEP to strive to do so more accurately, considering the alarming findings of the synthesis report of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, namely, that limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius required deep, rapid and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions.

7. Several delegations underscored the critical role of subprogramme 1, Climate action. While noting that the work of UNEP was the driver of global efforts towards a more sustainable and resilient future, a delegation underscored the critical role of the subprogramme in supporting countries to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Those efforts, the delegation added, were aimed at improving resilience against extreme climate change while, at the same time, contributing to sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. According to the same

delegation, by integrating climate action into the broader Sustainable Development Goals, UNEP must ensure that initiatives were both comprehensive and impactful. Another delegation made it clear that, in addition to supporting the Goals, climate action should contribute to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius. The same delegation supported investments in clean energy technologies, including low-emission and low-carbon technologies, to help reach net-zero global emissions by mid-century or before.

8. A delegation shared the view that the provision of means of implementation, including technological support to developing countries, must be a priority, as the climate crisis continued to be a critical and pressing issue. The delegation recalled losses of over \$30 billion, with 33 million people affected, across Pakistan caused by devastating floods in 2022 and noted that country's efforts to build back better and greener based on climate-resilient infrastructure, guided by the vision of resilient recovery, rehabilitation and a reconstruction framework.

9. A delegation reaffirmed its support for global climate action and international cooperation based on the established principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and noted that respective capabilities must be stepped up. The gap between the global climate finance commitments and their implementation needed to be narrowed. The same delegation stressed the importance of strengthened resilience and increased progress in achieving sustainable socioeconomic development at the national level, and in that regard stated that the delegation's country would continue to give priority attention to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The delegation expressed the hope that the proposed programme plan would enable UNEP to support Member States in those areas more effectively. With reference to paragraph 14.3 of the proposed programme plan, the delegation requested that the Secretariat shed some light on its plan to target the root causes and drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss.

10. A delegation observed that the 2030 Agenda was an integrated, holistic approach guided by the core principles of the Organization and shared the view that tackling the environmental dimension must be done in a balanced manner. The same delegation noted that the adverse effects of climate change were becoming more concrete and pointed to flooding in the south of Brazil, the worst in that country's history, which had claimed lives, displaced and disrupted the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people and had a negative impact on the economy. The delegation called for the international community to act and strengthen its efforts to combat that phenomenon.

11. A delegation referenced paragraph 14.17 of the proposed programme plan and noted that there were five areas of action mentioned and that several of the terms mentioned were only part of the Global Cooling Pledge, in particular its nature-based solutions. The delegation expressed the view that a broader approach that was more all-encompassing should have been used.

12. A delegation expressed support for the mandate and related activities of UNEP and reaffirmed its commitment to combating the issues of climate change, especially considering its national geographical features. The delegation stressed the importance of the exchange of information and cooperation among Member States. It stated that addressing climate change, climate action and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change were vital for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Further, the same delegation pointed to oceans, water management, bioagriculture and renewable energies as key areas of focus with regard to disaster management, and noted that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 coincided with the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements. The

same delegation stressed the need to preserve the environment while noting common but differentiated responsibilities.

13. Several delegations lauded the gender-sensitive approach of UNEP to climate action and pointed out that women and girls played a critical role in addressing the climate crisis. A delegation expressed the view that climate change did not affect women and men equally, as women suffered disproportionate impacts and faced barriers in accessing climate decision-making. Despite those challenges, the delegation explained, women and girls around the world were leading the way in mitigating, adapting to and addressing the impacts of climate change. Women and girls, in all their diversity, brought fresh perspectives, skills and talents to climate mitigation, an area in which innovative and sustainable clean energy solutions were needed to transform the high-emitting global energy sector. Another delegation valued as fundamental the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in environmental issues, as it believed that women and girls suffered the most from the effects of climate change. Another delegation recognized the role of gender in climate considerations.

14. A delegation lauded subprogramme 2, Digital transformations in supporting environmental action, for promoting continuous innovation and collaboration, key tools for safeguarding the planet for future generations by enabling support for conservation, protection, restoration, data systems and sustainable management of natural resources, including land and water. The same delegation welcomed the objective to enhance the use of data analytics on environmental issues and underscored that this would allow for more effective policies, decisions, actions and investments to leverage the digital transformation as an enabling tool to support sustainable economies and societies by bridging existing digital divides, thereby improving research, innovation and equal access to environmental information. The delegation added that UNEP should continue its work to enhance coverage of early warning in order to facilitate the ability of countries to forestall and minimize risks arising from climate change, nature, biodiversity loss and pollution. That, the delegation continued, was in line with the Early Warnings for All initiative of the Secretary-General and would enhance the transition of early warnings into early action by linking risks to solutions and their investment potentials.

15. A delegation welcomed the objective of subprogramme 4, Environmental governance, which supported countries in achieving environmental policy coherence and having a strong legal and institutional framework for implementation of environmental goals, as mandated by the special session to commemorate UNEP@50. The delegation recognized the importance of fostering environmental rule of law and effective international governmental governance through multilateral processes, as well as the crucial importance of effective domestic legal frameworks and governance structures for promoting compliance with obligations and international environmental law and for delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation referenced result 1 of subprogramme 4, Environmental governance, and the problem of illegal waste trafficking, in particular in the case of Asia-Pacific. The delegation noted the initiatives for capacity-building of some country representatives and asked whether UNEP was also considering taking action aimed at stopping waste trafficking at the source, as was done with drug trafficking.

16. Regarding subprogramme 5, Chemicals and pollution action, a delegation referred to result 3, adoption of circular economy policies and practices in high-impact sectors to reduce pollution, and posited that it highlighted the need to further develop actions related to high-impact value chains and sectors such as critical minerals and materials, as well as to enhance collective trust.

17. A delegation underscored that, over the years, UNEP had played a critical role in the provision of evidence-based assessments to underpin policy debate, as well as

in environmental monitoring and assessment for a strong science-policy practice, considering the essential role of data flows in that context. In that regard, the delegation welcomed the new global data strategy launched by UNEP and considered it as an essential step for enforcing scientific evidence in the science-policy interface. The delegation also expressed its support for the preparation of the seventh edition of the *Global Environmental Outlook*, the global rationale and methodological approach of which would strengthen the dialogue among the social, natural sciences and policy communities. Another delegation welcomed the science, policies and programmes aimed at bridging the gap between scientific research and environmental policymaking to enhance evidence-based decisions for sustainable development.

18. While noting the significant role and focus of UNEP, a delegation expressed support for the objectives of the current medium-term strategy of UNEP for the period 2022–2025. The delegation recognized the importance of the organization in focusing global efforts to address environmental degradation and crisis, including in support of the 2030 Agenda, including by delivering on the environmental dimension. In that regard, the delegation requested comments on the vision and development of the next medium-term strategy and programme of work of UNEP beyond 2025, and for consultations with Member States on draft proposals.

19. The same delegation expressed support for the role of UNEP as an international convener and encouraged UNEP to work on the implementation of resolutions agreed at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which included a resolution on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally. The delegation then requested comments on the plans of UNEP in that regard.

20. Furthermore, the same delegation reiterated its commitment to combating climate change and mitigating its impacts and pledged to continue to work collaboratively with the organization and Member States to ensure a more sustainable future.

21. A delegation posited that there was no greater long-term challenge confronting the world than climate change and that, therefore, its country had placed ambitious climate action at the centre of its foreign policy, diplomacy and national security. The same delegation applauded the inclusion of persons with disabilities in UNEP programme planning, including by raising awareness of their needs and concerns in its programme and project design, and implementing and tailoring its projects to fit the conditions and needs of local communities.

22. A delegation expressed the view that, given the fact that only 15 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals targets were on track, it was imperative to implement the environmental dimension to advance achievement. In that context, the delegation placed particular emphasis on subprogramme 6, Finance and economic transformations, convinced that a genuine and deep commitment to financing for development must inescapably be focused on the green and blue economies. The same delegation believed that the transition to an economy that contributed to limiting global warming required investments in renewable energies, resilient infrastructure and a just transition.

23. A delegation conveyed that it had consistently opposed environmental alarmism and did not support the concept of a “triple planetary crisis”. The delegation proposed to replace the term “crises” in the text with a more balanced term, such as “challenges”. Moreover, the delegation emphasized that the development of scientific research was the fundamental mandate of UNEP. It believed that there was an urgent need to provide technological assistance to developing countries and that this should be reflected in the programme plan. The delegation also noted that it consistently promoted the implementation of the principle of equitable geographical

representation in the work of UNEP and noted that the principle was reflected in United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/13.

24. A delegation emphasized its concern about the International Methane Emissions Observatory project, which it stated was being carried out without a corresponding intergovernmental mandate. The delegation added that the approaches implemented within the project's framework were not recognized as specialized multilateral United Nations mechanisms, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The same delegation noted that UNEP operated with some concepts that were not recognized by the international community, including low-carbon and low-emission behaviour and lifestyles, and advocated for the use of harmonized terminology.

25. A delegation stated that it was advisable to reduce the excessive level of individual consumption in developed countries and that models of consumer economies and cultures placed an excessively detrimental burden on the environment and created a colossal carbon footprint. The delegation noted that developing countries bore the brunt of the burden, as they must extract natural resources and produce the bulk of consumer goods to meet the corresponding demand from developed countries. In addition, the same delegation stated that it was necessary to contribute to an increase in the service life of consumer goods, as frequent replacement had extremely negative environmental consequences.

26. A delegation highlighted that global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals remained an uphill journey but acknowledged the significant contributions of UNEP to advancing sustainable development. The delegation gave assurance of its support for the mandate of UNEP to rally efforts to protect the shared planet and improve the quality of life without compromising future generations. The delegation suggested that UNEP should also help shape a global framework that ensured the achievement of stronger, greener development.

27. Referencing paragraph 14.46 and figure 14.VI of the proposed programme budget for 2025, a delegation described as impressive and encouraging the anticipated doubling of the number of countries joining the initiative to restore critical marine ecosystems. Overall, the delegation noted that the indicators and strategies all spoke eloquently to the work of UNEP. The delegation requested more detail on that initiative to enhance the restoration and conservation of critical coastal ecosystems.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

28. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 78/244, consider the programme plan for programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme budget for 2025 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.**