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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2026

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 11 Environment

1. At its 7th meeting, on 15 May 2025, the Committee considered programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme plan for 2026 and programme performance in 2024 (A/80/6 (Sect. 14)).

Discussion

2. Several delegations commended the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and expressed support for the critical role played by UNEP within the United Nations system.

3. A delegation expressed support for the advocacy of UNEP with regard to national obligations under the Paris Agreement and urged that efforts be strengthened, considering the alarming findings from the synthesis report of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

4. A delegation pointed out that, except for references under the legislative mandates section, the programme plan did not address the critical issue of sand and dust storms, which had increased dramatically in frequency in recent years. The delegation stated that sand and dust storms emitted an estimated 2 trillion tons of material each year globally, and recalled General Assembly resolution 77/294, by which 12 July was proclaimed as International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms. The delegation stressed the need for global and regional cooperation to manage and mitigate the effects of sand and dust storms. The delegation further stated that the current crisis of sand and dust storms required scaled-up engagement and increased ambitions, expectations and



concrete actions, including more attention in programme 11 to mobilizing funds, technical support and training to enhance capacities and implement effective plans of action.

5. Recognizing that climate change and environmental challenges had no borders, a delegation underscored the urgent need for strengthened regional cooperation as a pillar of effective environmental response. The delegation encouraged UNEP to consider a more deliberate and structured engagement with regional bodies, such as the Southern African Development Community and the African Union, to leverage existing regional strategies and mechanisms. The delegation supported region-wide early warning systems and coordinated disaster response mechanisms to promote joint programming and resource mobilization for clean energy, climate adaptation and sustainable land management. The delegation also called for strengthening of the regional knowledge base through shared research, data collection and capacity development and commended the proposed support of UNEP for Member States in developing low-emission development policies, scaling up clean energy investments and advancing ecosystem-based adaptation. The delegation urged UNEP to apply a regional lens to those initiatives, recognizing that many countries in the African region faced similar constraints.

6. A delegation proposed that the leadership of UNEP within the United Nations system be complemented by closer collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the regional United Nations offices and the regional resident coordinator system. The delegation believed that such collaboration would ensure that environmental strategies were fully integrated into development, humanitarian and peacebuilding frameworks, especially in disaster-prone and post-conflict settings.

7. Recognizing that peace and the upholding of human rights were also part of the work of UNEP, the delegation pointed out that the implementation of resolutions on human development and the right to a safe and clean environment were critical for the enjoyment of all human rights and for development opportunities for current and future generations.

8. A delegation reiterated its opposition to environmental alarmism and 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 called for the implementation of the principle of equitable geographical representation in the work of UNEP.

9. A delegation stated that it would no longer ignore threats to the natural environment and would support sensible environmental protections. To that end, the delegation believed that UNEP should focus its work within its core mandate, bearing in mind its limited capacity and available resources. The delegation urged UNEP to focus on efforts to ensure the equality of women and girls, and insisted on not including language on diversity, equity and inclusion, gender ideology or environmental justice.

10. The delegation encouraged UNEP to continue its efforts to implement the resolutions agreed at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, including the resolution on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally. The delegation welcomed any further comments from UNEP on its plans in that regard.

11. A delegation expressed appreciation to UNEP for presenting its medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and pointed out that southern Africa continued to experience the devastating consequences of El Niño and La Niña cycles, resulting in prolonged droughts, extreme heatwaves, unpredictable heavy rains, flooding and bushfires. The delegation noted that those events disrupted agricultural production,

destroyed ecosystems, displaced communities and deepened socioeconomic vulnerabilities in the region.

12. A delegation expressed the view that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals impinged on State sovereignty as a soft form of global governance, and therefore its State no longer reaffirmed them as a matter of course in United Nations resolutions. At the same time, the delegation expressed respect for the sovereignty of other nations and understood that countries might choose to pursue individual objectives covered within the Goals. In such cases, the delegation asked that entities focus on specific development objectives, such as addressing corruption, improving health, promoting food security or improving education, among others, rather than the blanket references to the 2030 Agenda.

13. Another delegation expressed the belief that the 2030 Agenda, although well intentioned, was made up of non-legally-binding commitments that States had the right to interpret in line with their sovereignty. In that regard, the delegation reserved its right to disassociate from some aspects of those programmes as they might or might not be in line with its State sovereignty.

14. Another delegation stated that, as President of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it had worked with the international community to conclude the ambitious, pragmatic and balanced Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and had launched initiatives for its implementation, and had advanced the building of the green Belt and Road Initiative, thus making its contribution to building a clean and beautiful world. The delegation noted that UNEP had been actively monitoring the state of the environment, providing information to support scientific decision-making and coordinating responses to global environmental challenges. The same delegation stated that UNEP had made an important contribution to environmental protection concepts and the promotion of global sustainable development. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to actively support UNEP to build a fair and reasonable global environmental governance system, accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda, promote stronger, greener and healthier global development and make joint efforts to promote the common homeland of all humankind.

15. On climate action, a delegation described the new-found focus of UNEP on climate action as an unnecessary distraction that would duplicate efforts elsewhere in the United Nations system and draw already constrained resources away from the core mission of UNEP. The delegation stated that it could not support an expansion of the UNEP mandate or new initiatives.

16. On the other hand, another delegation expressed that it placed particular importance on the objectives and results of subprogramme 1, Climate action, and was especially interested in assessments of progress and lessons learned in relation to food security, sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems, the quadripartite alliance and “One Health”, and the circular economy.

17. A delegation sought clarification on whether the efforts of UNEP to address climate change had become more difficult in the past year and whether Member States’ support had remained consistent.

18. A delegation referenced subprogramme 2, Digital transformations in supporting environmental action, and expressed support for the global environmental data strategy. The delegation added that it supported knowledge generation and transfer initiatives as well as activities that helped with the definition of data management and dissemination strategies in developing countries.

19. With regard to subprogramme 3, Nature action, a delegation noted that it was mentioned in paragraph 14.42 that an online course on the application of nature-based

solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other approaches was provided in seven languages and enquired about the criteria for selection of those languages and plans to expand the list.

20. Another delegation also referenced paragraph 14.42, and requested that UNEP elaborate on the target group and what the resilience programme entailed. The delegation also asked for details on how collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction was carried out.

21. On subprogramme 4, Environmental governance, a delegation referenced paragraph 14.53 and requested more details on the activities and measures being rolled out. The delegation expressed its support for training and technical assistance programmes with a gender perspective and reiterated its full support for the work of UNEP.

22. With regard to the role of environmental governance, a delegation stated that coordination within the United Nations system for a balanced integration of the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development was pivotal, particularly as it related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The delegation said that environmental commitments must be intensified, as delays and, in some cases, reversals in implementation had created critical moments for the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The delegation expressed the view that climate policy, sustainable development and poverty reduction were inextricably intertwined and, therefore, any actions in the context of the post-2030 agenda needed to consider this. In that regard, the delegation stated that UNEP should increase its role in actions towards green financing, green technology and sustainable lifestyles.

23. A delegation highlighted the importance of subprogramme 6, Finance and economic transformations, as it involved actions that addressed the core of sustainable development. In that regard, the delegation recalled the High-level Principles on Bioeconomy of the Group of 20, which aimed to increase multilateral momentum towards sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. The delegation wholeheartedly endorsed the emphasis placed on tailored and contextualized capacity-building and requested more details on the informational tools and products mentioned in paragraph 14.85.

24. A delegation pointed to paragraph 14.81 and stated that subprogramme 6, Finance and economic transformations, helped its national policies towards sustainable development, which meant that more than 98 per cent of electricity in the country currently came from renewable sources.

25. Another delegation expressed concerns about table 14.9 and enquired as to whether UNEP had the necessary expertise to effectively manage the projects mentioned, given that economic transformation initiatives were likely to involve special skills. Furthermore, the delegation asked whether the location of the projects took account of geographical regional balances and whether they were concrete examples of how UNEP helped African countries to gain access to the Green Climate Fund.

Conclusions and recommendations

26. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 79/247, consider the programme plan for programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme budget for 2026 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the eightieth session of the Assembly.**