Comments by Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

PART B: INPUTS TO SUBPARAGRAPHS 10 a) - c)

Operative Paragraph 10 of decision 4/2 reads as follows: “Decides that the scope of the consideration during the review process will be:

(a) The preparation, working arrangements, and scheduling of sessions of the Environment Assembly and the objectives, preparation, working arrangements and the scheduling of meetings of its subsidiary body, namely the meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the regular and annual meetings of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;”

Guiding questions for subparagraph 10 (a):

1. How can UNEA and its working arrangements be leveraged to further enhance its ability to take strategic decisions and provide political guidance?
2. What steps can be taken to meaningfully enhance stakeholder engagement, including from the scientific community, at UNEA?
3. Are the designations of the subsidiary intersessional bodies – i.e. OECPR and the annual subcommittee – adequately reflecting their roles and functions?
4. Should the respective roles of the OECPR and the annual subcommittee be further clarified and reinforced? If so, how?
5. Are the timing and duration of the meetings of the different UNEP governing bodies optimal, or should they be reconsidered, including with respect to facilitating meaningful stakeholder participation? If so, how?

Provided inputs:

Thank you for giving CIEL the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. Our main suggestions are included below:

- Enhance UNEA’s profile by engaging at the regional level (e.g. organizing ad hoc sessions/briefings during the regional forum of ministers of the environment) and by taking advantage of the existing UNEP offices (e.g. the regional offices could engage the local delegates and stakeholders community on a more regular basis). As a way of example: in Geneva, briefings for the missions are organized ahead of important meetings; however, follow up could be improved and cross-sectoral engagement with delegates working with other
institutions such as ILO and WHO, as well as delegates attending the Human Rights Council, would help to strengthen cross-cutting collaboration and raise the profile of UNEP and UNEA.

- Include Major Groups and stakeholders in the Orientation for the Committee of Permanent representatives.

- Recognize the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge as equal to scientific knowledge and integrate it as an essential element in the proposed solutions to environmental problems.

- Clarify the respective roles of the OECPR and the subcommittee by publishing more information on the UNEP CPR website.

- We highly appreciate the possibility to remotely join the meetings of the CPR and its subcommittee. Stakeholder participation in the meetings could be enhanced by improving the audio quality, including a video of the meeting so remote participants can clearly see the speaker, and by including access to interpretation. Moreover, Major Groups and stakeholders would benefit from specific training/briefings on how to engage with UNEP governing bodies.

- Major Groups and Stakeholders are not in a position to effectively participate in the OECPR meetings if the Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF) is held in parallel or at the end of the OECPR. We suggest the GMGSF is organized in advance of the OECPR, and an early slot of the OECPR meeting is held for the MGFC to share their main suggestions on the draft resolutions with delegates.

(b) The respective roles and responsibilities of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including those related to interactions with their respective constituencies;

Guiding questions for subparagraph 10 (b):

1. Should the respective roles and responsibilities of the CPR and UNEA Bureaux and their Chairs be more distinguished and clarified, including with regard to representation of regional constituencies?
2. Should the two Bureaux further strengthen their working relationship? If so, how?
3. How can individual Bureau members contribute to enhancing the visibility of UNEA as the leading global environmental authority in other international fora?

Provided inputs:
Major Groups and Stakeholders haven’t had the opportunity to closely interact with the Bureau members on a regular basis. Working more closely with Major Groups and Stakeholders could be mutually beneficial and also help Bureau members to enhance UNEA’s visibility.

During MEAs’ COPs or intersessional meetings, UNEA’s Bureau members and/or the UNEA President could be invited to present relevant UNEA resolutions that touch upon similar issues (e.g. hosting a session on the chemicals resolutions and ministerial declaration during SAICM or BRS COPs). This might also facilitate the negotiations by presenting previously agreed language to different delegates, and by creating more coherence and ambition between different fora. CPR Bureau members could be invited to participate in the Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM) of Major Groups of their respective region, and invite participants to report back on the consultation’s outcome at the following CPR meeting.

(c) Criteria, modalities and timing for presenting and negotiating draft resolutions and decisions;

Guiding questions for paragraph 10 (c):

1. What should be the key criteria and focus for draft UNEA resolutions and decisions, and how should they relate to the theme of the Assembly?
2. How to better ensure that informal deadlines for submitting draft resolutions are respected?
3. How to ensure that resolutions and decisions are complementary and not duplicative to the UNEP programme of work and budget?
4. How can the secretariat better support the chairs of the working groups that negotiate resolutions including through possible submission of proposals for suggested action?

Provided inputs:
- continue sharing clear deadlines
- consult with States and Major Groups representatives before taking a final decision on the UNEA theme