Comments by Canada

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?

Provide your inputs in the box below:

General comments from Canada on this Review process:

The Review process by the CPR should take into account the following considerations:

- Lessons learned from UNEA 4; the document prepared for the CPR 146 was useful in that respect.
- Links to paragraph 14 of same Decision 4/2 requesting the ED to develop an action plan for implementing Paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “The future we want” (paragraphs a) to h) – regarding the strengthening of UNEP). In other words, any improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of UNEA and governing bodies should also strengthen UNEP and vice-versa.
- The monitoring of the implementation of Resolutions and Programme of Work should be designed to enhance the effectiveness of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies.
- An inclusive consultation process needs to take place.
- Lessons learned from other relevant international bodies and organizations’ governance models:
  o this information should already be distilled into pre-identified good practices/lessons learned, as opposed to being presented as a simple list of what exists without analysis.
- The ED “input paper” should include a robust statement of the problematic and corresponding analysis:
  o For example, the “input paper” should not be shy of stating the problems and challenges that hinder the UNEA, the CPR, and the Subcommittee to reach their maximum potential and efficiency.
  o The paper should also outline what it would take to optimize the empowerment of member states (PRs, capitals, delegates...) and stakeholders to fully engage with and contribute to these various bodies and sessions. In this regard, a survey may be useful.

**Input to Q 1: leveraging UNEA working arrangements**

- The value-added and niche of UNEA, as the single universal gathering of environmental ministers, needs to be tapped better.
- The theme needs to be strategic, i.e. based on the most pressing and important issue where UNEA can make a difference.
- See also comments on resolutions below.

**Input to Q 2: stakeholder engagement, including scientific community**

- The “input paper” should dedicate a section to stakeholder engagement and analyze best practices in other bodies.
- The proliferation of informal negotiation meetings during OECPR and UNEA does not favour stakeholder participation and should be avoided.
- Suggestions that would be useful to pursue to increase stakeholder engagement include a dedicated session at the OECPR for direct interaction between Member States and Major Groups, an intergenerational dialogue and events targeting children and youth as well as on the empowerment of women;
- Consider options for increase the integration of indigenous knowledge in the work of UNEA;
- The science community in collaboration with the Secretariat could prepare “science briefs/key messages” that would be OECPR/UNEA documents, on the theme and sub-themes of UNEA, and for each topic covered by the draft resolutions:
  o These “science briefs/key messages” could be prepared based on GEO products or other science publications.
  o The goal would be to make the bridge between science and policy easier to cross and to ensure UNEA outcomes are informed by the latest science.
  o Additionally, these “briefs” could also usefully include ongoing initiatives in the field covered by the resolution, past relevant resolutions on the topic, and proposals made to UNEA by non-state stakeholders
**Input to Q 3 and Q4: designations and respective roles of OECPR, CPR and annual Subcommittee**

- Figure 1 in the document depicts the CPR Subcommittee as “meeting informally”. The Subcommittee is not informal. In practice, there is perhaps the perception that it is. There is a sense that the potential of the Subcommittee - and that of the CPR as a matter of fact - may be under-tapped.
- To make better use of both the CPR and the Subcommittee generally, agendas for their meetings need to be more substantive and attractive so as to stimulate engagement of MS. Formulating decisions and conclusions at the end of each CPR meeting would help. The CPR process for making actual decisions is unclear.
- A key question the Review process should address is: how to design agendas and the work calendars of the CPR/Subcommittee to seek timely and meaningful feedback/decisions from the CPR on the implementation of resolutions and the Programme of Work and on specific workstreams?
- Agendas should be laid out more in advance (and documents available sufficiently early i.e. 6 weeks) to allow for proper consultations in capitals and more meaningful engagement at the meeting.
- A key dynamic changer would be that deadlines for written comments on CPR documents should be before the CPR and Annual Subcommittee meetings as opposed to after. First of all that means documents would need be circulated much earlier, and this would allow for more substantive inputs and discussions at the meeting, which would enhance the overall efficiency of the CPR.

**Input to Q5: timing and duration of meetings**

- Holding the OECPR back-to-back with UNEA makes sense:
  - Holding the OECPR separately would carry the risk of reopening resolutions between OECPR and UNEA.
  - The five days of the OECPR should technically be sufficient to negotiate resolutions if they have already been streamlined or bundled (although in practice it most likely overflows on the 2nd week).
- A key issue at UNEA-4 was that some resolutions had not even undergone a first reading at the end of the OECPR, raising serious governance issues.
- A key question is how to avoid or better manage the “crunch period” before and at UNEA and OECPR:
  - This is very taxing for all and not helping the efficiency and productivity.
  - This disproportionately affects small delegations as they cannot cover all issues and limits their full participation
  - Better working arrangements and early preparation of documentation and resolutions should alleviate this situation if effectively implemented. See also comments on Resolutions below.
- The merging of the Fall 2019 CPR meeting with the Annual Subcommittee in October is a positive development. Given that delegates from capitals usually attend the Annual Subcommittee, this can enhance synergies, accessibility and profile.
Space should be provided for MS to direct questions in advance to the Secretariat to answer in the meetings with a view to promoting more dialogue.

(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 Bureaus 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?

Provide your inputs in the box below:

Canada’s input:

- The development of Terms of References for both Bureaus should help with clarifying roles:
  - Technically the Bureau of the CPR is focused on the functioning of the CPR while the UNEA Bureau is concerned with preparing UNEA.
  - Joint Bureau meetings may be more relevant immediately before and during UNEA sessions. If joint meetings are held, objectives for such meetings should be clarified in accordance with the mandate of both bodies.
- Individual Bureau members have a role to play in increasing the visibility, reach and impact of UNEA and UNEP in other global and regional fora, and of disseminating UNEA outcomes:
  - An assessment of what would help empowering Bureau members in that role, including possible tools, would be a useful component of this Review exercise.

(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?

Provide your inputs in the box below:

Canada’s input:

- Guidance to Member States on the submission of resolutions had been endorsed by the Bureau of CPR and Bureau of UNEA in the Fall 2018. This kind of guidance was useful, notwithstanding Rule 44 of the UNEA Rules of Procedures, and could guide future reforms.
- While we applaud the high level of interest and engagement by Member States, the number of resolutions at UNEA-4 was very high and as stated earlier, should have been more streamlined ahead of the OECPR;
- UNEA Decision EA.4/2 para.6 now strongly encourages at least eight week notification for submitting draft resolutions ahead of the OECPR meeting.
- As highlighted earlier in these comments, all resolutions should undergo at least a first reading by the end of the OECPR meeting. Some resolutions had not had yet a first reading by the beginning of UNEA-4 on the Monday morning of the 2nd week. This raised issues of governance and efficiency.
- Following up on this last point, Canada, as one of the co-facilitators at OECPR-4/UNEA-4, would like to propose to hold a “post-mortem” meeting of all the co-facilitators of the negotiating clusters/working groups:
  o A brainstorm among co-facilitators where they would share their experience and views on how to improve the negotiations process, could really help with informing this Review process as well as preparing the next UNEA.
  o We need to learn how to improve the consideration of resolutions both before and during the OECPR, including through more streamlining and consistency among clusters/negotiating groups.
  o This process could yield to suggested methods and practices that co-chairs/facilitators can use to better manage this particularly challenging process.
- Resolutions submitted on behalf of regional groups should be vetted in advance by MS from these groups, which would facilitate the consensus at OECPR.
- Another advantage of giving plenty of time ahead of OECPR/UNEA to MS to review draft resolutions is to call for written comments ahead of the CPR, which will save considerable time in the negotiating working groups.