Comments by Marine Ecosystems Protected Areas (MEPA) Trust

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:

There is need for parties to provide more timely information at the national level. In most cases information stay with the individuals who attend the meetings and is not disseminated or filtered down to the groups working at the local. This is how new ideas and workable solutions and local knowledge can be shared. The local groups need to have opportunities to participate but there is a cost to their effective participation which is on many instances not budgeted for.

In Antigua where MEPA has it’s base, we have case studies with experiences from knowledgeable local groups as well as from committed and knowledgeable persons who are willing to share their knowledge and competencies even voluntary to individuals with on the group knowledge experiences to collective actions towards solutions. At the meetings–very little time and space is given to hearing from local groups so it is not a balanced process.

(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:

Many Bureau person work and operate in boxes/silos only focused in a few areas and cannot make the linkages and connections with other conventions across the GEf Focal areas. MEPA works across all the conventions for in the communities where we work we have to find solutions to multiple issues for the "ridge to Reef concept is real in the island and the issues are cross cutting and need a wide approach across many sectors to find solutions.

There needs to be more members with strong local experiences and knowledge on the committees to enable the visibility to take place. The conversation must extend out from a Parties only process to inclusion of other stakeholders who can provide real life solutions.

(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:
It is possible that there is burn out and stress and work overload in small island where limited human resources is the norm. Ministries are doing multiple tasks many projects and the situation is not being able to read reports provide inputs, meet deadlines and key task and responsibilities are not being met.