Comments by Norway

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:

Decisions and resolutions taken by the United Nations Environment Assembly in order to fulfil its mandate as per Decision 27/2 should be consistent with mandate, work programme and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme. The rationale behind some resolutions is not always immediately clear for the Norwegian delegation. Inasmuch as form should follow function, the mandate, organisation and timing of the Open–Ended Committee of the Permanent Representatives and the Annual Sub–committee should be based on how best to fulfill the mandate of the Assembly. The Norwegian delegation believes that determining the timing for these meetings should not be seen in isolation from the substance of resolutions and decisions taken at the Environment Assembly. Resolutions which deal with substantial issues require sufficient time for member states to consult on domestically and potentially also with other countries.

Norway also notes that one of the challenges we appear to have at UNEA is that we request extensive reporting from the Executive Director/UNEP secretariat on resolutions and decisions, but note that while these were being reported on at UNEA–4, negotiations were already underway on new resolutions. It would be desirable if the resolutions and decisions taken at UNEA are clearly inserted within a broader context and that new resolutions are based on what has previously been decided and implemented. This is also fundamental in ensuring the implementation of both previous relevant resolutions, the mid–term strategy and the work programme and budget, as well as other relevant UN decisions, and relevant decisions in other
bodies. In addition, reports are released, such as the Global Chemicals Outlook, which should inform the substance of resolutions. It is important that the timing of the launch of these gives sufficient time for member states to consider them as use them to inform resolutions as appropriate.

With respect to having the meetings back to back, we note that in 1993, 1995 and 1997, the then Governing Council meetings lasted between 10 days and two weeks. There was in addition, a one day special session in 1994. Presumably these meetings dealt with the follow up to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but it is also telling that they were discontinued so quickly. Are there any lessons learnt which can be helpful in our decision regarding the current practice of having the OECPR back to back with the UNEA?

Norway believes that stakeholder engagement should be enhanced. This should clearly involve a step up and building on the current practices and basis for engagement. We would note that this has been a topic of decision in recent years and would welcome a fresh consideration of how to deepen the engagement and increase access for stakeholders to the work of UNEA. There are experiences in other processes and bodies which could be useful in this context – such as SAICM.

**(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?

Provided inputs:

The Norwegian delegation believes that it would be useful to consider the respective roles and responsibilities of the CPR and UNEA bureaux. Considering practices in other comparable UN and multilateral bodies may be a useful input to such a discussion, including how to ensure that all member states have appropriate access in respect of the work of these bodies. It is fundamental that the bureaux contribute to a strong sense of ownership by member states to both the Committee of Permanent Representatives and UNEA, while identifying the challenges and hinders to this in order to achieve this.

**(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:

The Norwegian delegation believes that we would benefit from a discussion which allows the development of a common understanding of what we seek to achieve with resolutions and decisions from UNEA. There needs to be clarity in respect of the relationship to the Medium Term Strategy and the Work Programme and Budget of UNEP. On that basis we may be better placed to consider what other changes are required in order to facilitate the adoption of resolutions and decisions which allow UNEA and UNEP to better fulfil their mandate, as envisaged in the appropriate UNGA decisions and related documents, while also respecting the practices and mores of the United Nations system more broadly and allow for flexibility to ensure the outcomes of UNEA are relevant and up to date. Are there other practices or rules of procedure within the UN and other multilateral organisations which can inform possible changes?