The second meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) takes place on 23-27 May 2016 at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi.

UNEA is the biggest global gathering of environment ministers of all UN Member States and involvement of stakeholders. Over 2500 participants are expected, including 123 ministers from approximately 160 countries. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, will head the EU Delegation.

UNEA is the first universal meeting of ministers after the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Climate agreement. These meetings were a clear indication that the tide is turning in favour of sustainable development, and that this agenda is shared between all nations and all stakeholders. The overarching theme of UNEA is “delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”.

The EU expects UNEA to agree:

- A Ministerial Declaration from UNEA’s High-Level Segment, which will reflect environment ministers’ collective vision for the future of the environmental agenda
- A large number of resolutions addressing the most pressing environmental challenges, including on
  - Sustainable Consumption and Production,
  - Food Waste
  - Illegal Trade in Wildlife
  - Natural Capital
  - Chemicals and Waste
  - Climate Change
  - Oceans and Seas
  - Marine Litter
  - Coral Reefs.

Several of these resolutions have been proposed by the EU and its Member States (see below), including a resolution on the role of UNEP and UNEA in delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

- UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021
- UNEP’s budget and programme of work 2018-2019.

UNEA 2 will also provide the first global platform for reviewing progress on the SDGs, particularly their environmental dimensions. To this end, UNEA-2 will contribute to the work of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), through transmission of its outcome documents. The ministerial policy-review session will use the topic of “Healthy Planet-Healthy people” as a case study of the close links between the dimensions of sustainable development and the importance of integrated policy making.
OBJECTIVES OF KEY EU RESOLUTION PROPOSALS

DELIVERING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

- Our resolution proposal on the 2030 Agenda aims at giving a strong mandate to UNEA and UNEP to give guidance on all key environmental issues and flag emerging issues and challenges in the implementation of the environmental dimension of the Agenda.

- We advocate a specific role for UNEP in integrating the environmental dimension into plans from across the UN system to provide support to countries to make progress towards the goals and targets.

- In implementing the 2030 Agenda UNEP must ensure active participation of all relevant stakeholders - drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions - and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.

OCEANS: (co-sponsored by US, Australia)

- Sustainable management of oceans and seas and their resources can make a significant impact on overall sustainable development progress; 70% of our planet is oceans and seas.

- The resolution, proposed jointly with the US and Australia, aims to give focus on and vision for UNEP’s action regarding oceans, specifically regarding implementation of and/or contribution to the SDGs, the Aichi Targets and the negotiations on BBNJ (biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction).

- It also acknowledges UNEP’s contribution to tackle emerging issues and activities adding to pressure on marine environment, including issues such as marine litter, ocean acidification, “blue carbon” and seabed mining.

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP):

- This resolution highlights the importance of SCP for achieving sustainable development, but that further efforts are needed from governments, businesses and society for truly efficient use of natural resources and a genuine circular economy.

- In the EU we are in the process of making a paradigm shift from a linear to a circular economy, a key tool to making our consumption and production more sustainable. Improving resource efficiency is another essential element of this approach. We use this resolution to demonstrate how some of these concepts could be useful to other countries in making a similar shift.

- Our proposed resolution also highlights the need to ensure policy is based on proper science and assessments. This necessitates contribution of science-policy panels such as IPBES and the International Resource Panel.

CLIMATE:

- COP21 was a turning point in the fight against climate change. Our resolution aims to use UNEA to urge all to shift from negotiations to ambitious implementation of the Paris agreement.

- The resolution supports UNEP’s ongoing work on climate change mitigation, adaptation and notably ecosystem-based adaptation, technology, capacity building and finance.

CHEMICALS AND WASTE: (proposed jointly with Japan, Mongolia, Burkina Faso)
• The resolution which we have proposed to UNEA 2 with partners from Japan, Mongolia and Burkina Faso, builds on the resolution of UNEA 1, which has become a major reference for work in this area.

• The adoption of the several C&W related targets in the 2030 Agenda also require policy directions by UNEA and pro-active involvement of UNEP to provide adequate support and guidance, notably at the national level.

• Our resolution stresses the importance of addressing environmentally sound management of waste and the prevention of waste generation as a priority, and that these priorities should be fully integrated in UNEP’s and governments’ policies and action.