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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 16 December 2025 - Seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) (Nairobi, Kenya, 8-12 December 2025) - Information from the Presidency and the Commission

Despite a challenging geopolitical context, the EU and its Member States met the objectives outlined for this year's meeting of the seventh United Nations Environment Assembly. With the Ministerial Declaration, UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy/Programme of Work and budget and a number of resolutions adopted, UNEA-7 sent a strong message that multilateral environmental governance is still alive. A total of 11 resolutions and 3 decisions were adopted, including on the topics of sustainable artificial intelligence, minerals and metals, chemicals and waste as well as enhancing the participation of children and youth, which were priorities for the EU and its Member States. Although these resolutions did not all meet the level of ambition sought by the EU and its Member States, and although it was not possible to reach justifiable compromises on 4 resolutions (including a priority one on crimes affecting the environment), the outcomes of UNEA-7 served as welcome reminders -particularly in the wake of the IMO meeting in London, COP30 in Belém, and the stalled INC5.2 plastics negotiations in Geneva- that the United Nations can still provide a meaningful platform for cooperation among Member States.

The seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) took place from 8 to 12 December 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet." Draft resolutions, decisions and the Ministerial Declaration were initially discussed at the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR), held from 1 to 5 December 2025. UNEA-7 had just under 6,000 participants from over 170 Member States, including 79 Ministers. The EU and its Member States were strongly represented, with approximately 200 delegates in total.

UNEA-7 proved to be a challenging meeting. It was difficult to reach agreement among widely diverging positions against the backdrop of strained geopolitics, a deepening crisis in the multilateral system, and increasing demands for financial support. At the outset of UNEA-7, nearly 30 resolutions/decisions had been proposed. Ultimately, the Assembly adopted a Ministerial Declaration, 11 resolutions¹ and 3 decisions².

The EU and its Member States advocated for an ambitious Ministerial Declaration, resolutions that deliver real added value, and the adoption of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy/Programme of Work and budget. Collectively, the outcomes reaffirmed the importance of multilateral environmental cooperation. However, the text of the Ministerial Declaration did not fully meet the expectations of the EU and its Member States, as it was generally considered to lack ambition. However, the EU and its Member States succeeded in securing the inclusion references on circular economy covering entire life cycle, crimes that affect the environment and the Global Environment Outlook (GEO), making the Ministerial Declaration a balanced compromise that helps sustain momentum in global environmental cooperation and ambition.

¹ Artificial Intelligence, Chemicals and Waste, Minerals and Metals, Glaciers, Coral reefs, Children and youth, Wildfires, Antimicrobial resistance, Sargassum seaweed, Sport and environment, MEAs synergies

² Mid-Term Strategy 2026-2029 and Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027 of UNEP, Agenda and date of UNEA-8, and Trust funds

The EU and its Member States had chosen not to put forward its own resolution building upon the proposals by other Member States well aligned with our priorities. The EU and its Member States sought to avoid duplication, promote unity, and strengthen collective efforts to address global environmental challenges more effectively. The EU and its Member States placed particular emphasis on circular economy, creating opportunities for youth through the green transition, ensuring sustainable artificial intelligence in support of environmental protection, safeguarding against crimes that affect the environment, and promoting safer management of chemicals and waste as well as minerals and metals. Two of these resolutions – on artificial intelligence and on chemicals and waste - the EU and its Member states decided to co-sponsor due to their final texts being the most aligned with EU’s priorities. The resolution on Crimes that affect the environment was withdrawn due to strong pressure in the negotiating room to limit the scope of the resolution and to lower the level of ambition, an outcome that the EU and its Member States could not accept. Nonetheless, UNEA-7 delivered several positive results, notably through the adoption of the following resolutions that the EU and its Member States had identified as particular priorities:

- UNEP/EA.7/L.14 – Environmental sustainability of artificial intelligence systems
(tabled by Kenya and co-sponsored by Armenia and the EU and its Member States)

This resolution, proposed by Kenya, explores both the environmental impacts of artificial intelligence and the potential to improve protection of the environment through artificial intelligence, and report on this. It also encourages Member States of UNEA to take measures to improve the quality, accessibility and interoperability of environmental data to overcome digital data divides. Although the version finally adopted was less ambitious than the one proposed, it still provides UNEP with a clear mandate in this area of fast emerging importance from an environmental perspective.

- UNEP/EA.7/L.9 – Enhancing the meaningful participation of youth in environmental processes and in environmental education

(tabled by Sri Lanka and co-sponsored by Bhutan, Burkina Faso and Thailand)

The resolution aims to strengthen the participation of youth in environmental processes. It encourages Member States to enhance youth involvement, supports the continued work of the Youth Environment Assembly, and promotes the integration of competencies needed for sustainable development. A central EUMS priority was the inclusion of children within the scope of the resolution, an element that proved highly contentious throughout the negotiations. Nevertheless, the final text retained this key component, marking a success for the EU and its Member States.

- UNEP/EA.7/L.6 – Strengthening international cooperation on the environmentally sound management of minerals and metals

(tabled by Colombia and Oman and co-sponsored by Armenia, Congo, Senegal and Zambia)

The resolution requests UNEP to convene member states and stakeholders for dialogues on enhancing international cooperation on sustainable management of minerals and metals, mine tailings, best practices, and enhancing cooperation to strengthen capabilities. This dialogue will include national focal points appointed pursuant to resolution 5/12, which was a priority for the EU and its Member States. Importantly, the resolution does not establish a new negotiation track, which was a concern of many delegations throughout UNEA-7.

- UNEP/EA.7/L.13 – Sound management of chemicals and waste

(tabled by Switzerland and co-sponsored by Australia, Chile, Congo, Norway, Peru, Ukraine and Uruguay and the EU and its Member States)

The resolution on chemicals and waste introduced by Switzerland encourages Member States to take further action with regards to lead, cadmium, arsenic and organotins, building on UNEP's findings. It also welcomes the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) and supports cooperation with other relevant bodies. The EU and its Member States engaged firmly to ensure no backtracking when it comes UNEP's mandate in that field and succeeded in adding a reference to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) as a global standard contributing to the sound management of chemicals.

- UNEP/EA.7/L.15 on Preservation of glaciers and the broader cryosphere, in particular in mountain regions
(tabled by Tajikistan, Peru and co-sponsored by Bhutan)

The resolution, tabled by Tajikistan and supported by Peru and Bhutan, recognizes the interconnections between the preservation and protection of the cryosphere, glaciers and their ecosystems and climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, sea-level rise and disaster risk reduction, and that glacier and cryosphere loss significantly affects communities, ecosystem functions and biodiversity, exacerbates water related challenges, while leading to the loss of cultural and natural heritage. It encourages Member States to take urgent action to preserve glacier and cryosphere in particular in mountain regions and address their loss, and to enhance international cooperation, to address glacier and cryosphere loss, and its causes and impacts. The EU and its Member States engaged firmly in the negotiations and, while the resolution is a slim version of the original proposal, it gives important impetus to the process of protecting the glaciers and cryosphere.

A draft resolution on circular economy, proposed by Republic of Korea, was withdrawn even before consultations started in the context of OECPR. Also, the following draft resolutions did not get enough support to be finally adopted at UNEA-7:

- Karst Ecosystem for Global Water, Biodiversity, Climate Resilience, and Economic Development *(Indonesia)*
- Active Protection of Deep-Sea Ecosystems *(Vanuatu)*
- Enhancing international response to address crimes that affect the environment *(Peru and Kenya)*
- Strengthening the Role of the United Nations Environment Programme Headquarters in Nairobi to Address Environmental Challenges and Enhance Multilateral Cooperation to address effective multilateral governance *(Mexico)*

Regarding the next session, it was agreed that the eighth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-8) will take place from 6 to 10 December 2027.