Switzerland – Expectations/Recommendations (Agenda item 4)

Delivered by Sebastian König, 20/05/2019, 12:35.
Switzerland wants to thank the Co-chairs for the elements paper.

Expectations for the 3rd substantive session

- Switzerland is prepared to contribute to a meaningful outcome that is **consensus-based** and that **reflects all three of the substantive sessions**. In this light, we believe that some elements of the co-chair’s paper do not reflect the discussions adequately.
- We pledge for building up **ownership** for the work and the outcome of this working group. We have met for three substantive sessions, working towards fulfilling the mandate given by the General Assembly. We must therefore try to be as specific as possible on as many elements as possible. *In this respect, we would like to thank the co-chairs for their draft elements and pledge for engaging directly with the text that has been circulated.*

Expectations on the recommendations

- International environmental governance and the interplay of the different elements of international environmental law are areas, which we should aim to strengthen. **International environmental governance**, however, is not specifically addressed or mentioned in the document. *In particular, it should be included in the section I as an overarching objective.*
- *(not delivered orally)* We consider it the primary duty of the Member States to ensure coherence regarding environmental matters across all policies. We are not of the opinion that environmental-related instruments should be part of the discussions on addressing environmental gaps in international law and governance as it is beyond the mandate of UNEP. *The reference to environmental-related instruments should therefore be removed.*
- We shall use this process as an **opportunity** to improve on the international environmental governance, further reinforcing the role of **United Nations Environment Programme**, and to address the emerging environmental concerns, such as marine plastics pollution, and others.

General expectations on a follow-on process

- Any further process after this third session should be **lean and should avoid unnecessary loops**. *The reference to an additional loop with the UN GA is not needed and would be undermining the work of a preparatory committee.*
- We must also assure that **UNEP** assumes its leadership in environmental matters in the UN-System and plays an important role in a follow-on process. **UNEA-4 has come up with specific requests towards UNEP and related stakeholders to prepare for a certain milestone event in the future. The current draft elements, however, do not adequately reflected UNEP’s role and the mandates given by UNEA.**
- And most importantly, the outcome of a follow-on process must be well-embedded in the **international environmental agenda**. In order to create the political momentum and will, there is need for an appropriate “hook”, a commemoration to mark a milestone for international environmental governance and emerging environmental concerns. *We see the 50-year commemoration of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 in 2022 as a very promising option in this regard.*