

3rd meeting of the EMG Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda.

Distribution: EMG Task Team members

09 July 2015

Teleconference, 15:30-17:00 hrs, Geneva time

Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat.

Minutes

3rd meeting of the EMG Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

Introduction

The third meeting of the Task Team took place by teleconference from 15.30 to 17.00 (CEST) on 09 July 2015, and was chaired by the Director of the EMG Secretariat, Elliott Harris.

The list of participants is provided in Annex I. Following the Chair's opening remarks, the meeting adopted its agenda (Annex II). The meeting considered a first draft of the report on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG and discussed its presentation to the EMG senior officials at their meeting in September 2015, and agreed to suggest to the senior officials a new approach for the work of the Task Team on Environmental Sustainability of the SDGs.

1. Discussion on the draft report on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG

The Chair apologised for the late transmission of the draft report to the Task Team and stressed that members will be given time to provide comments to the draft in writing in the course of July. He then provided a brief overview of the key elements of the report and posed the following questions to the Task Team as a basis for its discussion:

- Does the proposed structure of the report include all necessary elements?
- How could the sections 4 and 5 of the report that deal with the review of EMG governance, modalities of work and mandate be further strengthened?
- What should our strategic messages be?

Achim Halpaap, UNITAR, introduced the draft report, which was prepared through collaboration of the Secretariat and UNITAR, in further detail. He indicated that in particular the second part of the report provides suggestions that emerged from interviews and discussion of the Task Team, using a qualitative approach to data collection. He encouraged the Task Team to consider which points should be pulled out and highlighted in the report, e.g. in an executive summary or in text boxes after each section. Some of the findings point to the need to consider revising the TOR of the EMG. It would be important to consider how the results should be presented to the senior officials to stimulate their active contributions, bearing in mind that SOM20 requested an options paper as an output of this exercise.

The Chair confirmed that the senior officials should be given the chance to contribute to the process, for example through an interactive panel discussion around selected themes.

Key Considerations

- WMO expressed its satisfaction with the structure of the report and underlined that that heads of agencies should be the main audience for the report, and that the senior officials meeting should be the forum where strategic directions and inputs to the process are shared. Furthermore, WMO supported the idea of an executive summary highlighting key points, in which the EMG ToR and the future focus of EMG work should be included.
- It was mentioned that it may be more challenging than usual to mobilise heads of agencies' participation in the SOM considering the tight schedule during the General Assembly. This uncertainty makes it difficult to plan active inputs by heads during the SOM.
- UNEP clarified that any suggested changes to the EMG ToR would need to be processed through UNEA and recommended to Member States for their consideration. Revisions to the EMG ToR should be based on suggested ways in which system-wide cooperation on the environment can be further enhanced in the light of the post 2015 development agenda and should be submitted to UNEA by the SOM.
- Considering the tight schedule before the SOM, it was suggested that a general proposal for the need to revise the EMG ToR should be included in the Task Team's report to the senior officials, and that a process could be initiated after SOM to develop recommendations for a revised ToR for the EMG consistent with the post 2015, for the consideration of to UNEA.
- It was proposed that the recommendations to UNEA should include a suggestion that the SOM is mandated to initiate a revision of the EMG ToR, in order to avoid having to pass a decision on the matter by the General Assembly that approved the current EMG ToR.
- The CEB Secretariat expressed satisfaction with the draft report. Some editorial changes would be provided in writing after the meeting.
- WMO suggested that the recommendations in the report could be divided into categories of short-, medium- and long-term objectives, indicating their hierarchical importance and feasible implementation timeframe. Out of the many options proposed, the Task Team would have to recommend a preferred option for the consideration of SOM and UNEA.

Agreed action

The Task Team is requested to provide their written comments to the draft report within 14 days after the meeting (i.e. **by July 24**).

Based on comments received during the meeting and to be received in writing, the draft report will be revised. A revised, penultimate version will then be shared with EMG focal points before a final report is submitted to the senior officials in September.

It was agreed that an executive summary will be added to the report and that the recommendations should be made coherent and organized according to implementation timeframe and nature.

The issue of suggesting a revision to the EMG ToR should be proposed by SOM to UNEA.

Task Team members are requested to inform the Secretariat, if their head of agency could consider taking the lead in a panel discussion during the SOM on the topic of maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG.

2. Discussion on the suggested approach for the work of the Task Team on Environmental Sustainability of the SDGs

Referring to the note “Update and Proposed Adjustments to the Work on SDGs and Environmental Sustainability”, the Chair invited feedback on the proposed new approach to address the work stream on the environmental sustainability dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Chair informed that the proposed new approach suggests that an EMG input focuses on providing analytical support for the implementation of the SDGs from an environmental sustainability perspective, rather than seeking to inform the international negotiations on this matter. He suggested that the output of the exercise could be a summary matrix that shows the environmental dimension of each SDG (if any), the relevant environmental thematic areas it relates to and whether there are existing frameworks (such as MEAs) and implementation mechanisms that deal with the topic and whether the SDG is compatible with these.

Key Considerations

- WMO supported by the CBD Secretariat suggested that this work could be planned in the anticipation that the UN Secretary General will request all UN entities to conform with the post 2015 development agenda and ask them how they contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. The EMG input could be a light mechanism through which information that will be useful for Member States, is pulled together. When looking at the SDGs from an environmental perspective, attention needs to be paid to nexus issues to avoid a siloed approach.
- UNITAR advised that the proposed analysis could support UNDG and UNCTs in their work at the country level.
- The Chair then proposed that the Task Team could start this work by looking at one or two pilot thematic areas to test the feasibility and added value of the summary matrix. Based on this exercise, the Task Team could recommend to the EMG senior officials that the pilot study is extended to a wider analysis of the SDGs and their linkages to existing targets and implementation frameworks.
- Efforts must be made to avoid duplicating work that has already been done in the UN system, and so time should be dedicated to find out what analyses of the SDGs from an environmental/thematic perspective already exist.
- UNITAR recalled that some work has already been done, e.g. by the BRS Secretariat and UNEP Chemicals who have looked at which SDGs include references to chemicals and how existing targets support these. In addition, the IMG on the sound management of chemicals has looked at the SDGs from a chemicals perspective. IETC may also have carried out analyses on the SDGs from this angle. One pilot area could therefore be sound chemicals management, drawing on existing analyses.
- The CBD Secretariat supported the proposed approach outlined by the Chair and suggested that biodiversity serves as one thematic area in the pilot analysis. In this context the NBSAPs exist as an implementation mechanism for the Convention and its related targets, from which lessons learned could be drawn when new implementation mechanisms are created. Work done by UNEP and WCMC would also be relevant in this context.

- UNEP suggested that another thematic area covered by the pilot analysis could be Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), on which DESA has done a study that could be relevant to refer to in this context. An implementation mechanism does, however, not exist for this thematic area.
- DESA added that SCP could make the exercise relevant for a larger number of agencies.

Agreed Action

The Task Team agreed to proceed with a pilot analysis, testing the proposed analytical framework on three thematic pilot areas including sound chemicals management, biodiversity and SCP, drawing on the work already carried out by the BRS and CBD Secretariats and DESA.

It was further agreed that with the help of Task Group members, BRS and UNEP Chemicals the CBD Secretariat and DESA will be contacted to assist the EMG Secretariat in completing the table as outlined in the note using available information and existing data, by July 31, 2015 on sound chemicals and waste management, biodiversity and SCP.

3. Preparation of the Task Team report for SOM21

The EMG Secretariat informed that in addition to the report including recommendations by the Task Team, a progress report on the Task Team's work and deliverables along with suggested action points will be prepared and submitted for consideration of the senior officials. The Secretariat will prepare a draft progress report and draft action points that will be circulated to the Task Team for comments.

The Task Team members were requested to check whether their respective head of agency will participate in the SOM in New York on the 24th of September.

4. Any other matters

No other matters were discussed.

5. Closure of the teleconference

The Chair closed the meeting at 17.00 GVA time.

Annex I

List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Christian Blondin	WMO
Paul Egerton	WMO
Xenia von Lilien	CEB Secretariat
Neil Pratt	CBD Secretariat
Achim Halpaap	UNITAR
Micol Mulon	WFP
Federica Pietracci	UNDESA
Corli Pretorius	UNEP
Elizabeth Mrema	UNEP
Michiko Okumura	UNEP
Hemini Vrontamitis	UNEP
Alfons Kambu	UNEP
Elliott Harris	EMG Secretariat (Chair)
Hossein Fadaei	EMG Secretariat
Jannica Pitkanen-Brunnsberg	EMG Secretariat

Annex II

3rd meeting of the EMG Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda.

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09 July 2015

Teleconference, 15:30-17:00 hrs, Geneva time

Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat.

Working Documents:

- A. Provisional agenda
- B. First draft report (6 July 2015) : Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda
- C. Note on Proposed Adjustments to the Work of the Task Team on SDGs and Environmental Sustainability of the SDGs

Reference documents:

- A. Report of the 2nd meeting of the Task Team
- B. TOR of the Task Team

Provisional Agenda

2. Opening remarks by Elliott Harris, Director of the EMG Secretariat
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Presentation of the draft report on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG
5. Discussion on the suggested approach for the work of the Task Team on Environmental Sustainability of the SDGs
6. Short brief on preparation of the Task Team report for SOM21
7. Any other matters
8. Closure of the teleconference