



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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20th Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Management Group 25 September 2014

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Preparatory technical segment: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Senior officials' segment: 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

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Progress Report on EMG's ongoing work and suggested directions for further work

Note by the Chair

Executive summary

The present note is developed with the aim of supporting the relevant provisional agenda items 3-7 of the 20th senior officials' meeting (SOM) of the Environment Management Group (EMG). It reports progress on ongoing work, including by the Issue Management Groups (IMGs), and proposes actions and directions for further work of the EMG in its contribution to the implementation of the outcome document of the Rio+20: "The Future We Want", the decision of the First United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA)¹ as well as the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)². It suggests that the senior officials:

- I. Conclude the IMG on Biodiversity and suggest that the considerations of the IMG on enhancing integration of biodiversity in national level processes (including the NBSAPs, UNDAF and other planning processes and other work to support implementation of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity) be followed up by the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force (ABTTF).
- II. Conclude the IMG on Green Economy and recommend that the work of the IMG be followed up by partnership-based approaches such as PAGE or GGKP) for better coordinated support to member states on green economy and the facilitation of information sharing on existing and emerging policy options, methodologies and technical advice.
- III. Continue the IMG on chemicals and waste to undertake and complete the remaining tasks as listed in the ToR, including mapping of the expertise, activities and initiatives of UN agencies, funds and programmes and how these contribute to the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal and identifying possible synergies and areas for cooperation with the view to provide a contribution to the 4th International Conference on Management of Chemicals (ICCM4) in 2015.
- IV. Continue the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system to support piloting the use of the Interim Guide as a tool in individual volunteer agencies by approving the Pilot Concept Note, and to identify linkages

¹ Decision EA.1/15

² Decision XI

between the Sustainability Framework and the various ‘fit for purpose’ discussions held in the context of deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda.

- V. Welcome the call of the Secretary General to the UN system to become climate Neutral and agree to intensify their actions in moving their agencies toward climate neutrality starting by providing data on their organizations GHG emissions from this year onward , propose to the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management to prepare a road map including measures to support the UN agencies to become climate neutral by 2020 and report on progress to the next senior officials.
- VI. Decide to extend the peer review process into a second phase and take note of the potential interest that has been indicated by UPU, IMF, UN Women, WIPO and OECD to be peer reviewed during 2014-2015; invite the EMG members participating in the peer review process to consider how the process can be sustained going forward, including possible options for sustainable financing of the peer-review activities; and invite the reviewed agencies to consider sharing with other EMG members information on the progress made in their agencies in implementing the recommendations of their Peer Review Reports.
- VII. The senior officials take note of the UNEA decision and UNEP's mandate to prepare System Wide Strategy(/ies) on the Environment. They agree to provide feedback through the EMG Secretariat, by responding to the questions posed in the Strategic Directions note (*Working document: EMG/SOM.20/04*). Based on the feedback and views of EMG members, UNEP will provide a proposal on the further development of System Wide Strategy(s) on the Environment. They agree to review this process at their next meeting.
- VIII. Agree to establish an open-ended task team to identify options for furthering the effectiveness of the EMG and its contribution to the post 2015 development agenda. They agree to consider the outcome of the task force in their next meeting with the view to provide their input to the report of the UNEP Executive Director to the Second Session of the UNEA.
- IX. Take note of the suggested new issues proposed by WFP and WMO and invite further consideration by the EMG focal points to define the specific role and contribution of the EMG to these issues, for further consideration of the senior officials.
- X. Approve the work plan of EMG for the period 2015–2016, based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.20/05 to ensure that it fully reflects the actions agreed by the 20th senior officials meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources;
- XI. Welcome the opportunity to inform the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA) about the work of the EMG, and request the Chair to circulate to members of the Group for their comments a draft of the report by EMG on its work to the UNEA at its second Session in May 2016 .
- XII. Request the EMG secretariat to circulate to the members of the EMG the date and venues for the 21th meeting of the senior officials, and consult with members on its agenda

Introduction

The present note reports on the progress on the ongoing work of the Environment Management Group (EMG), including by its respective Issue Management Groups (IMGs), as well as suggested areas for further work. The note is developed to support the provisional agenda items 3-7 of the 20th senior officials' meeting. All EMG documents referred to in this report including those in the footnotes can be found on the EMG website: www.unemg.org under the special page for the 20th meeting of the EMG senior officials.

1. The IMG on Biodiversity

The 19th meeting of the EMG senior officials extended the IMG on Biodiversity for another year to respond to the decision of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)³, and to continue facilitating cooperation of its members in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The IMG was mandated to undertake and coordinate the following tasks:

- a. Present the online biodiversity mapping tool to CBD SBSTTA 17, transfer it to the CBD for future maintenance and make it available to Member States and other stakeholders.
- b. Contribute, as appropriate, to the NBSAPs Forum for the review and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- c. Contribute to the mid-term review process of the Aichi Targets, including by providing indicators and data, in particular those relevant to the national level implementation of the targets; also, further consider ways to integrate the Aichi Targets into other country level planning tools such as the UNDAFs.
- d. Prepare a progress report by the EMG on contribution of the UN system to the Strategic Framework for Biodiversity, for consideration of the twelfth COP of the CBD.

The biodiversity mapping tool, available online at <http://ieg.informea.org/>, was submitted to the CBD Secretariat and presented to the 17th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the CBD in October 2013.

The 9th meeting of the EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity was convened on 10 December 2013 in the margins of the Second Plenary Meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-2) in Antalya, Turkey. The meeting focused on implementation of the Strategic Plan at the national level through country-level policies and strategies, as well as country-level development planning tools such as UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)⁴. It considered UNDAF process entry points through which biodiversity can be integrated, as well as tools and guidelines to ensure inclusion of biodiversity, both in policies and in regional and national-level projects. The meeting agreed to continue this discussion by looking at other national-level processes and at the NBSAPs and their linkages with the UNDAF and other planning processes at the national level.

Subsequently, a Note was prepared by the Secretariat providing a non-exhaustive overview of existing initiatives, policies and processes of the UN agencies in support of biodiversity at the national level. The Note also described the UNDAF process and entry points for inclusion of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and areas where UN agencies could enhance cooperation and support national efforts and capacities.

³ CBD COP 11 in its decision XI/6 on "cooperation with other conventions, international organizations, and initiatives" highlighted the contribution of the EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity, welcomed its progress report and invited it to continue facilitating cooperation among its members in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to provide a progress report for consideration by the COP at its twelfth meeting.

⁴ Because there is already ongoing work within the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the IMG agreed to focus its work on Task 3 on UNDAFs.

The mid-term meeting of the technical segment of the IMG senior officials on 10 June 2014 considered the progress of the IMG. Acknowledging the importance of continuing the discussion on biodiversity at the national level, it was suggested that the CBD's Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force (ABTTF) could be rejuvenated and potentially used as a vehicle to continue the system-wide cooperation among UN agencies and beyond, should the IMG on Biodiversity be terminated as per decision of 20th Senior Official Meeting of the IMG.

The 10th meeting of the IMG, which was held by teleconference on 13 June 2014, continued its discussion on supporting biodiversity at the national level based on the Note by the Secretariat. The meeting proposed to solicit further views of IMG members on their engagement with UNDAFs and other national planning processes that could be relevant for mainstreaming biodiversity and promoting the Aichi Targets. The IMG also considered the possibility to engage in the development of or contribution to existing guidelines for mainstreaming biodiversity at national level, including into UNDAFs, in close consultation with the UNDG.

Some of the key findings of the Note on further integration of biodiversity and enhancing cooperation at the national level included:

- Biodiversity is included to some extent in some existing UNDAFs, and in the guidelines supporting their formulation process, but there is room for improvement to scale up the efforts to help meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets within the set timeframe.
- The environmental guidelines for the UNDAF process do not include the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, and the guidelines, when revised, should be modified to reflect this.
- UN Country Teams (UNCTs) do not always have the knowledge or the experience to address all relevant issues during the Common Country Assessment (CCA). They could be assisted by a capacity building section or a practical chapter on biodiversity in the Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Country Analysis, which would help identify synergies between biodiversity and other issues and sector targets, and encourage compliance by showing how biodiversity implementation contributes to the overall development agenda. Previous exercises such as mainstreaming climate change considerations into the CCA and UNDAFs could be looked at as examples.
- Top-down and bottom-up guidance or training material on biodiversity and development would be a useful tool to support UNDG Director Teams, UNCTs and governments in the UNDAF process.
- A useful input by the UN system could be to bring in existing national biodiversity-related targets and baseline data and NBSAPs during the assessment phase of UNDAFs (CCA or other), ensuring that national biodiversity targets and priorities are included in the result matrix and supported by the UNDAF from different sectoral perspectives, including those of sectoral agencies other than those responsible for environmental matters.
- A more detailed discussion at the UNDAF formulation stage and preparation period on the potential contributions of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing efforts to national development, and on national biodiversity priorities could help ensure that biodiversity and the Aichi Targets are integrated into the UNDAFs.
- UN agencies might make known their biodiversity related activities and expenditures in the country and how they relate to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to national biodiversity priorities and targets, and take steps to ensure that biodiversity is integrated into their national-level projects and programs.
- The new UNDAF roll-outs could be an appropriate context for stepping up the work with countries as "pilots" on the integration of biodiversity issues, pending the revision of the UNDAF guidance to better reflect biodiversity values and the Strategic Plan for biodiversity.
- Communication efforts are needed to inform key decision makers and the general public about the tangible benefits of biodiversity. These efforts should be coordinated with nationally planned events and could include organizing national biodiversity days and high-profile events that emphasise the importance and value of biodiversity.

The Note will serve as a basis for the IMG's report to the twelfth CBD COP taking into account additional information solicited from IMG members on how they engage with the UNCT/UNDAF process from a biodiversity perspective. It is recommended that future coordination and promotion of mainstreaming biodiversity at the national level is managed by the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force involving 27 member agencies.

The NBSAPs' Forum was established and is hosted by the Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other UN agencies have been invited to join the Forum, that aims to provides support action and implementation on NBSAPs through 2020. The IMG concluded that there is no expectation of further action from the EMG in this respect at this stage.

A progress report summarizing the achievements of the IMG will be prepared and submitted for consideration by the CBD COP at its twelfth meeting.

With the submission of the progress report to the twelfth meeting of the CBD COP, the IMG considers its work completed. In the view of the time-bound nature of the issue management groups, the senior officials may therefore wish to consider bringing the work of the IMG on Biodiversity to a close. The senior officials are, however, encouraged to keep biodiversity on the EMG agenda, considering effective ways to support the work of the ABTTF on follow-up, as necessary.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following action for the IMG on Biodiversity for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Action I: Directions for the Issue Management Group (IMG) on Biodiversity

In view of the time-bound and issue-focused nature of the IMG and accomplishment of its assigned tasks, the senior officials decide to conclude the work of the IMG on Biodiversity. The considerations of the IMG on enhancing integration of biodiversity into national level processes including the NBSAPs, UNDAF and other planning processes and other work to support implementation of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity can be followed up by the Aichi Biodiversity Target Task Force (ABTTF) in which many EMG members, as well as several non-UN entities, already participate.

2. The IMG on Green Economy

The senior officials at the 19th EMG meeting in September 2013 extended the IMG on Green Economy for one year to finalize the stocktaking report on UN knowledge products on green economy; identify options on how the information gathered can be maintained; and prepare a paper on institutional options for enhanced UN system wide support for inclusive green economy work.

The mid-term meeting of the technical segment of the EMG senior officials on 10 of June 2014, was briefed on the progress and outcomes of the Issue Management Group on Green Economy by UNEP-ETB. The stocktaking of UN knowledge products on green economy has been finalized, providing a succinct overview of existing UN system-wide web-based green economy platforms and resources including toolkits, best practices, analytical and assessment methodologies and lessons learnt. The stocktaking report will be shared with agencies and published on the EMG and UNEP websites. In addition, the identified knowledge products will be merged with the GGKP database, increasing outreach and usefulness of the exercise.

Key findings of the stocktaking report are presented below:

- Most of the reviewed products target national governments and inter-governmental practitioners as their main audience. More than half of the products feature best practices and/or case studies. Policy analysis & assessment tools form another common product type.
- Among the reviewed knowledge products, finance & investment, environmental & natural resources and fiscal policy are the three most frequently-tackled policy areas, while social inclusiveness is featured in less than a third of reviewed products.
- The importance of the water-food-energy nexus is well reflected in the key sector focus of these products, with energy, water and agriculture being the top three key sectors identified in these products. In terms of geographical focus, almost half of the knowledge products are developed for global application (49%), though Asia, Latin America and Africa are the three regions on which most knowledge products focus.
- Very few of the reviewed products have a focus on private sector engagement. The scarcity of products focusing on private sector engagement highlights the need to spur private sector engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders such as policy-makers, workers, civil society, etc.
- While green economy policy implementation often takes place at the local level, only 7% of the reviewed knowledge products have a local focus and aim to support local policy implementation.
- The knowledge products lack information pertaining to coordination and collaboration among UN agencies and partners in their green economy knowledge product development, and there is a certain duplication of work. The multi-disciplinary nature of green economy implies that cooperation and collaboration among critical UN agencies and partners would be necessary and beneficial for optimal knowledge creation. It is advised that various agencies further strengthen collaboration and coordination, and seek synergies to maximize efficiency in their green economy work.

The task to prepare a paper on institutional options for enhanced UN system -wide support for inclusive green economy work has been discussed but no agreement on an approach or appropriate methodology for such a coordination was reached.

The meeting noted that there is large demand for support by agencies and governments on the transition to a green economy and supported the idea of a framework through which coordination and of UN green economy work could be enhanced. While the IMG has played an essential part in further articulating the notion of a green economy and in identifying gaps and needs at the national level, it was thought that current needs at national or regional level might be better addressed by another partnership or platform, rather than by a time-bound IMG.

The meeting therefore agreed that a partnership-based approach beyond the Issue Management Group could be the best way forward for dealing with green economy on a system-wide scale. It was thus agreed to recommend to the senior officials that the IMG on Green Economy be concluded. However the IMG can be reconvened, as appropriate, should further system-wide cooperation on green economy be required.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following action for the IMG on Green Economy for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Action II: The Issue Management Group (IMG) on Green Economy

In view of the time-bound and issue-focused nature of the IMG and accomplishment of its tasks, the senior officials decide to conclude the work of the IMG on Green Economy. The senior officials recommend that the work of the IMG be followed up by partnership-based approaches including through the ongoing work of PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy) or GGKP (Green Growth Knowledge Platform) for better coordinated support to member states on green economy and the facilitation of information sharing on existing and emerging policy options, methodologies and technical advice.

3. The IMG on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

Following the discussion of the senior officials at their 19th meeting on establishing an Issue Management Group on the sound management of chemicals to prepare a contribution by the UN system in support of the 2020 goal, proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the IMG were prepared in cooperation with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and discussed at its meeting in November 2013. The ToR included the following tasks: a) Mapping out different agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system and analysing how their expertise, activities and initiatives can contribute to the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals and the “Overall Orientation and Guidance towards the 2020 Goal”; b) identifying potential areas for synergies in the process; and c) developing and disseminating joint and consistent messaging on the measures needed to support the achievement of the WSSD 2020 goal on chemicals, for example through a progress report to the SAICM Open Ended Working Group, the 4th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, and other relevant fora.

The Chair of the EMG in his letter of 9 January 2014 shared the draft ToR with all EMG members for comments and proposed that the IMG be established to undertake the suggested tasks in the spirit of the guidance received by the 19th meeting of the senior officials. The preparation of a set of key composite targets and indicators in the area of sound chemicals and hazardous waste management which could serve as a joint input by the UN system into the open working group process elaborating the post 2015 framework and the sustainable development goals and targets included in its outcome document, was added to the tasks of the IMG.

The Issue Management Group has so far held three teleconferences focussing on providing inputs to the process of formulating possible indicators and targets for the SDGs on chemicals and waste. Building on the existing contributions of its members, the IMG put forward a set of targets and indicators in the field of chemicals and waste management that could underpin, as appropriate, relevant goals. The list of targets and indicators was delivered to the Open Working Group on SDGs in the beginning of May 2014.

The current focus of the IMG is to undertake a mapping of related efforts by the UN agencies, in particular those not participating in the IOMC, to develop a UN system-wide contribution to the 4th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 4), scheduled in 2015.

The mid-term meeting of the technical segment of the senior officials in June 2014 was briefed on the progress made in the IMG. The relation between the IOMC and the IMG was clarified and it was emphasised that there is no duplication of work. It was agreed that the IMG, after completing its current tasks, should take up the issue of waste management, which is also part of its mandate, and expand its group of agency focal points as needed to ensure that the right expertise is available for dealing with the waste aspects of the IMG’s work.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following actions for the IMG on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Action III: The Issue Management Group (IMG) on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

The senior officials:

1. Welcome the progress made by the IMG and its contribution to the Open Working Group on SDGs and the UN Task Teams on possible targets and indicators for sound management of chemicals for the SDGs.
2. Decide to extend the IMG to undertake and complete the remaining tasks as listed in the ToR, including mapping of the expertise, activities and initiatives of UN agencies, funds and programmes and how these contribute to the achievement of the WSSD 2020

goal and identifying possible synergies and areas for cooperation with the view to provide a contribution to the 4th International Conference on Management of Chemicals (ICCM4) in 2015.

4. Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system

The senior officials at the 19th EMG meeting extended the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system for one more year to consider possibilities for implementation of the Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability, including through an Interim Guide⁵, as well as the system-wide follow up of the Sustainability Framework. The senior officials also agreed to seek the views of other inter-agency mechanisms of the UN system, including the CEB and its high-level committees, on the follow up to the Sustainability Framework by sharing with them an “Options Paper”.

The Chair of the EMG invited UN agencies to share with the CEB Secretariat their views on the suggested options, as well as on the implications associated with the implementation of the Sustainability Framework by the UN system. A total of 16 replies from UN system organizations were received by the CEB Secretariat. Replies varied widely in substance and options presented, as well as in the level of detail. Respondents were generally of the view, however, that further consultations were required on the Sustainability Framework prior to its wider application throughout the UN system. Respondents also noted the ongoing inter-governmental process toward elaborating the post-2015 development agenda and its possible relevance for guiding actions by the UN system in the area of sustainable development.

At the March 2014 meeting of the HLCP, the EMG Secretary provided a briefing on the Sustainability Framework and the Options Paper. HLCP members acknowledged the importance of sustainability in the work of the UN system and its linkages with the ‘fit for purpose’ discussion⁶ in the context of the Committee’s deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. They underlined the importance to expand ownership of the Sustainability Framework beyond the EMG. HLCP members suggested that EMG continue to deepen the Sustainability Framework, in particular as regards understanding its legal and financial implications. HLCP members also suggested that extending the Sustainability Framework to include also the economic dimension of sustainability should be considered.

In light of the guidance provided by the EMG and the HLCP, the fourth meeting of the Consultative Process was held in May 2014. The meeting discussed the follow-up of the Sustainability Framework, including finalizing the Interim guide and piloting it in individual agencies.

The meeting concluded that future focus of the Process should be on strengthening communication and raising awareness of the Sustainability Framework, as well as on piloting its implementation, beginning in volunteer agencies, benefiting from the Interim Guide. The objective of the pilot would be to encourage more in-depth stakeholder engagement, along with a feasibility analysis of both the Guide and Framework. Pilot agencies should represent different types of organisations and cover a diversity of mandates and operations. The pilot could focus on agencies that are getting started with their process, while agencies that are further along could bring much added value through lessons learned and a basic understanding of what it takes to develop a sustainability framework. The pilot would also generate some preliminary insights and lessons that could help facilitate overall uptake and interest in the Guide and wider ESS Framework. A knowledge sharing mechanism for participating agencies

⁵ Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework in the United Nations System. Interim Guide (2014). <http://www.unemg.org/index.php/consultative-processes-home/environmental-and-social-sustainability>

⁶ The “fit for purpose” issue is also discussed within the UNDG and the HLCM. New task teams may be established within the UNDG to address the post 2015 Development Agenda, in which context the role of the Sustainability Framework will need to be reviewed.

and others will be developed. It was suggested to consult with UN Women on their experience in piloting the System Wide Action Plan on Gender (SWAP). Potential pilot agencies could be UNEP, UNDP, WHO, UNOPS, WFP, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women and OHCHR (to be confirmed).

The Consultative Process agreed that there is no need to revise the Framework at this stage. The issue of including an economic dimension within the Framework and its implications should be revisited following the pilot phase. It was agreed that the economic dimensions UNEP's draft sustainability framework could be reviewed by other agencies once it is approved by UNEP management. As a preliminary step in addressing the legal implications of the Framework, an informal meeting was organized in April 2014 between the World Bank, OLA UNDP and UNEP in New York. The outcomes of this meeting highlighted that executive powers mandated to individual funds and programmes provided sufficient administrative powers to integrate aspects of the framework (which is not a system-wide commitment/obligation). Therefore, the EMG process should not articulate a system-wide legal framework for the Sustainability Framework but rather focus on facilitating a shared learning across the UN system on legal challenges and implications.

A project concept note for piloting the use of the Interim Guide in interested agencies has been prepared by the Drafting Group lead by WHO, WFP, UNDP and UNEP, and is attached as Annex II for consideration and approval of the senior officials.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following actions for the Consultative Process for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Actions IV : Consultations on Advancing the Framework for Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system.

The senior officials:

1. Welcome the progress made by the Consultative Process and the Interim Guide prepared for UN agencies to implement the Sustainability Framework;
2. Decide to extend the Consultative Process to:
 - a) Approve the Pilot Concept Note and support piloting the use of the Interim Guide as a tool in individual volunteer agencies, with the view to share lessons learned, better understand the practical implications of implementing Sustainability Framework, improve the Sustainability Framework and the Guide and prepare a system wide Action Plan on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system;
 - b) Identify linkages between the Sustainability Framework and the various 'fit for purpose' discussions in the UN system held in relation to the post-2015 development agenda and enhance communication around this issue.

5. IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the United Nations system

The 19th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Environment Management Group (EMG) took notice of the decision made by the CEB in April 2013 that UN agencies, funds and programmes should achieve measurable progress in their environmental performance and progressively implement environmental management systems. Given the associated request that such progress should be reported to the HLCM by the EMG, the senior officials discussed the modalities, timing and scope of such reporting.

The senior officials recommended that the CEB commitment to "measurable progress" be expressed against a series of agreed milestones and asked the IMG to develop such milestones. Further, the senior officials agreed that a report on environmental performance be presented to

the HLCM annually, and committed to join forces for the development of a common reporting service, based on experience with GHG inventory reporting.

Echoing a similar request from the CEB, EMG senior officials invited UNEP to confirm its intention to continue its work of coordination, technical support and reporting related to the environmental performance of UN organisations. In this context, they also expressed the need to find an appropriate platform to support this work on a sustainable basis over the longer-term.

Below are some highlights of the IMG's activities between December 2013 and September 2014.

5.1 Climate neutrality

The fifth common greenhouse gas inventory for the UN system - ***Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN –The UN system's footprint and efforts to reduce it-*** was published on 27 February 2014. The report included the greenhouse gas emissions inventories from 64 UN entities for 2012, and described their emission reduction efforts in 2013. The data shows that the footprint of the UN system continues to be around 1.7 million tonnes CO₂eq and 8 tonnes CO₂eq per capita, with only a very slight decrease since 2011. Though the results help to show overall emission trends and obvious causes, comparison of GHG emission data across years is still a technically complex issue for the system and for individual organisations.

In compliance with the April 2013 CEB decision, in the forthcoming years, reporting will need to go beyond GHG emission and appropriate tools will be needed for use by the UN system. An IMG-based working group of 12 organisations therefore submitted a joint application to the HLCM Harmonised Business Practices Trust Fund to fund a **new monitoring system for the UN environmental footprint**. The proposal has been accepted.

5.2 Greening the blue

The UN campaign *Greening the Blue* continued in 2014 and maintained an average of over 7000 visitors a month. The website showcases 48 case studies and presents more than 250 best practice examples of emissions reduction measures from across the UN system. In collaboration with the IMG, UNEP SUN and UNDP launched in June 2014 the **Greening the Blue tutorial**, a one hour animation that highlights the work that is underway to make UN operations more environmentally sustainable, and suggests concrete actions that staff can take on a day-to-day-basis.

5.3 Environmental sustainability management

The IMG finalised a **Milestones Framework for Environment Management Systems in the UN**. The Milestones Framework outlines steps for UN organisations to use as guidance for implementing an EMS and/or to understand the level of EMS implementation attained. The framework was shared with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) to ensure its compatibility with the ISO 14001 standard and related certification and contains EMS documentation for 10 UN /international entities.

With in-kind support from World Bank experts, UNEP hosted a training on sustainability reporting in Washington for 15 Focal points from 11 UN organisations. The training was held back to back with the meeting of the IMG hosted by the IMF on 27-28 February 2014. As a result of this training, the IMG is now considering options for the next UN-wide reports on GHG and EMS, following the internationally recognised Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidance.

5.4 Follow up to Secretary General's call on UN climate Neutral

On the occasion of the Climate Summit in September 2014 and in follow up to CEB commitment and strategy in 2007 of Climate Neutral UN, the Secretary General in his letter of 3 September 2014 (Annex II) called on the UN system to reach full compliance with the UN

Climate Neutral Strategy by 2020. He urged all UN agencies to further reduce their climate footprint, fully report greenhouse gas emissions to enable a complete picture of the climate footprint of the United Nations by 2015 and establish the necessary administrative mechanisms to guarantee climate neutrality over time. He requested Executive Director of UNEP and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC to extend their support to their sister agencies in moving towards such objectives.

In response to the SG's letter, the Executive Director of UNEP and Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC confirmed via a series of personalized letters to each CEB member and heads of funds and programmes as well as to secretary general (Annex II) their readiness to support the UN agencies in this endeavor. They also proposed that the 20th EMG Senior Officials meeting could be the first occasion for UN organisations to inform on their ability to be climate neutral by 2015 or 2020 and discuss how to move the system forward on this goal benefitting from the existing interagency infrastructures.

A background note (*Supporting Document V*) has been prepared by the EMG/SUN secretariat to facilitate the discussion of the technical segment on this issue .

In view of the above progress report, the IMG submits the following action points for its future work for consideration of the EMG senior officials:

Suggested Action V: System-wide commitments on Environmental Sustainability Management

The senior officials:

1. endorse the above report on activities of the IMG on environmental sustainability management and invite the EMG to present a progress report to the fall session of the HLCM, as agreed and in due form;
2. welcome the call of the Secretary General to the UN system to become climate Neutral and agree to intensify their actions in moving their agencies toward climate neutrality starting by providing data on their organizations GHG emissions from this year onward.
3. propose to the IMG to prepare a road map including measures to support the UN agencies to become climate neutral by 2020 and report on progress to the next senior officials.

6. Peer-Review of Environmental Profiles of UN organizations

In 2011, the EMG established an approach for peer reviewing the environment portfolio of its members, and launched a pilot phase in early 2013. At their 19th meeting in September 2013, the senior officials welcomed the progress of the pilot phase of the peer reviews, including the reviews of UNIDO, on behalf of the UN entities based in the Vienna International Centre, WMO and UNEP. They requested an assessment of the pilot phase for consideration at their 20th meeting in 2014.

6.1 Progress made

The Peer Review Reports of WMO, UNIDO/VIC and UNEP were prepared with the support of the EMG secretariat (staff and consultants) and in-kind support of UN agencies as reviewing agencies (by attending in the review missions and meetings) or reviewed agencies (by hosting the meetings). The reports focused on corporate environmental management of facilities and operations, addressing issues such as GHG emissions from travel and facilities, water and waste management, green meetings, etc. The reports also provided non-binding recommendations for improvement. A Peer Review Body (PRB) composed of 17 UN agencies held three meetings in

January and June 2014 to review the reports and finalize the recommendations made for each agency.

6.2 Assessment of the first phase

The last meeting of the PRB also undertook an assessment of the first phase of the Peer Review process, including the benefits to the participating agencies and areas for improvement, and considered the issue of extending the process to a second phase for consideration of the SOM20. Overall, there was consensus on the usefulness of the Peer Review process and its continuation into a second phase. Areas identified for improvement included: the availability of credible and comprehensive data from reviewed agencies; a mechanism for follow up of the reports and their recommendations; and a sustainable approach to covering the costs and coordination of the review process, as well as other implications to the EMG Secretariat and the participating agencies.

UPU, IMF, UN Women, WIPO and OECD have expressed interest to be reviewed in the second phase, awaiting further information on the costs implied in participating. A provisional cost of the first phase was prepared to allow agencies to estimate the implications and feasibility of their reviews. It was suggested that adjustments be applied to the process to make it applicable as well to decentralized and/or larger agencies in the future.

The main conclusions drawn from the first phase of the peer review process include:

- The reviews provided in-depth technical analysis based on information provided by the agencies. The voluntary nature of the review allowed for a greater openness by the reviewed agencies. However, the effectiveness of the review is heavily dependent on the availability and quality of data.
- The process enabled the facility managers to take a comprehensive approach and see the overall impacts of the facilities, beyond day-to-day operations. It also created a useful platform for the reviewed agencies to work together with the host governments, keen to demonstrate their environmental sensitivity and commitment.
- The participation of other UN agencies in the review process (together with the EMG Secretariat and supported by consultants) produced opportunities for mutual learning, raised issues that otherwise would not have been raised, and allowed the UN-specific situation of the reviewed agencies to be better taken into account than would have been possible with external auditors. The independence of the reviewing team from auditors, industries, engineering teams, etc., enabled a more open approach and discussion of the overall challenges facing the agencies.
- The comprehensiveness and consistency of the review reports represented an important advance over the disaggregated documents usually produced, and could be a useful tool for the top management to justify certain sustainability management changes or activities.
- The peer reviews results should be shared within the reviewed organization, as they could provide facilities management with the analysis and incentives needed to pursue needed improvements. They can also be used in a voluntary manner as a useful tool to benchmark agencies' progress against an established baseline, particularly in matters that the agencies themselves identified as relevant. Improvements against the baseline could then be shared with the Peer Review Body.
- The dissemination of the Peer Review results should not be ex ante assumed, formalized or standardized. It should also not be presumed that the results of the review will be shared with the member states through the governing body, or that it will be incorporated into the budget process. Rather, the decision on whether and how to disseminate the Peer Review results should be at the discretion of the senior management of the reviewed agency.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following actions for the Peer Review process for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Action VI: Environmental Peer Reviews of the EMG members

The senior officials:

1. Welcome the Peer-Review reports of WMO, UNIDO (VIC), and UNEP and thank these agencies, as well as other contributing UN entities, including the peer review expert teams and the PRB, for taking part in the pilot phase,.
2. Decide to extend the peer reviews process into a second phase and take note of the potential interest that has been indicated by UPU, IMF, UN Women, WIPO and OECD to be peer reviewed during 2014-2015.
3. Invite the EMG members participating in the peer review process to consider how the process can be sustained going forward, including possible options for sustainable financing of the peer-review activities.
4. Invite the reviewed agencies to consider sharing with other EMG members information on the progress made in their agencies in implementing the recommendations of their Peer Review reports.

7. Contribution of the EMG to a UN System-Wide Strategy on the Environment

In line with paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document, “The Future We Want” and in follow up to the Resolution of the first United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA)⁷, a background Note (*Supporting Document II*) on the plan of developing a United Nations Strategy on the Environment as well as a Draft Outline of the Strategy (*Supporting Document II*) prepared by UNEP was shared with the EMG focal points in early September 2014 for comments in advance of a discussion on this issue by the 20th meeting of the Senior Officials.

A compendium (*Supporting Document II.I*) of the comments received is shared with the EMG members for the ease of their consideration.

The following DRAFT ACTION POINT can be considered by the technical segment in addressing this issue:

Suggested Action VII: Contribution of the EMG to a UN System-Wide Strategy on Environment

The senior officials take note of the UNEA decision and UNEP's mandate to prepare System Wide Strategy(s) on the Environment. They agree to provide feedback through the EMG Secretariat, by responding to the questions posed in the Strategic Directions note (*Working document: EMG/SOM.20/04*). Based on the feedback and views of EMG members, UNEP will provide a proposal on the further development of System Wide Strategy(s) on the Environment. They agree to review this process at their next meeting.

⁷ UNEA Resolution 1/ 11 invites the Executive Director of UNEP to “develop system-wide strategies on the environment mainly through the EMG and to invite the engagement of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to facilitate broad ownership in the United Nations at all levels”.

8. Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in coordinating the environmental work in the United Nations in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

The First Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in its Resolution 11 on the work of the EMG (Annex I) invited the Executive Director of UNEP as Chair of the EMG, to identify possible measures to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Group in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board, and to submit a report with recommendations to the UNEA for consideration at its second session. The senior officials are invited to discuss this issue as part of their strategic discussion and the future directions for the EMG. Issues for discussion include the mandate and the approach of the EMG, linkages with the wider coordination system including the CEB and fitness for purpose and contribution to the Post 2015 development agenda details of which are provided in document (*Working document: EMG/SOM.20/04*).

The following DRAFT ACTION POINT can be considered by the technical segment in addressing this issue:

Suggested Action VIII: Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in coordinating the environmental work in the United Nations in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

The senior officials agree to establish an open-ended task team to identify options for furthering the effectiveness of the EMG and its contribution to the post 2015 development agenda. They agree to consider the outcome of the task force in their next meeting with the view to provide their input to the report of the UNEP Executive Director to the Second Session of the UNEA.

9. Addressing new issues

In preparing the agenda of the 20 senior officials' meeting, the Chair of the EMG proposed to the EMG members to bring forward their suggestions on issues that warrant a UN system-wide approach and cooperation, for discussion by the EMG senior officials. This was in line with the mandate of EMG to identify issues on the international environmental agenda that warrant cooperation, and find ways of engaging its collective capacity in coherent management responses to those issues.

Following that, two Issue Notes were proposed by WFP and WMO. The mid-term meeting of the senior officials technical segment considered the two proposals and provided comments. The revised proposals are provided in Annex II and III of this report for consideration of the senior officials.

The suggested issues include:

9.1 A cohesive vision of sustainability within the UN-system - merging and streamlining of inter-agency sustainability initiatives (proposed by WFP)

The proposal (*Supporting Document III*) suggests that the EMG consider including in its work plan for 2015-2016 an appropriate mechanism for streamlining the operational and management initiatives "Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability" and "Enhancement of Sustainability in Management", potentially through the merging of the two work streams. These two initiatives were developed as distinct and separate processes and bodies, creating the potential of some areas of overlap with respect to aspects of UN internal operations. The interaction of the two working groups on these initiatives has been limited to date and there is not a uniform understanding of the two initiatives and how they fit together, even within the community of environmental practitioners. Given the extremely limited resources available

within the UN system to address sustainability issues, WFP encourages the EMG to review the mandate of these two working groups, formulate a clear and cohesive vision of sustainability within the UN context, and consider the merging and streamlining of these inter-agency sustainability initiatives in order to better leverage the available resources, ensure clarity of purpose, align the efforts of the UN entities, and identify the highest priority areas for the UN system where efforts to improve environmental and social sustainability performance would garner the highest returns, whether those returns be financial, reputational, or risk reducing.

9.2 Waste management in the UN system - leading by example in minimizing the impact of UN operations in emergency settings and fragile environments (proposed by WFP)

The proposal (*Supporting Document III*) suggests that the UN agencies jointly address the common challenge of waste management as a specific priority area, particularly in emergency settings and remote locations where the UN has a presence, as many agencies which would benefit from a system-wide response that leverages resources and taps into the expertise that the EMG can provide on the subject matter. The proposal underscores the need for the United Nations to find an agile and responsible mechanism for minimizing the impact of its own operations in emergency settings and in fragile environments, in order to not further strain the natural resources or jeopardize the human communities.

9.3 Supporting the “data revolution” for key nexus issues (proposed by WMO)

The proposal (*Supporting Document IV*) suggests that the EMG work plan for 2015-2016 take into account the international context which provides the fundamental underpinning climate services, by exploiting its individual and collective expertise to assist the business case, design and implementation of an environment-focused global observing platform in support of the nexus issues such as food/water/energy/health/climate, possibly within an Issue Management Group. The proposal highlights that a coherent, inter-related and consistent picture of all environmental aspects of this nexus is crucial for the transition towards sustainable development—in particular, it would help avoid increasing the vulnerabilities of the most fragile and exposed to various tensions or shocks either due to variability and changes of environmental conditions or leading to exacerbating ones. Among the key success factors and levers for completing the MDGs and transitioning to and achieving the SDGs, the need for a “data revolution” has been stressed. Such a data revolution – a sustained, transformative effort aimed at improving how data is produced, processed, stored, disseminated and used - is needed to ensure that high-quality, timely and data collected in a sustainable manner will be available at both the national and the global level. The inter-agency work would focus on the measures needed to enhance the interoperability of data and new approaches to analysis in support of the 'data revolution' and attaining future development targets, especially as regards the environmental dimension of SDGs, and taking into account parallel work on the complexities of social and economic policy integration. The joint work in this area could possibly lead to the development of effective partnership structures/modalities across the Environmental Nexus areas.

The technical segment of the EMG senior officials suggests the following actions for consideration by the senior officials:

Suggested Action IX: Addressing new issues for future work of the EMG

The senior officials take note of the suggested new issues proposed by WFP and WMO and invite further consideration by the EMG focal points to define the specific role and contribution of the EMG to these issues, for further consideration of the senior officials.

10. EMG Work Plan for 2015–2016

The 19th senior officials' meeting of EMG adopted the 2014-2015 EMG work plan. The plan has been updated to reflect the suggested actions put forward in the current note as presented in document EMG/SOM.20.05.

It is proposed that the work plan be given a two year horizon, i.e. cover the period 2015 to 2016, subject to annual approval by the senior officials. The plan is organized according to four main expected accomplishments as they pertain to programmatic, management and operational issues, as well as overall cooperation.

The work plan remains un-costed as long as there is no common budget for EMG activities. It is recommended that the work plan be implemented through in-kind contributions subject to the availability of resources. The in-kind contributions will be budgeted, programmed and reported on by each member and the UNEP secretariat within their own administrative processes.

Suggested Action X: Approval of the work plan for EMG for the period 2015 – 2016

The senior officials approve the work plan for EMG for the period 2015–2016 based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.20/05 to ensure that the plan fully reflects the actions agreed by the 20th senior officials meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources.

11. Process for reporting to the UN Environment Assembly of UNEP

The 19th senior officials' meeting of the EMG welcomed the opportunity to inform the first session of the UN Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA) of its work and requested the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of the report to EMG members for their comments before submitting the final report to the UNEA. The final report was circulated by the Chair in document UNEP/EA.1/3/Add.1 to the 1st session of the UNEA held in Nairobi, Kenya from 23 to 27 June 2014.

After considering the EMG report, in its Resolution UNEP/EA.1/3/Add.2 on “Coordination across the United Nations system in the field of the environment, including the Environment Management Group”, the UNEA “took note with appreciation, of the efforts in mainstreaming environmental considerations into activities of the United Nations system at the policy, programme and management levels, in close cooperation with the CEB and its subsidiary bodies”. It requested “the Executive Director as Chair of the Environment Management Group, in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board, to identify possible measures to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Group and to submit a report with recommendations to the United Nations Environment Assembly for consideration at its second session”.

It also welcomed the establishment of the IMG on Sound Management of Chemicals and requested the UNEP Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the EMG to provide a summary report at the second session of the UNEA on the Group's work, highlighting issues that may require the particular attention of the Assembly. It also requested the Executive Director to transmit the summary report to the governing bodies of the Group's members.

The UNGA is informed of the work of the EMG through the submission of the proceedings of the Environment Assembly of UNEP. The UNGA requested to be informed about the work of the EMG in its resolution A/RES/58/209.

Suggested Action XI: Reporting to the UN Environment Assembly of UNEP

The senior officials welcome the opportunity to inform the UN Environment Assembly of UNEP of its work. The senior officials note their appreciation for the guidance received from the 1st session of UNEA, and request the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of the report by EMG on its work to members of the Group for their comments, and to submit the final report to the second UN Environment Assembly of UNEP.

12. Date and venue of the next senior officials meeting

Preparing for the senior officials' meeting, the Chair has continued the practice of seeking the views of members on the agenda and to informally consult on dates and venues. This practice will be continued for the 21th senior officials meeting scheduled to take place in September 2015.

Suggested Action XII: Date and venue of the next senior officials meeting

The senior officials request the EMG secretariat to circulate to the members of the EMG the date and venues for the 21th meeting of the senior officials, and consult with members on its agenda.

ANNEX I

Resolution 1/11. Adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP at its First Session titled: Coordination across the United Nations system in the field of the environment, including the Environment Management Group

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972,

Recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, in particular its paragraph 88,

Recalling further General Assembly resolutions 67/213 of 21 December 2012, 67/251 of 13 March 2013 and 68/215 of 20 December 2013,

Recalling Governing Council decisions 26/11 of 24 February 2011, SS.XII/2 of 22 February 2012 and 27/2 and 27/5 of 22 February 2013,

Determined to strengthen its functions to provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII),

Expressing appreciation for the progress report prepared under the senior officials of the Environment Management Group at their nineteenth meeting and presented by the Executive Director,

Recalling the objectives of the Environment Management Group to assist the United Nations Environment Programme in carrying out its functions related to the promotion of coordinated approaches to environmental issues in the United Nations system and to enhance environmental perspectives, in particular analytical aspects in the work of other United Nations system organizations,

Recalling also Governing Council decision 24/1, recognizing the Environment Management Group as an instrument at the interagency level that assists the United Nations Environment Assembly in enhancing policy coordination across the environmental activities of the United Nations system,

I

Process to prepare a proposal for a United Nations system-wide strategy on the environment

1. *Reiterates* paragraph 3 of Governing Council decision 27/5, and requests the Executive Director, mainly through the Environment Management Group and in line with paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", to develop system-wide strategies on the environment and to invite the engagement of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to facilitate broad ownership in the United Nations at all levels;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare, in consultation with regions, as appropriate, and to submit to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, a report which includes proposals developed in conjunction with the Environment Management Group describing the integration of the outcome of the post-2015 development agenda into the environmental work of the United Nations;

II

Environment Management Group

3. *Notes with appreciation* the continued efforts of the Environment Management Group to enhance interagency cooperation in mainstreaming environmental considerations into activities of the United Nations system at the policy, programme and management levels, in close cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director as Chair of the Environment Management Group, in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board, to identify possible measures to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Group and to submit a report with recommendations to the United Nations Environment Assembly for consideration at its second session;
5. *Welcomes* the online mapping knowledge-management tool on biodiversity prepared by the Environment Management Group in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, as well as Group's approach to contributing to the midterm review process of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and considering ways to integrate the Aichi Biodiversity Targets into country-level planning tools, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks;
6. *Notes* the contribution of the Environment Management Group to the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, by providing a United Nations Action Plan (2012–2018) for Coordinated Action in the Drylands;
7. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Environment Management Group Issue Management Group on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste;
8. *Encourages* the Environment Management Group to continue to support efforts to promote sustainability in the work of the United Nations system, including in the areas of environmental sustainability management and environmental peer reviews;
9. *Requests* the Executive Director, in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group, to provide a summary report at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the Group's work, highlighting issues that may require the particular attention of the Assembly;
10. *Also requests* the Executive Director, in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group, to transmit the summary report to the governing bodies of the members of the Group.

ANNEX II

Secretary General letter of 3 September 2014



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

3 September 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Climate change is one of the most formidable challenges facing humanity today. It is my priority to ensure that the United Nations system responds strongly to the challenge -- globally and locally. The high-level Climate Summit I am hosting in New York on 23 September 2014 presents an opportunity for the United Nations to take a clear stand on climate change mitigation and encourage leaders from all parts of society to follow suit.

Efforts to date to realize the 2007 commitment by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination of a climate neutral United Nations are inspiring. I call on the United Nations system to build on previous achievements to further enhance enthusiasm, efforts, and keep walking the talk -- moving steadily towards climate neutrality in the United Nations system.

Several of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have already succeeded in becoming climate neutral and have kept the associated costs to a minimum as emission reductions can equate to financial savings through reduced energy use and reduced travel costs.

It is my expectation that the United Nations system reaches full compliance with the United Nations Climate Neutral Strategy and becomes effectively climate neutral by 2020 at the latest, adopting the same time frame as proposed for a new agreement on climate change, expected to be adopted by parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in December 2015.

To reach this goal, I urge all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to continue to reduce their climate footprint and report greenhouse gas emissions annually from this year onwards, so as to enable a complete picture of the climate footprint of the entire United Nations system by 2015. In addition, I encourage all to commit to achieve a net-zero climate footprint (climate neutrality) by 2020 and consider to accelerate this to become climate neutral by the end of 2015, including by reducing emissions in-house and offsetting remaining emissions in order to fully implement the United Nations Climate Neutral Strategy.

Members of the Chief Executives Board
for Coordination

Finally, administrative routines should be established to ensure that the climate neutral commitment can be sustained, including by working and agreeing with governing bodies, as may be required, on how costs and savings may be handled in respective budgets.

In support of this initiative, I have requested two of our leaders on climate change, Ms. Christiana Figueres of UNFCCC, and Mr. Achim Steiner of the United Nations Environment Programme, to extend support to facilitate your path towards climate neutrality to which they have eagerly agreed.

The United Nations has the potential to demonstrate responsible stewardship and leadership on true climate action. I urge you to do your part in making the United Nations climate neutral.

Yours sincerely,



BAN/Ki-moon

Executive Director of UNEP and Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC letter to Secretary General of 16 September 2014



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

16 September 2014

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

In response to your letter of 3 September 2014, on UN Climate Neutrality, we would like to express our deep gratitude for your continued support to the Climate Change agenda and to the role the United Nations system can play not only as a normative institution but also as a 'doer'.

As you rightly indicated in your letter, it is up to each individual entity to 'walk the talk' by developing in-house mechanisms that promote emission reductions and facilitate the path to climate neutrality.

UNFCCC and UNEP look forward to continue offering support to their peers with technical expertise, including within the existing system-wide networks where entities can share their challenges and positive experiences encountered in their efforts to implement the UN Climate Neutral Strategy.

Our next steps in this direction will include:

- (i) A follow up letter to all Chief Executives Board (CEB) members and other participating entities, reminding them of the main elements of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy, providing an organisation specific cost estimate for carbon offsets needed to reach climate neutrality;
- (ii) Development of a road map towards climate neutrality in cooperation with the Environment Management Group (EMG) and the CEB, including more accurate and extended monitoring of UN GHG emissions and support of emission reductions in facilities and;
- (iii) Peer reviews of the environmental management of UN entities including tracking GHG emissions and identifying opportunities for emission reductions;
- (iv) Providing advice on options to reach climate neutrality;
- (v) A joint in-house outreach and awareness effort building on the Greening the Blue campaign, to intensify the work of all UN entities on the path towards full climate neutrality.

Mr. BAN Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

E-mail: SGCentral@un.org



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

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We stand ready to be on your side at the Climate Summit on 23 September, 2014, as you announce that the UN system will indeed lead by example, and become climate neutral by 2020.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Achim Steiner in blue ink.

Achim Steiner
Executive Director, UNEP
Chair, Environment Management Group

Handwritten signature of Christiana Figueres in blue ink.

Christiana Figueres
Executive Secretary, UNFCCC

cc: CEB Secretariat, E-mail: petrova@un.org
SG's Climate Change Support Team, E-mail: raczek@un.org