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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UNEP

4th meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on System Wide-Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS) **27 October 2015** GoToMeeting, 15:00-17:00 hrs, Geneva time Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat	Distribution: Members of the Consultative Process 30.10.2015

Documents:
A) Provisional agenda
B) Revised Concept Note on a UN-System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS)
C) Guide for attending a GoToMeeting

Minutes of the 4th meeting of the EMG Consultative Process for the preparation of a System Wide- Framework of Strategies on the Environment

1. Introduction

The forth meeting of the Consultative Process took place online by GoToMeeting from 15.00 to 17.00 (CET) on 27 October 2015, and was chaired by Elliott Harris, Director of the EMG Secretariat. The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

Following the chair's opening remarks, the meeting adopted its agenda (Annex II) and heard views expressed by the participants on the revised Concept Note on UN system-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS). It was agreed that additional comments be provided in writing by the 4th of November.

2. Consideration of the revised Concept Note

The Chair opened the meeting by introducing the revised concept note inclusive of comments provided during the 3rd meeting of the Consultative Process as well as comments by the EMG Technical Segment and Senior Officials during its 21st meeting in September 2015.

The Chair stressed that the SWFS does not seek to impose on or replace existing strategies on the environment in the UN-system. He further explained how the proposed Framework is structured around facilitating alignment of agencies environmental strategies or environmental progammes with environmental dimensions of SDGs (referred to as internal alignment) as well as facilitating consideration of areas of collaboration among the UN agencies in supporting SDG planning and implementation (referred to as external alignment). Monitoring of the implementation of the Framework would not imply an additional reporting burden on the agencies, as their reports to their Governing Bodies would be used to analyze how UN entities, within their mandates and roles, have designed their strategies, projects/programs and management systems to support the environmental dimensions of SDGs.

The following views were then expressed:

- UNESCO suggested that the framing of the SWFS should be more in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in order to avoid a fragmented structure. Furthermore, the use of the word *alignment* may

create misunderstandings, whereas *convergence* and *synergy* would be preferred to describe the focus of the Framework. The section on collaboration and exchange of lessons learned (section 5 in the Note) should be at the core when the purpose of the SWFS is described. UNESCO offered to suggest language that reflects the above. With regard to measuring implementation, reference should be made to a monitoring and evaluation platform that clearly links to the agencies' reporting mechanisms on the SDGs. Clarification with regard to the process and the timeline going forward was requested.

- UNDP saw avoiding duplication with other processes within the UN system around the SDGs and added value to the work of the EMG as two niche areas identified in the Concept Note. UNDP agreed on the idea of alignment but supported the proposal of different wording to describe the purpose of the SWFS along with an elaboration/description on how this alignment will occur. Moreover, further details on the format and regularity of a reporting system is requested. UNDP will submit more comments on the Concept Note in writing.

- UNDESA considered the main goal of the SWSFS being to refine and further synchronize work on the environment through a light approach. Ultimately better programming on the environment is needed. DESA agreed with the concerns expressed by UNESCO and UNDP on the semantics used in the Concept Note and supported the requests for more information on the measuring and reporting requirements, especially in terms of resources in order to make sure that extra layers of work are avoided.

- UNECE agreed with the previous comments and stressed that reporting under the SWFS should be kept as a light exercise. Looking separately at the environmental component of the SDGs may imply a risk as it may lead to competing agendas especially if frameworks on economic and social aspects are implemented. UNECE encouraged the development of an information sharing tool that would help the system see existing and potential areas for interconnectivity.

- UNDP pointed out that an environmentally focussed framework would still be valuable in the context of the integrated approach of the SGDs as there will still be environmental programming. UNDP further suggested that a comprehensive mapping of the environmental work of UN agencies in relation to the SDGs would add value as such, having an impact on efficiency, effectiveness and coordination in the UN system, even if regular measuring of internal alignment with the SDGs would turn out to be challenging.

- UNDESA supported the approach that implies no additional reporting and agreed with the concerns of the CEB Secretariat with regard to the language of the Concept Note that mixes intergovernmental and interagency terminology. For an organisation like DESA that does not carry out environmental programming per se, the added value of the Framework is challenging to see. Sharing draft strategic plans at this stage, would help the mapping exercise and structuring of the SWFS.

- IMO suggested that the added value of the SWFS from an agency perspective be expressed in the Concept Note, with emphasis on exchange of lessons learned and information sharing.

- ILO supported IMO's suggestion and questioned whether the SWFS would involve a one-time or continuous effort to analyse the environmental components of its work, which could be challenging at the institutional level where information may not be readily available.

- UNECE suggested that, in order to avoid a fragmented approach and to enhance effectiveness system-wide, agencies working primarily on environmental issues would present how they work on social and economic matters and how these are taken into account in their work and vice versa, how agencies with other primary foci would show how they work on environmental issues. This exercise would show where linkages are possible, while each agency makes use of their own capacities capacity within their focus areas.

In response to the feedback received, the Chair provided an overview of comments that had been received prior to the meeting, including comments by the CEB Secretariat on the work plan. Feedback that had already been taken into account in the revised Concept Note include the notion that the SWFS should be

solution-oriented, take a multi-strategy approach and serve as a tool to help agencies manage the interdependency that the SDGs imply. Furthermore, the SWFS can help linking global policies to institutional policies and facilitate coordination between agencies while encouraging them to implement they own specific mandates. The Chair clarified that the SWFS is not expected to involve the creation of new, additional indicators. Agencies will continue to report only to their own Governing Bodies, and any compilation/analysis efforts would be carried out by the EMG Secretariat. The issue about continuity of efforts implied would need to be further discussed by the consultative process with an expectation of differing views.

3.Next meeting of the Consultative Process

The Chair asked EMG Secretariat to present the proposed work plan and mile stones for the preparation of the SWFS and requested comments and suggestions on the next steps and the sequencing of the proposed timeframe. He explained that a new revised version of the Concept Note will be circulated, inclusive of the comments made by agencies at the meeting and/or in writing.

- UNDP pointed out that it is difficult to take the drafting of the SWFS to the next level before agreement has been reached on the Concept Note, and suggested that the Consultative Process may need to consider a more modest work plan B, should there not be agreement on the Concept in time to develop a full Framework before UNEA2.

- UNEP suggested that the Consultative Process would meet in person in December to solve any remaining issues, and requested a summary by the EMG Secretariat on the elements of the SWFS on which there is consensus to facilitate the process. An in-person meeting would have to have a clear and specific focus on issues that have been identified as not yet being in agreement.

- The EMG Secretariat drew the meeting's attention to the proposed outline of the Framework annexed to the Concept Note and suggested that the role of various agencies in the drafting of the Framework going forward would be clarified with the aim to finalize and submit it to UNEA2 in January 2016.

Agreed Action
It was agreed that any additional comments on the Concept Note in its current form would be shared with the EMG Secretariat by **Wednesday, November 4** at the latest. The EMG Secretariat would revise the Concept Note accordingly, and share a new version of the Note with the Consultative Process by November 6, to see whether the Note is acceptable to agencies in its revised form or whether further consultations are needed. The next meeting is tentatively proposed to be held as an online meeting on November 23, 2015.

It was further agreed that the minutes of the meeting would include a list of issues where consensus is emerging or already in place to facilitate focused efforts, developing the SWFS going forward.

4. Any other matters

No other matters were raised.

5. Closure of the meeting

The Chair thanked participants for their time and inputs and closed the meeting at 16:23 on the 27th of October.

ANNEX I
List of Participants

	Name	**Organization**
1.	Angus, Mackay	UNITAR
2.	Ilaha Rzayeva	ITU
3.	Micheal Nicholas Bonvoisin Kristof Doucot	UNECE
4.	Dalila Hamou	WIPO
5.	Micol Mulon	WFP
6.	Federica Pietracci	DESA
7.	Michele Candotti Clarice Wilson Corli Pretorius Masa Nagai Mamadou Kane Hemini Vrontamitis Michiko Okumura Ludgarde Coppens	UNEP
8.	Katrin Lichtenberg Rodel Urmatan Cecilia Lopez y Royo	UNOPS
9.	Neil Pratt	CBD Secretariat
10.	Marylene Beau	BRS Secretariat
11.	Isabel Aranda	UNFCCC
12.	Edward Kleverlaan	IMO
13.	Tim Scott	UNDP
14.	Catherine Zanev	CEB Secretariat
15.	Salvatore Arico	UNESCO
16.	Kees Van der Ree	ILO
17.	Elliott Harris Hossein Fadaei Jannica Pitkanen Andrew Wilson Manon Ebel	EMG Secretariat (chair)

ANNEX II

Provisional Agenda

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3. Guide for attending a GoToMeeting

Provisional Agenda

1- **Introductory remarks by the Chair**

2- **Consideration of the revised concept note on** a UN-System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS) in follow-up of the 21st EMG Senior Officials Meeting

3- **Next meeting of the Consultative Process**

4- **Any other matters**

5- **Closure of the meeting**