

6th meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on SWFS 01 February 2016 GoToMeeting, 14:30-16:30 hrs, Geneva time Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat	Distribution: Members of the Consultative Process
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Documents:

- A) Provisional agenda
- B) Revised Zero Draft of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies (SWFS)

Minutes of the 6th meeting of the EMG Consultative Process for the preparation of a System Wide- Framework of Strategies on the Environment

1. Introduction

The sixth meeting of the Consultative Process took place online from 14.30 to 16.00 (CET) on 1 February 2016, chaired by Elliott Harris, Director of the EMG Secretariat. The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

The Chair recalled the outcome of the 5th meeting of the Consultative Process held in-person in New York in December and summarized the progress made since then leading up to the revised Zero Draft of the SWFS that was shared with members of Consultative Process as part of the meeting documents. The meeting adopted its agenda (Annex 2) and discussed the process and steps towards submitting a report on the progress made on developing a System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment to UNEA II in May 2016. Initial comments on the revised Zero Draft were heard.

2. Consideration of the revised Zero Draft of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment for the UN System

The Chair gave an overview of the changes made to the Zero Draft since it was first circulated to the Consultative Process on December 23, 2015, taking into consideration comments received by Members of the Consultative Process. Mainly, changes had been made to ensure that the SWFS responds adequately to the request for its development in UNEA Resolution 1/11 and the Rio+20 Outcome Document, including elaborated language in Part I and II on the objectives and expected benefits of the SWFS.

Members expressed the following views:

- WMO questioned whether there should be an explicit reference to the process of Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG, explaining how the two work streams are related. The Chair supported the idea and proposed that reference is made to the SWFS in the Effectiveness Study as a concrete step towards greater effectiveness and coordination and as an example of how the EMG can be used effectively to bring the system together around a common objective. The EMG Secretariat recalled that the work on EMG Effectiveness is mentioned in section V of the draft SWFS.
- UNECE requested a separate section before Section V in the draft SWFS on its outputs, where the process itself, the report and the analysis mentioned elsewhere in the text could be clarified.

- FAO expressed a concern that the SWFS as it stands does not incentivize agencies enough to take action and inquired whether it would be possible to promote a more pro-active engagement by agencies in the SWFS. The Chair stressed the importance of the SWFS being non-coercive and proposed that the exchange of information among agencies may encourage them to identify areas where they could work together. He further saw a possible incentive in documenting the way in which agencies have stepped up their collaboration and referred to the regular meetings of EMG senior officials as an opportunity to discuss and review the SWFS analysis/synthesis report on a regular basis. A mobilizing role of the EMG Secretariat is not envisaged for now, but could be introduced at a later stage should agencies so wish. FAO agreed that a facilitative role of the EMG Secretariat is preferable in creating opportunities for agencies to come together in a more proactive way.
- ICAO requested additional language in the collective commitment para 6 “environmental related matter, *and avoid duplication of activities already successfully undertaken by existing UN organisations*”, to recognize the work done by other organizations and coordination mechanisms on which the SWFS will build. The avoidance of duplication of work should be highlighted as a benefit of the SWFS. ICAO will provide these comments in writing.
- IMO mentioned the inventory of mandates and activities prepared by UN Oceans and inquired whether it would be useful to gain access to existing compilations such as that in the process of preparing the synthesis report under the SWFS. For example, the members of the Consultative Process could inform the EMG Secretariat of other coordination mechanisms that they are taking part in, and share analyses made in these contexts in support of the compilation of information under the SWFS. IFAD added that analyses and mappings prepared by other agencies or coordination mechanisms could be useful for the compilation of information under the SWFS and suggested that these could help in the design of the questionnaire/survey for identifying agencies mandates.
- UNECE recalled that the draft SWFS already states that it will take into consideration work by existing mechanisms and inquire whether there will be a section on existing coordination mechanisms in the synthesis report under the SWFS. The Chair responded that the outline of the synthesis report has not yet been discussed, but should be brought to the Consultative Process for its deliberation. The EMG Secretariat proposed that a sentence could be added to section IV of the draft SWFS to include collection of information from other inter-agency processes.

Agreed Action

The Consultative Process will be given time until **16.00 CET February 8, 2016** to provide final comments on the Zero Draft, based on which the draft will be finalized and re-circulated to Consultative Process and the EMG Technical Segment for their views during the second week of February. The extent and nature of the comments received will help determine whether the EMG Technical Segment can proceed with commenting the SWFS by written procedure or whether a teleconference is needed.

The members of the Consultative Process were encouraged to inform the EMG Secretariat of other coordination / inter-agency mechanisms that they are taking part in to facilitate linkages with these and the SWFS.

3. Meeting of the EMG Technical Segment and next meeting of the Consultative Process

The Chair gave a brief overview of the envisaged process for finalizing the SWFS. Agreement on the final draft of the SWFS would first be sought within the Consultative Process for which more time can be allocated. Should there be no major changes proposed, the circulated Zero Draft including minor revisions would be considered to be the final draft of the SWFS, that would be shared with the EMG Technical Segment for comments. The Draft, including any revisions or comments proposed by the Technical Segment would then be shared with the EMG senior officials for approval. The Chair highlighted that the Technical Segment can comment on the SWFS through written procedure without convening, or convene by teleconference to discuss the draft should they prefer to do so. The final version would then be shared with the EMG senior officials for approval through a letter by the EMG Chair, ideally in the beginning of March. The approved SWFS would then be brought to the attention of the CEB at their next regular session in April 2016, with the purpose to gain broad ownership and raise awareness of the SWFS. Finally, the SWFS would be submitted for consideration of UNEA II in May through a progress report on the implementation of the Resolution 1/11 by the EMG Chair. The Chair stressed that the Consultative Process can convene as needed/requested during this time.

Members expressed the following views:

- Questions about the timeline for the approval of the SWFS in the agencies, the expected input by their governing bodies and the role of the EMG in the implementation of the SWFS were raised. The Chair stressed that the SWFS makes no effort to influence the agencies' own strategies and that the EMG is not the implementing body of the SWFS. The role of the EMG is to receive information that the agencies communicate and make it available for the system to see who is doing what, allowing agencies to identify opportunities for further collaboration as they see appropriate. The EMG Secretariat facilitates this process, providing a service and reporting collectively to its membership. Over time this process may, or may not, lead to gradual convergence of the environmental work in the UN system.
- WMO supported clear communication about the above when it is shared with the CEB, explaining clearly what is expected in terms of feedback. WMO further supported that the focus of the current SWFS on the implementation of the SDGs is highlighted when communicating progress to UNEA.
- IMO wondered what specific action is being asked of UNEA in the progress report. The Chair reported that neither will a specific action be requested nor will UNEA be asked to approve the SWFS. The progress report will inform governments that the process is underway, report what has been achieved and explain how the UN system plans to progress under the SWFS. The progress report will spell out that the autonomy of the individual agency strategies will be preserved, while the SWFS provides an opportunity for exchange of information and lessons learned as well as identification of possible areas of synergies in the context of the SDGs that provide an opportunity for convergence. The environment ministers may provide guidance on the SWFS that can be taken into account as the process moves forward, and they may look forward to receiving further information about the progress made.

- WMO highlighted that it is important to be clear about where the ownership of the SWFS lies, and about the formalities around accountability, relating this point to the discussion about the effectiveness of the EMG and the role of the EMG in the UN system. The Chair suggested that this issue is brought to the work stream dealing with the EMG effectiveness study, stressing that the EMG is a voluntary mechanism that cannot set demands on who should collaborate with whom.
- UNECE inquired whether there will be a face-to-face meeting of the EMG senior officials to discuss the SWFS. The Chair informed that a face-to-face meeting has not been planned, however, should the technical segment consider it necessary, a video conference can be organized.

Agreed Action

The EMG Secretariat will contact the CEB Secretariat for information about the deadline for submitting documents to the CEB regular session in April.

4. Any other matters

No other matters were discussed.

5. Closure of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 15.55 CET.

Annex 1

List of participants

Name	Agency
Maria-Teresa Pisani	UNECE
Sergiusz Ludwiczak	UNECE
Mark Davis	FAO
Ludgarde Coppens	UNEP
Michiko Okumura	UNEP
Corli Pretorius	UNEP
Brennan van Dyke	DM
Xenia Von Lilien	CEB Secretariat
Andrew Rudd	UN Habitat
Rodel Urtman	UNOPS
Lorenzi Gavilli	ICAO
Julia Blocher	UNU
Fredrik Haag	IMO
Stefan Micallef	IMO
Salvatore Arico	UNESCO
Paul Egerton	WMO
Christian Blondin	WMO
William Abiabdallah	UNICEF
Margarita Astralaga	IFAD
Elliott Harris	EMG Secretariat (Chair)
Hossein Fadaei	EMG Secretariat
Jannica Pitkanen-Brunnsberg	EMG Secretariat

Annex 2

6th meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on the System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS) 1 February 2016 GoToMeeting, 14:30-16:30 hrs, Geneva time Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat	Distribution: Members of the Consultative Process
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Working Documents:

1. Provisional agenda
2. Revised Zero Draft of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies (SWFS)

Provisional Agenda

- 1- Introductory remarks by the Chair**
- 2- Consideration of the revised Zero Draft of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment for the UN System**
Conclusion and agreement on the final draft to be submitted for consideration of the Technical Segment of the EMG Senior Officials.
- 3- Meeting of the EMG Technical Segment and next meeting of the Consultative Process**
- 4- Any other matters**
- 5- Closure of the meeting**