
3rd meeting of the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste: Towards Eco-design and a Life-cycle Approach for E-products

EMG/e-waste/IMG/
13.06.2017
Distribution: IMG members

01.06.2017

GoToMeeting from 03:30 p.m. to 05:30 pm. (Geneva time)

1. Introduction

The third meeting of the IMG took place online on 1st June 2017, chaired by Mr. Hossein Fadaei of the EMG Secretariat. The meeting considered final comments on the analytical report and its recommendations, whilst also discussing the need for a proposed Heads of agencies' joint statement in follow up of the report. The next steps of the IMG were also reflected upon, taking into account the Group's Terms of Reference. The meeting further considered progress reporting to the 23rd Senior Officials' Meeting to be held in September 2017 and also the fourth IMG meeting proposed for July 2017.

The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

2. Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed focal points and meeting participants to the third meeting of the IMG and thanked them for their participation and commitment so far.

The meeting adopted the agenda (Annex 2).

3. Update on the finalisation of the analytical report

Mr. Garam Bel of the EMG Secretariat provided a summary of the procedure leading up to the completion of the draft analytical report and to the present meeting:

In early autumn 2016, the EMG Secretariat with the support of UNU undertook a desk-based mapping exercise identifying 154 e-waste initiatives (past and present) undertaken by UN entities including entities active in e-waste outside of the IMG such as the OECD. Furthermore, the Secretariat received 15 responses to a survey distributed to IMG Members.

A draft of the report was reviewed in connection with the 2nd IMG meeting in March 2017. The report as it stands in the present meeting is based on feedback provided during the second meeting in addition to any subsequent comments.

In addition to the report, leading up to the present meeting and based on availability, the EMG Secretariat conducted several bilateral discussions with IMG Members, including with: ITU, the BRS Secretariat, UNITAR, UNU and UN Environment. The aim of these bilateral meetings was to guide the discussions of the present meeting, in particular with regard to the follow-up of the recommendations provided in the analytical report.

The Chair opened the floor for any final comments on the report and its recommendations. The following comments were made:

- With reference to the recommendations, the ILO sees a lack of attention to legislation and attention to the inter-disciplinary and multi-level approach of e-waste at the country level. An example of the potential need for the environment, labour and finance ministries to come together was highlighted. Furthermore, ILO noted that they would like to see the concept of labour cooperatives and labour market perspectives addressed in the report. The way in which the international processes and agreements are organized in chapter 2 should be explained (i.e. by date or alphabetically), as well as the order in which agencies are listed both in chapter 2 and 3. Finally, more clarity regarding the transition between Chapter 2 and 3 was requested.
- The BRS Secretariat requested clarification regarding the intention and meaning of recommendation (C), which suggests the need to consider expanding the geographical scope of UN agencies' e-waste initiatives to more frequently include developed countries.
- In response to this request, UNU highlighted that based on the findings of the analysis there is a clear need to also address the e-waste problem as a developed country issue, as fundamentally e-waste arises from these countries.
- ILO contributed to the clarification made by UNU by highlighting that the 2030 Agenda is a universal and integrated agenda and that the Sustainable Development Goals apply to all countries. It was suggested that the recommendation be rephrased to reflect this.
- The Chair requested IMG Members to notify the EMG Secretariat of any missing aspects relating to the report and the data.
- ILO highlighted the need and on-going recognition of e-waste to move away from the idea of e-waste being considered as a pollution issue, but rather as a topic that can lead to better working conditions and organised jobs resulting in a more prosperous e-waste economy. ILO further addressed that we should focus on health no longer as a cost, but as an investment for all governments; and that these positive elements could be considered in the report and in future work of the IMG.
- UNITAR expressed their agreement with a shift to naming e-waste in a more positive way, and that in fact e-waste has a potential especially at the national level to be addressed through guidance provided to respective governments; and that tackling the e-waste problem is an opportunity significantly tied with job growth.
- UNU noted their concurrence with ILO and UNITAR, but also suggested caution in relation to how far job creation can actually contribute to e-waste management. UNU highlighted that research shows new technologies for waste management in fact replace what were originally informal jobs.
- In response, noted that there is still irrefutable benefit in providing workers with simple safety equipment and devices that can help support them in e-waste collection and processing. ILO offered to share their research and guides on this topic.

Agreed action:

ILO will provide the EMG Secretariat with written bullet points for the structural and clarity issues faced by the report.

The EMG Secretariat will make corrections to the minor structural issue at the end of Chapter 4 in relation to the recommendations section.

The EMG Secretariat will make changes to the recommendation on addressing developed countries in UN e-waste initiatives, and ensure its purpose is more clear and that it intends not to leave developing countries aside. This will explain that developed countries are a part of the solution without giving an impression that developed countries can benefit from capacity development and technical assistance which is available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

ILO will provide the EMG Secretariat with a few paragraphs for insertion into a particular suited part of the report; referring to potentially moving away from the idea of e-waste being considered as a pollution issue, but rather as a topic that can lead to better working conditions and organised jobs resulting in a more prosperous e-waste and green economy.

4. Next steps of the IMG

The Chair invited the participants of the meeting to discuss the next steps of the IMG, taking into consideration the IMG Terms of Reference, the role of the IMG in the follow-up of the analytical report recommendations and the bilateral meetings held prior to the meeting. Attention was also paid by the Chair to upcoming progress reporting by the EMG Secretariat to the 23rd Senior Officials' Meeting in September 2017.

- The BRS Secretariat highlighted that following the mapping exercise, there is now a need to move forward in understanding the programmatic and policy level preferences of UN agencies. This would help better recognise who could take the lead on a particular area and which other agencies are best fitted to support this lead. For example, ITU has a leading expertise on ICTs, while UN Environment has expertise in consumer awareness and labelling. Information on the policy and programmatic arrangements which might be required could be taken from the report and bilateral consultations as part of further correspondence.
- As a component of the next step after the finalisation of the analytical report, the BRS Secretariat suggested that the following could be pursued:
 - Based on the report identify and, if necessary, clarify the programmatic areas of work of the Members of the IMG on Tackling E-waste in the context of e-waste and the support they require.
 - Devise a gap analysis as a follow-up to the report in order to identify the programmatic/mandate aspects of e-waste which the report does not address. using the life-cycle stages, e.g. a flow chart or matrix with focusses on the country level.
- UNU reiterated that the intention of the report as laid out in the IMG Terms of Reference, was purely to act as a mapping exercise of past and present e-waste initiatives in the UN system.
- In reply, BRS mentioned that such a gap analysis idea could be placed under the recommendations section (as a component of the next steps), rather than within the main body of the report.
- UNITAR pledged agreement with BRS, and suggested that the next steps should be designed around agreements among agencies and not so much based on information identified in relation to their current e-waste activities and initiatives.
- ILO supported the gap analysis as proposed.

- The Chair then addressed the two remaining points in the Terms of Reference, including on funding and opened the floor up to discuss how we develop a new momentum. The Chair asked how we formulate future recommendations on this IMG, and how a strategy would look going forward. The Chair stressed the importance of understanding these questions in order for the EMG to formulate some actions for the EMG Senior Officials.
- UNU highlighted that they are very much in favour of a platform on e-waste, with the aim to enhance UN system-wide coordination not only to enhance cooperation but also to facilitate funding for e-waste projects and to prevent funding and collaboration being hindered by existing UN processes. UNU proposed a joint mechanism to be developed with the EMG/IMG initially taking the mandate for developing this mechanism.
- Making reference to other initiatives not related to e-waste which have successfully accrued funding for the support of various projects, ILO made reference to the Youth Employment Initiative and Working for Health Initiative, and the efficiency of these initiatives in explaining clearly what their theory of change is towards the goal which they aim for. Reference was also made to possible funding which could be brought from the multi-partnership fund in New York.
- ILO also proposed more coordinated dialogue on which developed countries are actually creating the most issues in terms of e-waste, and proposed the benefit of developing plans at the national level. Referring to this proposal, ILO noted that there would also have to be global level discussion focussing on standards and extended producer responsibility.
- Moreover, ILO noted that perhaps a mandate proposing more coordinated dialogue on which developed countries are actually creating the most issues in terms of e-waste, could be given by the Chief Executives Board backed with a resolute theory of change. Lastly, ILO indicated that if donors are approached with the idea of UN coordination and platforms there may not be as much interest.
- The Chair highlighted the need to maintain the energy and effort in the IMG's work beyond the report, and that ultimately a common goal will be necessary especially when this concerns more substantive work at the country level. The Chair made reference to replicating a platform which exists already, or through existing structures.
- The BRS Secretariat reiterated that the key point is to identify a clear goal and not specifically on how to solve national or global-level e-waste problems, but rather focus on setting targets for agencies. BRS mentioned that in these initial steps, consideration of establishing an coordination platform may be pre-mature but should come later.
- BRS proposed that the IMG should take a stepwise approach whereby the Group would focus on carrying out a gap analysis to identify concrete goals upon which a work plan would be developed highlighting how to reach these goals. This work plan would then be distributed to possible donors. BRS highlighted that such a proposal for a stepwise approach should be a part of the report recommendations.
- The Chair offered UNU to provide an overview of their proposal on coordination across the UN system.
- UNU replied with information on how the proposed coordination platform and synergies could work. UNU concurred with previous comments that there is a need to identify a target that is agreeable, while reiterating the benefit of UN agencies identifying a goal on e-waste for each country across the life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment.

The Chair introduced another dimension to the IMG relating to internal (corporate) e-waste management issues within the UN system and some of the concerns on stockpiling of used equipment, and a limited understanding of disposal avenues being raised by field offices. Reference was made to how the IMG on Tackling E-waste could support the IMG on environmental sustainability management coordinated by the Sustainable UN (SUN), with perhaps a more active role on guidance. The following comments were raised:

- UNU highlighted the unique opportunity in this IMG for paying attention to internal e-waste management issues and suggested that there could be an inter-UN organisational approach on managing our e-waste. UNU noted that e-waste will be a problem for a long time and that the UN may consider developing internal guidance, new approaches and even unconventional means internally to tackle e-waste.
- The Chair questioned what the focus on internal e-waste issues would be; for example, would it be to gather expertise from each agency to support the work of SUN? How would such an initiative be run and funded?
- UNITAR addressed the issue of funding by highlighting that a concrete strategy is required on how to address e-waste in order to raise seed money; an approach can then be undertaken which defines a program on how to access the funding and have clarity on what this funding is going to be used for. UNITAR proposed a committee to be established at least for developing an internal e-waste management strategy and organising associated funding for this work.
- UN Environment echoed comments by UNITAR on a defined vision across all UN agencies, and the agreement of targets in order to attract funding. The issue of whether or not funding would come from more pragmatic or ear-marked funds was questioned.
- The Chair invited UNICEF to discuss their internal e-waste work.
- UNICEF provided an overview of their work on the flow of e-waste from their offices, including on island nations. UNICEF also highlighted that for these assessments, they manage to accrue some funding internally.
- UNITAR suggested that the IMG maps out which donors are funding particular aspects of e-waste, and then with one strategy, approach these donors on what will be done differently.

Agreed action:

The EMG Secretariat will incorporate a recommendation into Chapter 4 which proposes the undertaking of a gap analysis as a next step following-up on the report, as advocated by the BRS Secretariat.

Issues for further consideration:

The IMG may consider a stepwise approach for next steps based on the proposal by the BRS Secretariat to undertake a gap analysis upon which a work plan would then be devised.

The IMG may consider mapping out the donors who are funding particular aspects of e-waste, and then approach them with a novel work plan on e-waste.

The IMG on Tackling E-waste may consider providing support to SUN on their work relating to the management of internal e-waste within the UN, in particular, with the attention of procurement.

5. Next meeting of the IMG possibly in July 2017

The Chair provided a recap of the discussion during the meeting and outlined the short term next steps of the IMG's work:

- 1) An email will be sent out shortly inviting IMG Members to the proposed 4th meeting of the IMG to be held in July 2017, along with the draft minutes of the meeting.
- 2) A final draft of the analytical report will be distributed to IMG Members before submission for design and editing.
- 3) A draft Joint Statement will be prepared by the EMG Secretariat for internal distribution by IMG Members within their respective agencies. The aim of the statement is to provide the key findings of the report and its endorsement by Heads of agencies. Once this draft is developed, there will be room for comments by IMG Members on this.

The Chair outlined the development of three Notes to be prepared in the short term regarding the next steps of the IMG's work:

- 4) Between June and August 2017, IMG Members will receive a Note containing a set of recommendations for future work of the IMG based on the findings of the report and discussions of the IMG. The Note will be distributed to IMG Members for their further comments and development of the recommendations contained;
- 5) After the Senior Officials' Meeting in September 2017 and building on the first Note, the EMG Secretariat alongside IMG Members will prepare a second Note containing a plan for the work of the IMG. During this time, considerations for funding of the proposed work plan beyond the IMG should also simultaneously begin to be addressed;
- 6) A third Note will be prepared and shared with IMG Members explaining how the IMG on Tackling E-waste will liaise with and provide support to the IMG on internal e-waste issues.

6. Other matters

No further matters were reported.

7. Closure of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 5.30pm GVA time.

Annex 1 (List of Participants)

	Name	Organisation
1	Ms. Tatiana Terekhova	BRS Secretariat
2	Mr. Matthias Kern	BRS Secretariat
3	Mr. Feng Wang	UN Environment
4	Nelson Manda	UNITAR
5	Mr. Casper Edmonds	ILO
6	Ms. Bianca Perina	ILO
7	Ruediger Kuehr	UNU
8	Mr. William Abi Abdallah	UNICEF
9	Marit Nilses	ESCAP
10	Mr. Hossein Fadaei (Chair)	EMG Secretariat
11	Mr. Garam Bel	EMG Secretariat
12	Ms. Hillary Green	SUN

Annex 2 (Provisional Agenda)



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

联合国环境规划署



3rd meeting of the Issue Management Group Tackling E-waste: Towards Eco-design and a Life-cycle Approach for E-products

EMG/e-waste/IMG/
29.05.2017

Distribution: IMG members

01.06.2017

GoToMeeting from 03:30 p.m. to 05:30 pm. (Geneva time) .

Documents:

- Provisional Agenda
- IMG Terms of Reference
- Draft Analytical Report
- Discussion Note on Next Steps

Provisional Agenda

1. Opening remarks
2. Adoption of the Agenda
Agenda approved
3. Update on finalization of the draft Analytical Report
 - a.) *Consideration of any final comments and finalization of recommendations.*
 - b.) *Proposal for a Heads of Agencies' joint statement in follow up of the report.*
4. Next steps of the IMG
 - a.) *Consideration of points 18 (d) and (e) of the IMG Terms of Reference and the role of the IMG in the follow-up of the Analytical Report recommendations (taking into account the bilateral meetings held prior to the 3rd IMG meeting).*
 - b.) *Consideration of progress reporting to the 23rd Senior Officials' Meeting, including proposed action items for approval by the Senior Officials.*
5. Next meeting of the IMG possibly in July 2017
6. Other matters
7. Closure of the meeting