Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste: Towards Eco-design and a Life-cycle Approach for E-products
18/07/2017

Note on Action Points 2017/2018

1.) Introduction

This Note provides the basis for future work of the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste and follows on from the recommendations put forward in the E-waste Analytical Report. Separately, through a Joint Statement, Heads of agencies have been requested to commit to the recommendations outlined in the Report and to consider the key findings which it highlights.

The key findings identify the underlying principle that UN agencies should increase efforts, where possible, to address the early stages of the life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment; for example, during its design and production, whilst at the same time ensuring all stages are considered from design, to use, to final disposal. The principle of life-cycle thinking should be considered in any subsequent e-waste work by agencies of the United Nations. Other findings have highlighted that there is less private sector involvement in e-waste initiatives, limited collaboration among UN agencies and far fewer e-waste initiatives implemented in advanced economies, compared to the global south.

The Report underlines that the majority of partnerships and collaboration involve external stakeholders, with little consolidation and sharing of knowledge and expertise within the UN system on e-waste matters. The following action points refer to increasing UN system-wide collaboration and coordination in order to enhance the work of UN agencies in their efforts to tackle the global e-waste problem.

Based on the detailed overview provided in section 2, the following <u>Action Points are being proposed for the Environment Management Group Senior Officials, who will meet in September 2017</u>.

1. Take note of the achievements made by the IMG on Tackling E-waste, including preparation of the E-waste Analytical Report and the Joint Statement, which outlines the commitments of respective Heads of agencies towards the follow-up of the recommendations listed in the Analytical Report

2. Decide to extend the IMG for one more year to:
   a. Undertake a gap analysis for identifying possible long-term programmatic cooperation and collaboration on tackling e-waste;
   b. Establish means for further and systematic sharing of knowledge among UN agencies on e-waste management partnerships and programmes, including developing a repository of project expertise, country level information and related data;

c. Deepen the liaison between the IMG on Tackling E-waste and the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the UN, through further reciprocal briefings and exchanges of best practices, information and case studies.

2.) Environment Management Group and the IMG on Tackling E-waste

The information in this section gives a more detailed overview of the proposed next steps for the Environment Management Group Secretariat and the IMG on Tackling E-waste, upon endorsement at the 23rd Environment Management Group Senior Officials'.

Undertaking a gap analysis

I. It is recommended that a gap analysis be undertaken by the Environment Management Group Secretariat, to investigate the programmatic strengths and weaknesses of IMG Member agencies and related entities in addressing the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment. To date, the E-waste Analytical Report has identified gaps which exist in the coverage of UN initiatives to tackle e-waste, relating to their characteristics or geographical spread for example. However, the proposed analysis at the programmatic level may identify factors such as:

    1. An understanding of the existing mandates of each agency in relation to e-waste provided by their governing bodies, statutes, etc.., what kind of activities on e-waste are included or can be included in the programme of work or other relevant document of each organizations and resources currently dedicated to it
    2. An understanding of the experience and possible support of each agency for one another on e-waste related work
    3. An understanding of each agency's comparative advantage based on their e-waste mandate
    4. Analyse the gaps between agencies' e-waste mandates, and the advantages and disadvantages which they may face as a result
    5. An understanding of the resources available
    6. Etc.

II. It is proposed that the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment be used as a foundation for the gap analysis. That is, the analysis would focus on each stage of the life-cycle, and would map the programmatic strengths and weaknesses (*such as the above points*) of each IMG Member and related entities in relation to all life-cycle stages.

III. The desired outcome is an analysis which makes it possible to identify both gaps and links among agencies, where subsequently, a concrete set of recommendations for programmatic cooperation and collaboration could be established.

IV. It is proposed that the gap analysis would take place from September 2017 to March 2018.

Identifying possibilities for knowledge sharing

I.   In addition to the undertaking of a gap analysis, as outlined above, it is recommended that possibilities for knowledge sharing among UN agencies be explored. It is proposed that this sharing of knowledge involves the compilation of, and easy access to things such as relevant knowledge, information on past and present project experiences and lessons learned, training and research findings, statistical data, and information on national legislation and country e-waste inventories etc.

II.   A number of existing platforms/hubs exist upon which it may be possible to develop a comprehensive database; these include: the United Nations University's (Step) E-waste World Map, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the Clearing-House Mechanism serving the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox and the International Telecommunication Union's Global Portal for E-waste.

III.   It is proposed that such a platform/hub be developed with simple and accessible usability by any UN entity who wishes to access information regarding UN projects and programmes relating specifically to e-waste, which might also include detailed information regarding the current state of e-waste-related issues across countries.

Supporting UN internal e-waste management

I.   Providing support for the management of UN internal e-waste has been recommended, as a longer-term goal with the aim of establishing a link between the IMG on Tackling E-waste and the Sustainable UN (SUN)-led IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management.

II.   It is proposed that the attention to internal e-waste management work by the IMG on Tackling E-waste in liaison with SUN, focuses initially on distributing overall expertise between the two IMGs. There remains a need to support guidance on e-waste management being developed by SUN, and for the creation of guidance on corporate procurement of electrical and electronic equipment based on an understanding of what the UN purchases, how this is used and where it can be disposed of.

3.) Long-term programmatic cooperation and collaboration possibilities

Developing a joint work plan on tackling e-waste

I.   The development of a joint work plan has been recommended, towards tackling e-waste more collaboratively. This may involve translating the recommendations of the gap analysis led by the Environment Management Group Secretariat, into a set of concrete goals based on which the plan may be devised.

II.   Involvement in the joint work plan would be available to all UN agencies who are interested in cooperating and collaborating programmatically towards tackling issues across the entire life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment at the country level, through existing or upcoming projects and programmes. For example, through collaboration, an agency may intend to gain additional expertise/experience in a given area of e-waste which is currently under-resourced or not available to

them. An agency may equally be interested in cooperating or even collaborating in particular e-waste projects and programmes for which they have already have significant expertise in.

III.   It might be the case that involvement in the joint work plan on tackling e-waste would be either voluntary or decided upon through some formal process during its design.

IV.   It is proposed that the objective of the joint work plan be two-fold:

<u>1.) To actively pursue programmatic cooperation and collaboration</u>

It is anticipated that based on the recommendations put forward in the gap analysis, several entry points might be identified for collaboration in order to support agencies' programmatic weaknesses and make use of their strengths, in addressing the full life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment.

<u>2.) To identify goals at the country level</u>

It is proposed that wherever cooperation and collaboration among UN agencies is established, their work would focus directly on the country level whenever possible, considering the following key findings of the E-waste Analytical Report:

   a. Supporting the implementation or strengthening of national legislation on extended producer responsibility schemes;
   b. Supporting the design and production stages of electrical and electronic equipment;
   c. Focussing on developed economies by enhancing national consumer awareness about the consumption of electrical and electronic equipment and the damaging effects of e-waste.

V.   The development of a joint work plan on tackling e-waste would not fall under the role of the Environment Management Group. Instead, plans for any long-term programmatic cooperation and collaboration, involving the decision on which agencies cooperate and collaborate programmatically to tackle a particular e-waste issue in the life-cycle, would require the direction of a lead agency (or agencies).

VI.   An opportunity may exist for the Environment Management Group, so long as the IMG on Tackling E-waste is in place, to provide backing towards arranging meetings and general coordination support. The possibility may also exist for the Environment Management Group to monitor the progress of the joint work plan, at its Senior Officials and mid-term Senior Officials' meetings.