



THE EMG NEXUS DIALOGUES

NEXUS DIALOGUE ONE, 26 - 27 APRIL 2017



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP



Operationalizing environmental issues within the UN system is at the heart of the EMG's work, including promoting coordination, information exchange and joint action among UN agencies.

The EMG Nexus Dialogues bring UN agencies and other stakeholders together to identify synergies and partnerships at the intersection of the different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from an environmental perspective. Participants are able to acquaint themselves with available nexus methodologies for their work.

Nexus Dialogue One: addressing policy, planning and practical implementation of the nexus approach

April 26 2017

The Technical Segment probed the practical implementation of the approach at the global and country level, by focusing on opportunities and challenges. Participants explored ways to establish and maintain nexus partnerships among agencies, ministries, private sector and NGOs.

April 27 2017

The High-Level Segment gave an opportunity for UN Senior Officials, academia, the private sector and civil society to discuss the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships to strengthen policy coherence in implementing the environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

For more information, visit the EMG Website
unemg.org/emg-nexus-dialogues

Technical Segment Overview



The SDGs have guided the work of the UN system now for almost two years. To understand opportunities and challenges, and to reflect on their own work from a nexus perspective, participants were presented with several case studies. The presentations are available at <http://unemg.org/emg-nexus-dialogues/dialogue-1>. During discussions among the presenters and participants, a lack of **knowledge sharing between and within sectors** was alluded to, as well as a possible lack of **nexus skills** around negotiating and identifying unintended trade-offs resulting from specialized SDG programs.

The **Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE)** Mr. Asad Naqvi shared the modalities by which PAGE **brings together 5 agencies** to support Member States to holistically consider the social, environmental and economic dimensions of the SDGs. **PAGE within Peru** was then presented as a nexus success story by Ms. Dorit Kempter of the **ILO**.

UN AGENCY CASE STUDIES



Mr. Jonas Rodhe of the **Swedish Environment Protection Agency** spoke of collaboration at different levels of governance in implementing the Swedish Environmental Objectives, and how these objectives align with the SDGs. Dr. Catalina Spataru, **University College London**, showcased research in the context of Brazil. The IDA3 model, developed by UCL, addresses the water-energy-land nexus. Dr. Kaveh Madani, from **Imperial College London** demonstrated different tools used to influence policy through the use of examples from work undertaken in Alaska.

NATIONAL LEVEL CASE STUDIES

Breakout sessions facilitated reflection and discussion about nexuses in participant's own work and exploration of available nexus methodologies and tools.

Among other tools and methodologies, the Stockholm Environment Institute presented their EMG Nexus Visualization Tool. This tool can clarify which SDGs are interlinked, assist UN Agencies seeking to understand existing initiatives targeting specific SDGs and help UN Agencies to identify possible future collaborations.

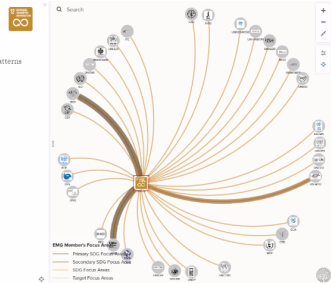
SDG 12

SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal

SDG RESOURCE PAGE: sustainabledevelopment.un.org/go/SDG12

Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE)





High Level Segment Overview

Mr. Elliott Harris delivered the opening remarks and Mr. Felix Dodds provided a brief overview of the Technical Segment. Mr. Felix Wertli expressed the position of the nexus approach within the political climate of the UN in Switzerland and the Swiss support for the Dialogues. Panelists discussed the benefits and challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation in implementing the environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

In successfully meeting the SDGs, the UN system and Member States must prepare for more uncertainty. Mr. Janos Pasztor suggested the world which created the 2030 Agenda has passed; we face a changing, unpredictable future. Exciting and worrisome, our response must engage the world in a more flexible way.

Nexus thinking advocates for specialization within silos, as conveyors of each SDG, and creation of inter-agency partnerships; PAGE is one example. We must know from where to pull expertise from outside of our field.

Mr. Stephen Pursey noted that our technology, climate, and social and demographic systems are changing; the UN must ensure it is shaping the future. We must support training and skills development.

For a nexus approach to be effective, we need to understand where the existing initiatives and overlaps are and where there is a need to do more. Mr. Nikhil Seth noted that this is both a national and local challenge. We need to move beyond identifying common interests and develop transmission channels and action. Data to support cross-sectoral issues exists, but how much is this shared, asked Ms. Laura Thompson. We must build on this through straight forward narrative. EMG can improve understanding of these issues to implement this narrative; possibly even an EMG approach to create an 'SDG Management Group'.

Multi-sector response is not a new concept; response to the AIDS crisis is one example. Ms. Nadia Isler, Head of SDG Lab, reminded that, whilst a public health crisis this sector was assisted by the trade, education and labour sectors.



Discussion regarding the risks of staying within the silos must increase. Nexus solutions are found at the science-policy interface; the UN, Member States, academia, national research bodies and ministries, and the private sector must come together. Dr Elena Manaenkova drove home our need to work across boundaries, as ecosystems do not work on political boundaries. The multilateralism which the 2030 Agenda was built upon is under threat. Special guest, Dr. Joachim Monkelbaan argued we must nourish optimism in the face of fear, anger and pessimism.

To reach the required flexibility, strict funding schemes are an obstacle. State funding targets outcome-based projects, not research and training. For as long as funding is directly distributed to agencies, competition between agencies will prevail, with little incentive to consider issues outside one's own sector.

By identifying existing overlaps, and reallocated funding for collaborative projects, existing funding would stretch further. Collaboration needs to be mobilized, normalized, and possibly incentivized. A higher emphasis must be placed upon the non-monetary benefits and calculation of multi-sector outcomes for projects.

Left: Mr. Felix Wertli, Head of Global Affairs for the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland; Mr. Janos Pasztor, Executive Director, Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance Initiative; Ms. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, IOM; Dr. Elena Manaenkova, Deputy Secretary General, WMO; Mr. Nikhil Seth, Executive Secretary, UNITAR; Mr. Stephen Pursey, Senior Policy Adviser and G20 Coordinator, ILO. Right: Mr Felix Dodds, Senior Fellow, University of California. Lower: Mr Elliott Harris, Assistant Secretary General, UN Environment

Future Dialogues

Three more Dialogues are to take place during 2017. These Dialogues will bring together UN Agencies and stakeholders around specific nexus issues. During the first Dialogue, participants contributed to the development of the next three dialogues.

The Environment and Poverty Nexus, July 2017

The eradication of poverty remains one of the largest and most urgent global challenges. Environmental change, degradation, climate distress and conflict disproportionately impact and exacerbate poverty.

An opportunity exists to clarify the dependency between these issues. There is a need to coordinate with local planning, engage stakeholders and consider political agendas.

Environmental and Humanitarian Issues Nexus, October

Environmental disasters and degradation have contributed to the overwhelming number of internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees.

The humanitarian sector must often react swiftly, whilst the environment timeline is often longer-term. There are possibilities to include the environment in operating procedures and training. Skills-sharing and institutional structures to foster joint work were identified as entry points to this nexus.

The Urban Pollution, Health, and Sustainable Development Nexus, December

Environmental quality is increasingly linked to global causes of illness and death. In urbanized environments, environmental hazards include exposure to air, water and chemical pollution. The SDGs play an important role in this nexus, highlighting that isolated actions to improve health are unsustainable, and the environment must be an entry point into addressing global health.

Focus could include common threats and potential synergies; waste, urban heat islands, and increased incidence of disease.



Left to right: Mr Asad Naqvi, PAGE, United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Perception Change Project. Mr Eric Kemp-Benedict, Stockholm Environment Institute.

Acknowledgments



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IISD
International Institute for
Sustainable Development

Imperial College
London

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