



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

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2nd meeting of the EMG Task Team for on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda 20 May 2015	Distribution: EMG Task Team members 05.06.15
Teleconference, 15:30-17:00 hrs, Geneva time	

Minutes

2nd meeting of the EMG Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

Introduction

The second meeting of the Task Team took place by teleconference from 15.30 to 17.00 (CEST) on 20 May 2015, and was chaired by the Director of the EMG Secretariat, Elliott Harris.

The list of participants is provided in Annex I. Following the Chair's opening remarks, the meeting adopted its agenda (Annex II) which was composed of two interlinked issues of 1) Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG and 2) EMG's contribution on the environmental sustainability dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) . The meeting considered two notes namely : "Emerging Insights: Preliminary findings of the interviews with UN agencies on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG (draft, 18 May 2015)" and " Proposed Adjustments to the Work of the Task Team on EMG Contribution to the Environmental Sustainability Dimension of the SDGs" which are attached to this report as ANNEX III and IV respectively. The participants provided preliminary comments and agreed on the next step and the way forward.

Part I - Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

The chair opened the meeting recalling the issues that were under consideration in the context of maximizing the EMG Effectiveness including :

- a) EMG's approach for identification of topics/issues (Internal UN issues as well as global issues)
- b) EMG working modalities, their effectiveness and work load (consultative processes, IMGs, Task teams, reports etc.)
- c) Dissemination of EMG products within the UN system – how does this happen, what is the take up of our products and conclusions; what has been the most effective method?
- d) Is the EMG fit for purpose and institutionally-well equipped to guide and support the UN system on environmental dimensions of SDGs?

- e) functioning of the Secretariat and linkages with the wider coordination system including the CEB.

He then invited Achim Halpaap (UNITAR) to present the preliminary findings of the interviews with UN agencies on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG contained in the note : “Emerging Insights: (draft, 18 May 2015)”. The Emerging Insights report has been framed based on the outline of the expected final report. A revised version of the Emerging Insights report including the comments provided in this meeting will be shared for additional written comments.

Mr. Halpaap thanked all 15 UN agencies which have participated in the interviews and provided their views and perspectives. The respondents included a diverse range of agencies with various mandates and spectrum of operations to ensure a balanced and inclusive report. The interviews were conducted under Chatham-house rule around a set of questions which were circulated in advance.

. Mr. Halpaap provided a short description of the findings captured under each chapter of the Insights Report. Following that presentation, the Chair invited comments from the participants.

Key Considerations/Comments

The following views and comments were expressed by the Task Team in relation to each chapter:

1) Introduction

- A collective institutional memory for what was the intent of establishing EMG may be beneficial to be included in the final report to set the context and stage for the proceeding forward looking chapters.
- The overall assessment of the interviews should be stated in a more objective manner.

2) Review and lessons learned from specific work streams

- Based on the results of the interviews and other research, it was suggested to provide a clearer picture of how institutions are engaging and what they expect out of the EMG and the role they expect to play.
- A focus on the notion of moving towards a change and improvement is missing.
- Section 2.5 in the report provides a number of good ideas however these can be expressed in a better way. For example, it is not entirely correct to describe the IMGs as ad-hoc. Work is needed to more clearly define some of the phrases or secondary comments.

Current EMG set ups are not captured by description in Section 2.5.

- In section 2.2, it is important to note that EMG is a UN inter-agency mechanism and that each agency will follow up on EMG reports at their own discretion.

3) EMG Governance and Modalities of Work

- There are some factual inaccuracies in section 3.2.4 with regards to the chairing arrangements which should be reviewed .

- The report makes reference to a suggestion to arrange the EMG SOM back to back with the CEB meeting. As there is already a lot of competition from other groups as well as several standing meetings organised the day before the CEB meeting.. The SOM-CEB back to back meeting may therefore not be an optimal option.
- It should come out clearer in the report that the EMG and groups such as the CEB and UN Water, Un Energy and Un Oceans are different types of interagency mechanisms with different chairing arrangements The CEB Secretariat will provide appropriate language to better describe the linkages/differences.
- In Section 3.2.4 the report should also capture the traditional co-hosting of meetings in addition to co-chairing..
- In section 3.2.1 clarification was sought on why co-chairing is mentioned rather than vice-chairing. Note should be made to highlight the differences between co-chairing and co-hosting as these are significantly different.
- If the most important point is to ensure senior level representative participation, instead of having set SOM meetings, they should take place when they are really required and essential and allow for a more regular and accurate technical level meeting with in-depth preparations which will allow much more to be done and decisions to be prepared in advance.
- Further precision is needed in comparing the EMG with other UN system wide coordination mechanism and their relationship with the CEB.
- There was a consensus to remove reference to the option of establishing a “ UN Environment” in the report.
- With regard to section 3.4., it was suggested that an option that would promote a more dynamic and participative way to conduct the work of the EMG is added
- Both Section 3.3 (Identification and Selection of Issues for EMG Action) and Section 4 (Review of Mandate and Future Opportunities) are talking about how the EMG can be relevant in responding to UN priorities in the future, and both sections are not mutually exclusive. It was suggested that the points in Section 4 be included into part of Section 3.3, to understand what are the big clusters and the specific actions and deliverables that the EMG will address in a single section of the document.

4) Review of Mandate and Future Opportunities

- It was questioned whether human settlement dimension should be explicitly added to the mandate of EMG. If so, there needs to be more justification related to the themes of the current mandate rather than merely stating that human settlements once were part of an overall mandate.

- Section 4.2 to 4.5 addressing the mandate and the future focus of the EMG contain pertinent issues that may nonetheless not belong to this report . A separate report about what issues EMG want to take up in the future may be more grounded.
- In terms of the contributors to the data collected for the report, it was queried whether respondents were all EMG focal points. A needs assessment including an analysis of the eventual beneficiaries of the EMG was suggested.
- It was recommended that the EMG takes a more interactive manner of acting. On one hand, the focal points said there needs to be more of a focus and better process of selecting issues but at same time, some responded by saying that EMG needs to be more strategic and set strategic lines of work that EMG want to participate in. This should be more strategic than doing a little work here and there.

Agreed Action I :

The Secretariat will circulate a revised version of the preliminary insights report by Monday, 8 June 2015. The revised version will take into account views expressed at the teleconference as well as selected additional insights that emerged in the most recent interviews. Agencies should wait with submitting written comments on the report until the revised version is circulated to them..

b) The commented Emerging Insights report will be used to prepare the final report of the Task Team which will include additional contextual information about the EMG and descriptions of the issues, etc.

c) A draft final report will be circulated in time for the next Task Team meeting before the summer holidays the date of which will be communicated in due course. This report will be the basis for the discussion of the SOM21. Therefore, rather than pruning specific suggestions from the Emerging Insights document, it should be used to select those suggestions and recommendations that the task team wishes to include in the final report that will be proposed to the SOM .

Part II – EMG contribution to the environmental sustainability dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Chair recalled the discussion of the EMG mid-term technical meeting on 6 May which suggested modifying the TOR in addressing this issue given the advanced stage of the SDG negotiations and in order to ensure added value by the EMG. The mid-term meeting suggested that the EMG could focus on consolidation of existing materials on environmental sustainability in the UN system and be forward looking aiming to :

- a) Explore linkages of the SDGs and their targets and emerging indicators with existing international environmental agreements and goal frameworks;
- b) Inform, as appropriate and through existing channels, the development of indicators from an environmental sustainability perspective;

- c) Provide analytical insights to support consideration of implementation issues and linkages at an early stage

He invited the meeting to look at section 2 and section 5 of the Note " Proposed Adjustments to the Work of the Task Team on SDGs and Environmental Sustainability" and invited the meeting to provide reflections on the following:

1. Are the suggested questions relevant for "an implementation focused analysis" which seeks to link the environmental aspects of the SDGs with existing international goals and MEAs? Are the questions sufficient? What other questions could be posed?
2. Do you agree with the suggested focus of an EMG contribution on "implementation of the SDGs and a focus on providing analytical insights that link environment related SDGs with internationally agreed goals and MEAs"?
3. How can we ensure that this exercise adds value as a collective input through the EMG?

As the discussion on the first issue had run well over the allocated time, the chair invited the participants to provide their comments and answers on the above questions by email. If there is agreement on this approach, a technical exercise could be conducted and coordinated with the aim to fill in Table 1 in the Note. This could first be tested on one or two thematic areas, such as biodiversity or chemicals to evaluate the utility of the results. The Secretariat could initiate this technical analysis in close cooperation with the selected chemicals and biodiversity focal points of the EMG members.

Agreed Action II

The meeting agreed to provide comments on the Note " Proposed Adjustments to the Work of the Task Team on SDGs and Environmental Sustainability" including the questions proposed therein. by June 12, 2015.

Part III – Other matters

The chair stated that it would be more beneficial to have the report of the Task Team finished as soon as possible by the final week of July at the latest.

Annex 1 : List of Participants

	Name	Organization
1	Georgina Stickels	WFP
2	Julie McKenzie	WFP
4	Achim Halpaap	UNITAR
5	Neil Pratt	CBD
6	Federica Pietracci	UNDESA
8	Daniele Violetti	UNFCCC
9	Christian Blondin	WMO
11	Maria Teresa Pisani	UNECE
12	Barbara Tavora-Jainchill	UNFF
13	Ryo Nakamura	UNFF
14	Isabella Marras	UNEP
15	Gary Fowlie	ITU
16	William Abi Abdallah	UN Women
17	Marianna Belsky	UN Women
18	Stefan Micallef	IMO
19	Jane Hupe	ICAO
20	Corli Pretorius	UNEP
21	Tim Scott	UNDP
22	Xenia von Lilien	CEB
23	Brennan Van Dyke	UN Secretariat, NY
24	Elliott Harris (Chair) Hossein Fadaei Jannica Pitkanen-Brunnsberg Andrew Wilson	EMG Secretariat

Annex II

Provisional agenda

2nd meeting of the EMG Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda. 20 May 2015 Teleconference, 15:30-17:00 hrs, Geneva time Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat.	Distribution: EMG Task Team members
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Working Documents:

- A. Provisional agenda
- B. Emerging Insights: Preliminary findings of the interviews with UN agencies on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG

Reference documents:

- A. Draft Outline of the Final Report on Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG
- B. Questionnaire for the interviews
- C. TOR of the Task Team
- D. Draft Reference lists of documentation covering linkages between the SDGs and the Environment

Provisional Agenda

Part I - Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG

15:30-16:20

1. Introductory remarks on the background and elements of the EMG SOM20 Decision VIII and the overall progress so far
2. Presentation of the preliminary findings of the interviews with UN agencies on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG
3. Next steps/stages in preparation of the report for SOM21

Part II – EMG contribution on the environmental sustainability dimension of the SDGs

16:20-16:55

4. Discussion on EMG contribution on the environmental sustainability dimension of the SDGs including:
 - a) Explore the linkages of the SDGs with existing international environmental agreements, goals and frameworks
 - b) Inform, as appropriate and through the existing channels the development of the indicators from an environmental sustainability perspective
 - c) Provide analytical insights to support consideration of implementation issues and linkages at an early stage
5. Next steps and preparation on this issue for SOM21

Part III

16:55-17:00

6. Any other matters
7. Closure of the teleconference