



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

Draft Report of the Third Session of the Environment Management Group (EMG)

10 October 2001, Geneva

International Environment House

A. Opening of the meeting

1. The third meeting of the Environmental Management Group was held on 10 October 2001 in Geneva. Mr. Bakary Kante, UNEP Director of the Division of Environmental Policy Development and Law, in the absence of Dr. Klaus Topfer, UNEP Executive Director, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.
2. The Chairman expressed his appreciation and thanks to the members for participation to the meeting despite the late notice. He then proposed some changes to the provisional agenda including the deletion of the agenda item on environmental education based on the written request of the UNESCO representative who was not able to attend the meeting. Therefore it was agreed to postpone consideration of this matter to the next session of the EMG.
3. The list of participants is contained in the annex attached to the present report.

B. Adoption of the agenda

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the meeting
 2. Adoption of the agenda
 3. Implementation of UNEP GC Decision 21/21 “International Environmental Governance” Status Report.
 4. Harmonization of Information Management and Reporting for Biodiversity-Related Treaties
 5. Education, Training and Awareness Raising of Issues Relating to Solid Waste Management
 6. Clustering Approach to the Chemical Agenda
 7. Other business
 8. Date and venue of the next meeting
 9. Closure of the meeting

C. Agenda item 3, Implementation of UNEP GC Decision 21/21

5. The chair informed the members on the current status of the IEG process, which had benefited significantly from high-level support from Governments and key institutions, including UN agencies and the members of the EMG.

6. He described the IEG process as being initiated in decision 21/21 of the UNEP Governing Council on international environmental governance. Decision 21/21 called for a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthened governance, including the financing of UNEP.

7. Meetings in New York, Bonn and Algiers had clarified a number of important issues and had considered a set of specific questions and participants had made substantive progress in identifying areas of convergence. They had also addressed a possible role for the GMEF as the cornerstone of IEG, enhancing synergies and cooperation across MEAs while avoiding the creation of new institutions, the need for stable and predictable financing for UNEP, and the role of the EMG in cooperating with the UN system.

8. In his response to comments from UNDP and UNCHS, the Chairman said that discussions at the three meetings already held on the IEG process included inviting the participants to consider the proposals of the President of UNEP GC, Mr. David Anderson, which delegates referred to as the “building blocks” document. Governments, he said, did not seem to be in favor of a world environmental organization, and on the question of UNEP becoming a specialized agency he said that the majority of countries had favored an evolutionary approach to the IEG process rather than the creation of new intergovernmental bodies. He said the current situation of UNEP in relation to the General Assembly of the United Nations was working well and would improve if UNEP were able to resolve its current weaknesses, especially in financing and budgeting.

9. Members thanked the chair for the update on IEG and expressed their readiness to contribute to the process. FAO informed the meeting on his organization’s input on IEG to be sent soon to UNEP for incorporation to the related documents.

10. Some MEA’s secretariats (CMS, CITES, UNFCCC) expressed their concern over the expected roles to be given to GMEF as the main global policy making body in the field of environment and its relation and interaction with the COPS of MEA’s. UNCHS, UNCTAD, FAO and UNIDO sought clarification on the relationship of the roles of EMG and GMEF and asked about the relationship of IEG with EMG.

11. The Chairman said that EMG and the GMEF were considered to provide policy guidance and coordination on environment and sustainable issues within the UN system. The Chairman encouraged the members to prepare their proposals and actively participate to the IMG4 in Montreal. .

12. RAMSAR and CITES stated the difficulty for the MEA's to return each time to their COP's to obtain authority to take decisions at the EMG, therefore they proposed that a better definition or revisiting of the EMG's TOR at the WSSD might be needed. The members also insisted on the importance of high-level participation at the meetings of the EMG and selection of themes, which are of common importance and interest for all members. The Chairman stated that EMG should be proactive and should deal with issues of high priority if it were to be appreciated by Governments. EMG should enhance coordination across the UN system with inputs from all the agencies. He referred to the GA resolution 53/242 where it was made clear that EMG should discuss areas of common concern at the highest level and could take decisions accordingly.

D. Agenda item 4 (a), Harmonization of information management

13. UNEP-WCMC summarized the background paper on this topic and said that EMG agreed to establish an IMG in January 2001 with UNEP serving as task manager. Its role was to focus on biodiversity-related conventions while considering the relevance of biodiversity-related aspects of other MEAs. It had organized a teleconference in June with participation of the secretariats of four global biodiversity-related treaties (CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity). Further inputs were provided by the World Heritage Convention and the Cartagena Convention.

14. The revised paper incorporated inputs from FAO, UNESCO, and the secretariats of the Barcelona Convention, the Basel Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification. It now contained a draft action plan for a more proactive approach to harmonization and proposed a further IMG teleconference on the action plan and to identify lead roles and available resources.

15. Reacting to the paper, the group appreciated UNEP- WCMC report on harmonization and called the proposed plan of action as a good initiative. However requested for another chance to discuss the Plan of action within their respective bodies. Accordingly UNEP-WCMC suggested a timeline for follow-up action with informal discussions by the end of November, a further action plan would be drafted in January/February, and in March another IMG teleconference would be convened. A final draft would then be brought back to the next IMG. The group agreed on the time frame.

E. Agenda item 5 (b), Raising of issues relating to solid waste management

16. UNIDO representative introduced his paper on solid waste management. He said the time to prepare its paper had been limited and it had reservations on the use of the word "solid" in the title. It preferred to concentrate simply on waste management which through its integrated programmes in more than 40 developing countries and economies in transition had witnessed decades of inadequate waste management practices which had resulted in serious health and environmental impacts

that required immediate action at all levels from government policy, through municipal services and the participation of the communities involved.

17. Measures to mitigate the effects of inadequate waste management practices were unlikely to be successful if taken in isolation. The EMG recognized that such measures should be executed in parallel with effective campaigns of training and capacity building to raise awareness of the issues. These included source reduction including actions to reduce the overall amount of toxicity of material being disposed of, and recycling and reutilization to seek the amount of waste going to landfills or incinerators.

18. CITES asked about the disposal of waste in protected areas whilst FAO expressed its concern at landfill usage and composting which might become a problem on agricultural land and affect water supplies. BASEL CONVENTION noted that activities were to be focused on the national and local levels, and asked how solid waste would be used at the local level. It also wanted to know if a strategy was to be articulated for cleaner production centers.

19. UNIDO stated it was aware of the need to pay attention to BASEL's concerns and that UNEP and UNIDO planned to launch a global alliance to encompass those dealing with these matters. Protected areas were always considered when dealing with hazardous materials.

20. Basel conventions and WHO briefed the meeting as well, on their experiences and current activities in the field of waste management. BASEL and CITES Conventions and WHO expressed their interests to actively participate to the work of the IMG on waste management. The group agreed that UNIDO's paper would be distributed to all members and that the members should provide the task manager with their inputs no later than December 2001. The final paper would be considered at the EMG 4.

F. Agenda item 6 (c), Clustering approach to the chemical agenda

21. UNEP Chemicals Unit was asked by the chair to inform the group on the report entitled "A Clustering Approach to the Chemicals Agenda", which is under preparation for IEG 4. UNEP Chemicals referring to the implementation of GC Decision 21/7 which called for a review of the need for a strategic plan for chemicals, added that the concept of clustering offered the opportunity to deal with the life cycle of the chemicals. He referred to the ongoing cooperation between UNEP chemicals and the Basel, Rotterdam and the Stockholm Conventions for preparation of the report. He approached the subject from a thematic viewpoint and said that the Governments needed legislation to be brought forward, to deal with institutional structures of chemical life cycles.

22. In response to CITES on the danger of having only one chemicals convention, UNEP replied that on the contrary, they were not suggesting collapsing three

chemicals conventions, but looking at ways of aligning MEAs and finding out what should be in a chemicals cluster.

23. The Chairman noted the need for clear benchmarks and a timetable for action. He urged all agencies to cooperate in this important area. UNIDO and WHO expressed their readiness to contribute to this endeavour. It was also mentioned that the current UNEP, WHO and UNIDO cooperation through IOMC could be utilized in developing of the report. It was also agreed that the UNEP Chemicals would introduce its paper at the next session of EMG.

G. Agenda item 7, Other business

24. WMO representative said it was pleased to attend the meeting for the first time and emphasized the need to handle environmental issues with great care.

25. The Chairman in response to a question on the functioning of the EMG and its IMG's, drew participants' attention to GA res. 53/242 and the terms of reference of EMG where under modus operandi it stated that the EMG would have a two-tier structure: a senior level decision-making body (the EMG) chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and consisting of senior level officials from organizations members of the EMG; and time-bound ad hoc issue-related groups, set up by the EMG. They will cease to exist after completion of their tasks.

H. Agenda item 8, Date and venue of the next meeting

26. The Chairman referred again to the terms of reference and noted that members of EMG would meet at least once a year. He said that the Executive Director wanted all agencies to become well-informed of the processes involved in international environmental governance and proposed they could meet again in the first quarter of 2002 preferably before the second session of the. The proposal was agreed.

27. The Chairman said the terms of reference clearly said there was a two-tiered structure. He then suggested a venue in Geneva unless invited elsewhere by a sister agency. This was also agreed upon by the participants that members of EMG would meet at least once a year and suggested that they could meet in the first quarter of 2002 preferably before the second Prep-com of the WSSD. He suggested a venue in Geneva unless invited elsewhere by a sister agency. This was also agreed upon.

I. Agenda item 9, Closure of the meeting

28. On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, the Chairman thanked all those present and declared the meeting closed.

ANNEX

List of participants

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