



---

**Annual meeting of the Environment Management Group  
Hosted by the World Health Organization at its Headquarters  
Geneva, 8 October 2007  
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.**

**System-wide coherence on International Environmental Governance**

**Key issues for further consideration by the Environment Management Group (EMG)**

**I. Introduction**

1. This note identifies and elaborates on four areas of possible interest and action for the EMG. It is based on and derived from information contained in the Annexes summarizing the contribution of the EMG to the discussion on International Environmental Governance (IEG). The EMG Secretariat has identified those areas with potential merit as well those which offer the opportunity for the EMG to undertake some further work. These are:

- Platforms for issue- or theme-based cooperation that could result in enhanced systemic coherence;
- Issue-based approaches to enhancing coherence and synergies within Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
- The roles and specificities of the different intergovernmental institutions dealing with environment and sustainable development;
- Policy coherence between the three pillars of sustainable development, including enhanced coherence between the environmental and economic/trade agendas.

2. The Annexes provide background information for discussion on International Environmental Governance within the EMG. Annex I contains the initial conclusions of the First Meeting of the Issue Management Group on IEG held in Geneva on 5 September 2007. It lists some points and key ideas for the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) as forwarded to the informal session of the General Assembly (GA) on 10 September in New York. This GA session gathered initial reactions of Member States to the Co-Chairs' Options Paper, developed by Ambassadors Maurer and Heller, on the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities.

3. Annex II contains a synthesis of replies to the questionnaire sent to EMG members on 16 August 2007, as part of a consultative process to gather the views of agencies and MEA secretariats on the Co-Chairs' Options Paper and the current debate on enhancing coherence within the international environmental governance system. For more information on the process, please refer to document EMG/AM.07/02.



## II. The four key areas

### *1. Establishment of platforms for issue- or theme-based cooperation that could result in enhanced systemic coherence*

4. The need for enhanced coordination of environmental activities is highlighted by the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit and the IEG documents that succeeded it. Enhancing coordination requires careful planning and in particular the avoidance of new institutional and bureaucratic layers in support of the activities to be coordinated. The creation of such additional structural layers might draw resources away from specific programmatic activities without contributing to the coherence of the system, while new bodies and structures would not necessarily enhance cooperation and synergies between agencies and their programmes. In general, issue-based thematic approaches that are focused and practical tend to be more effective in enhancing coordination and coherence.

5. Examples exist of thematic and issue-based cooperation initiatives and mechanisms (such as the special task forces or platforms on avian flu, climate change, water issues etc.) that have effectively allowed agencies to share and use their specific know-how and complementary expertise in a coordinated manner. This has not only resulted in more effective responses to the issues, but has also allowed agencies to build and capitalize on their specific identities and mandates.

6. At the first meeting of the Issue Management Group on IEG, agencies confirmed their willingness to work together through available cooperative platforms to explore the potential of 'issue-based' exercises to enhance coherence. The EMG could be one of those platforms.

7. The EMG could:

1. Investigate existing issue-based cooperation mechanisms and initiatives and report back on success stories, advantages and drawbacks;
2. Identify issues and themes around which such platforms could be established and cooperation mechanisms created;
3. Undertake one or more pilot projects to create issue-based cooperation mechanisms, on issues to be identified by EMG.

8. These activities would be in line with the EMG terms of reference and current practice; the Secretary-General has tasked the EMG to 'establish time-bound task forces or working groups covering clusters of issues in which representatives of the main institutions involved in a particular issue can work together quickly to solve important problems'.

### *2. Development of an issue-based approach to enhancing coherence and synergies within MEAs*

9. A significant number of MEAs advocate better coordination, agreeing that decisions made in the various forums should be linked better and that potential future action should be formulated in terms that are compatible with existing realities. Global convention secretariats are ready to explore collectively the potential for further cooperation and to identify areas where cooperation would be useful.

10. While the international debate and consultations on improving system-wide coherence within MEAs have so far very much focused on proposals to resolve administrative problems or enhance technical structures, there is a feeling that little analysis and investigation have been undertaken of the potential for issue-based cooperation. A thematic approach to MEA cooperation could improve the



coherence of decision-making and enable a common and consistent approach to all environmental issues to be taken.

11. The EMG could establish an Issue Management Group on MEAs to:
  1. Analyze and report on current proposals to enhance MEA coherence, and assess the advantages, shortfalls, feasibility and desirability of those proposals;
  2. Explore and report on existing issue-based approaches to enhance the coherence of MEAs and identify issues for cooperation that should be addressed as a priority (e.g. climate change);
  3. Initiate an issue-based exercise to enhance coherence within MEAs.
12. As above, the proposal would be in line with the EMG mandate to establish working groups covering clusters of issues.

### ***3. Clarification of the roles and specificities of the different intergovernmental institutions dealing with environment and sustainable development***

13. During consultations with UN agencies about the Co-Chairs' Options Paper - whether through replies to the questionnaire or during the First Meeting of the IMG on IEG - the need to discuss and consider further a number of issues that the Options Paper did not satisfactorily address was highlighted. These included, for instance, the need to clarify the roles and specificities of the different intergovernmental institutions dealing with environment and sustainable development.

14. It was noted that, while the mandates and the roles of UN bodies dealing with sustainable development and the environment should be clearly defined, the reality is that uncertainties remain in the system vis-à-vis the relationship between sustainable development and the environment, and the role that the environment can play in the overall equation of sustainable development. This affects the relevant actors, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose functions are not meant to be overlapping but complementary and mutually supportive. The situation also affects the relationship between sustainable development bodies and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

15. The EMG could undertake a study to identify original mandates, analyze current roles and identify overlaps and possible areas for complementarities. The study should help to clarify relationships and improve understanding of how different agencies can contribute to, and fit within, the UN environment and sustainable development framework.

16. This would be consistent with the EMG mandate to assist its member organizations to achieve a more rational and cost-effective division of labour with respect to their growing and often overlapping environmental functions and objectives.

### ***4. Identification of ways to increase policy coherence between the three pillars of sustainable development, including enhanced coherence between the environmental and economic/trade agendas***

17. Another issue identified by the consultations amongst agencies as in need of further elaboration is that of policy coherence between the three pillars of sustainable development and not only within the environment-related bodies of the UN system. It was often noted that fragmentation at the international level is partially due to the fact that UN bodies respond to the different mandates of different ministries and stakeholders.



18. This situation is particularly prevalent in the environmental and trade agendas, which need to be better integrated and made more coherent in order to improve responses to both environmental and development concerns. The improved mainstreaming of environmental issues into trade agendas, and vice versa, at the international level could also result in more coordination and enhanced coherence at the national level.

19. The EMG could explore existing attempts to integrate the environment and trade agendas, and identify both successful mechanisms and possible new mechanisms.

### **III. Possible action for the EMG**

#### **20. EMG members may wish to:**

- **Consider areas of possible interest for the EMG contained in this note and advise the EMG and its Secretariat on action to be taken.**
- **Advise on future steps to be taken by the EMG in the ongoing discussions and consultations about the institutional framework for the environmental activities of the United Nations, including with regard to further elements and ideas for dissemination, through the DSG, to the next sessions of the General Assembly.**



## Annex I

### Initial conclusions of the Issue Management Group on International Environmental Governance

21. *Annex I contains the initial conclusions of the First Meeting of the Issue Management Group on International Environmental Governance held on 5 September in Geneva. They are listed under a number of key points which were also forwarded to the DSG and, for information, to the informal session of the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly convened by Co-Chairs Maurer and Heller on 10 September in New York to receive initial feedback from Member States on their Options Paper<sup>1</sup>. The introductions to the points highlight the main thrust of the message and were included in a two-page note read out by the EMG Secretariat at the abovementioned meeting in New York.*

#### I. Existing cooperation and coordination efforts and mechanisms

22. The group recognized that work is ongoing within the UN system to enhance cooperation and improve coherence. Much can be learned from the numerous current initiatives and mechanisms and some of the more recent initiatives may not be sufficiently known.

- Although considerable cooperation exists at the international level, there is still room for improved cooperation and joint action, especially in the UN system, through the better use of existing structures and mechanisms and through learning from the various experiences of these structures and mechanisms;
- With particular regard to the implementation of adopted environmental policies, the broader participation of the UN system is needed to enhance coherence. Efforts are being made, for instance, in the area of climate change;
- Examples of ongoing cooperation as well as synergies and work at different levels include:

##### Global:

- i. Coordination bodies such as UN Water, UN Energy and UN Oceans have succeeded in sharing information and aligning programs/actions between the participating agencies;
- ii. Several agencies have embarked on a broad range of processes to make better use of existing structures (e.g. the UNEP+ package) and to strengthen their delivery mechanisms on environment issues;
- iii. The Secretary-General's Policy Committee and, more recently, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) have initiated ambitious efforts in the areas of energy and disaster reduction and to ensure a system-wide response to climate change..

##### Regional

- iv. At the regional level, there are successful examples of coordination with UNEP and other IGOs, such as the Environment for Europe process of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), or the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific;
- v. UNEP and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have initiated regional preparatory meetings for the climate change COP in Bali this year.

##### Issue-specific

---

<sup>1</sup> "Informal consultation process of the plenary on the issue of the institutional framework for the environmental activities of the United Nations in follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome", 61<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly, 10 September 2007, New York



- vi. Intersectoral task forces have been established, including the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Task Force on Global Climate Change;
  - vii. The Nairobi Framework was initiated by the SG in 2006 as a collaborative effort by several agencies (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, UNFCCC, the World Bank and the African Development Bank) to build capacity in those developing countries that are not yet able to access the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism;
  - viii. Ad hoc issue-based partnerships have been established between agencies, such as: the cooperation of all UN agencies on water issues; World Meteorological Organization (WMO)-World Health Organization (WHO) or WHO-UNEP cooperation on health issues; UNEP-International Maritime Organization (IMO) cooperation on oil or chemical spills; the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)-Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other agencies cooperation on avian flu; the CMS-Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) cooperation on saiga antelopes; the cooperation between CITES and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Biotrade initiative; and several UNDP ad hoc partnerships with other agencies.
- o Other ongoing initiatives and efforts to enhance coherence and improve cooperation include:
    - ix. The work of UN agencies through the EMG to “green the UN”, particularly through achieving climate neutrality and adopting sustainable procurement approaches;
    - x. Improved cooperation efforts between MEAs (the Biodiversity Liaison Group, various other efforts in relation to biodiversity, the recently enhanced JLG for the Rio Conventions, Chemicals etc.);
    - xi. Coordination mechanisms and initiatives for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) goals (e.g. the 2010 target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss).

## **II. The UN system is ready to enhance efforts to improve system-wide coherence with regard to delivering on the ground**

23. In addition to what has already been implemented through existing mechanisms and efforts, the UN system is ready to consider other ways and means to increase coherence. However, further progress depends on a number of factors.

- o Despite all the efforts made, there is still need for enhanced coherence, in particular with regard to efforts to integrate, mainstream and deal effectively with environmental issues in the work programmes of all agencies. In this context, the ultimate goal of coherence is the cumulative result of cooperative efforts on concrete issues and themes: to achieve this there is a need to involve all actors fully and to work collectively with agencies and with Governments;
- o Several of the elements proposed in the Co-Chairs' paper, and summarised under the two definitions of “ambitious incrementalism” and “transformation changes”, are important to the success of the reform, and both tracks could be pursued in parallel;



- Some of the options provided in the paper are feasible, given the necessary resources, incentives and leadership. However, such resources, incentives and leadership do not yet exist in all cases. The implementation of these options also depends on a number of factors, and realistic, pragmatic approaches have to be taken;
- One of the most important factors is the availability and distribution of funds to enhance coordination, to increase the capacity of the UN system to deliver on environmental issues, to increase activities and to make progress on the implementation of recommendations and work programmes;
- Some of the recommendations are already being implemented through ongoing cooperation efforts. Others can be implemented immediately, since they depend only on the internal processes of respective agencies. Agencies recognize this and are reviewing recommendations and taking action as appropriate. Yet others depend on decisions of the General Assembly, of governing bodies of the agencies and of Conferences of Parties (COPs).
- UN agencies and the secretariats of MEAs are already collaborating, and have a responsibility to collaborate further. This collaboration will be more effective, however, if it is matched by coherent decisions by governments in the GA and in the various governing bodies, including COPs;
- Efforts at the country level to reduce fragmentation between agencies at the national level could also greatly contribute to enhancing the coherence of the international environmental governance framework.

### **III. Towards more coherence through cooperation**

24. The group considered some additional recommendations and expressed its views on these based on past and current experiences. The group found merit in a number of the suggestions.

- The UN system will capitalize on experiences and existing initiatives for use as the foundation for further work and to reduce fragmentation and improve coherence;
- The system does not necessarily need additional coordination mechanisms, but rather better defined platforms for issue- or theme-based cooperation that could result in enhanced systemic coherence;
- There is merit in the specialization of agencies, and in the thematic and specific contributions of each agency to cross-cutting environmental issues (e.g. on climate change, water and air pollution);
- Cooperation exercises and mechanisms are likely to be more effective when they are issue-based and strategically organized around thematic ‘consortia’ of agencies, rather than traditional exercises in general coordination;
- An issue-based approach could also assist the current debate on coherence with regard to issues being addressed within the framework of MEAs;
- Partnerships to enhance and promote cooperation should be developed both within and outside the UN family (including agencies and MEAs). There is merit in including both civil society and the business sector in the partnerships;
- The framework of international environmental governance would also benefit from an increased valuing and strengthening of the role of regional commissions.

### **IV. Other issues that might need further discussion and consideration**



25. The group also felt that a number of issues, only partially addressed in the Co-Chairs' Paper or discussed during the meeting, need further discussion and consideration. These are:

- How to achieve an optimal working relationship between agencies at the country level and how country-level activities might be coordinated in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building;
- How to clarify the roles and specificities of the different intergovernmental institutions dealing with environment and sustainable development (e.g. Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), CSD, COPs etc.);
- How to increase policy coherence between the three pillars of sustainable development, including enhanced coherence between the environmental and economic/trade agendas;
- How to better address and further elaborate on the crucial question of resource availability, and funding in particular, not only to increase coherence but to enable agencies to implement agreed environmental activities within their mandates?

#### **V. Proposals for the way forward**

26. The group felt that this initial exchange of views could be very useful both for the agencies themselves and for Member States. As this was a very first step, the group is of the opinion that the work of the EMG's Issue Management Group on International Environmental Governance should be continued and be further guided by ongoing discussions of Member States, which are likely to result in additional proposals. The views expressed above only constitute an initial reaction; the group needs more time to reflect and to provide its collective views on existing and future options. Some key points regarding the process going forward were identified.

- Agencies are prepared to continue with ongoing efforts and report collectively to the GA on successes, but also to assess and address obstacles and needs;
- Agencies are willing to work together, through available cooperative platforms, to explore the possibilities for 'issue-based' cooperation exercises to enhance coherence (such as the EMG);
- Global convention secretariats are ready to explore collectively the potential for further cooperation and to identify areas where this cooperation might be useful;
- Within the limit of their respective competencies and mandates, agencies are prepared to continue the implementation of the "Cartagena package" to improve coherence, strengthen the role and financial situation of UNEP, improve the coherence of MEAs, build capacity, engage in technology transfer, improve country-level coordination and enhance coordination across the UN system;
- Agencies are prepared to respond to guidance by Member States in the context of the ongoing discussions on transformative changes and to share experience gained through the IMG and other coordination and coherence efforts.



## Annex II

### Synthesis of replies to questionnaire

27. *Annex II contains a compilation of replies received to the questionnaire sent to EMG members on 16 August 2007 about the Co-Chairs' Options Paper. Footnotes indicate the origin of the comment or suggestion. While some comments have been inserted verbatim, others have been edited or slightly modified to fit with the logic of the paper. No substantive changes have been made to the suggestions.*

**QUESTION 1. The Co-Chairs' report covers a series of options under "ambitious incrementalism", as well as a few "transformational changes". Is there something missing from the Co-Chairs' report that you consider we could and should do in order to respond to the broad challenge of the High Level Panel (HLP)?**

28. The Co-Chairs' report is a highly substantive and yet compact paper that captures a number of key aspects and diverse positions on the current debates concerning international environmental governance<sup>2</sup>. The seven building blocks provide an adequate and comprehensive coverage of the issues that should be examined as part of the review of the institutional framework for the UN environment activities<sup>3</sup>. Given its comprehensiveness, it might be a challenge to achieve this review within a short to medium time frame<sup>4</sup>.

29. There are some areas that need further consideration, in order to better respond to the broad challenge of the HLP. While some felt that it may be more appropriate to let Member States react first to the options paper, in particular to those suggestions that require changes in mandates, before agencies express their views<sup>5</sup>, others noted that, in addition to the issues and options identified by the Co-Chairs' paper, a number of areas might need further consideration. There is a need to:

1. Broaden participation of the whole UN system in the exercise to enhance coherence. Agencies responsible for the development and finance agendas should be also fully involved<sup>6</sup>.
2. Better understand, and value<sup>7</sup> the role of regional commissions and coordinate country-level activities<sup>8</sup> in the framework of international environmental governance<sup>9</sup>, and continue to address regional and sub-regional issues in the context of the strong focus on country-level activities<sup>10</sup>;
3. Better deliver on country-level activities in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building and achieve an optimal working relationship between UNEP and UNDP at the country level;
4. Address the roles and responsibilities of other UN agencies with a mandate/responsibilities on environmental issues and identify how to mainstream environmental considerations in the overall work of the UN system<sup>11</sup>;
5. Recognize and build on current ongoing coordination efforts and sectoral coordination bodies<sup>12</sup>;

---

<sup>2</sup> UNCCD

<sup>3</sup> CBD

<sup>4</sup> WB

<sup>5</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>6</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO

<sup>9</sup> UNDP

<sup>10</sup> UNEP

<sup>11</sup> IMO

<sup>12</sup> UNDP and others



6. Clarify the relationships between sustainable development and environment, including roles and relevant actors (for instance relationship between CSD and UNEP, or role of ECOSOC)<sup>13</sup> and analyse how the new UN structure could ensure more holistic approach to the three pillars of sustainable development<sup>14</sup>;
  7. Address possible means by which the GA could seek to exercise greater influence with the COPs and, thereby, encourage the COPs to support implementation of the GA's recommendations<sup>15</sup>;
  8. Clarify the links between the Environment Management Group (EMG), the new 'environmental cluster' under the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the UN Development Group (UNDG)<sup>16</sup>, in order for the EMG to play a role that complements the mandate and comparative advantage of these entities<sup>17</sup>;
  9. Ensure that the GC/GMEF fulfills its function as the world's high level environmental policy forum<sup>18</sup>;
  10. Include in the environment agenda the need for policy coherence between environment and development/trade regimes<sup>19</sup>;
  11. Recognize the idea of 'risk' as an environmental issue and analyse the linkages between poverty, environment and disaster risk<sup>20</sup>;
  12. Take into account emerging and unresolved environmental issues, such as climate change and its manifold consequences and the degradation of ecosystem services and impacts on human well-being<sup>21</sup>;
  13. Better address and further elaborate on the crucial question of resources, to support and implement change,<sup>22</sup> and ensure that resources invested in various environment funds, programmes, conventions and activities serve to support synergies;
  14. Undertake an authoritative evaluation (independent) of the current UN system of IEG, that would provide not only the analysis of existing shortcomings of the environmental governance but could also bring a new vision and innovative impartial proposals<sup>23</sup>.
30. Some specific suggestions and recommendations on the issues above are developed more in detail under the relevant building blocks of Question 2.

**QUESTION 2. Can we already implement all of what is under “ambitious incrementalism”? Is there any reason why we are not going ahead with these within existing mandates? Are there options in the Report that are not feasible? Please be as specific as you can in your answers, including by addressing one or more of the 7 blocks of options proposed in the Report. Should we instead go for “transformative changes”? Why? Should we pursue both tracks?**

---

<sup>13</sup> ESCAP, CITES

<sup>14</sup> ESCAP, ECLAC

<sup>15</sup> BASEL

<sup>16</sup> UNDP

<sup>17</sup> UNEP

<sup>18</sup> UNEP

<sup>19</sup> CITES and BASEL

<sup>20</sup> UN/ISDR

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO

<sup>22</sup> CMS

<sup>23</sup> UNFPA



---

Can we go ahead? And which options?

31. Several elements are considered to be essential to the success of the reform<sup>24</sup> and, in general, agencies are of the opinion that both tracks should be pursued<sup>25</sup>. An ‘incremental transformation’ would probably better define ideas beyond the reform in this area, which could be a blend of the two current options<sup>26</sup>.

32. Many of the options presented are useful and some of them already being implemented, while there are others which feasibility needs to be assessed<sup>27</sup>. Most of them are considered reasonable and realistic, although dependent on the commitment of Member States and UN agencies.<sup>28</sup> In general, almost all of the options seem feasible given the necessary resources, incentives, and leadership. However, such resources, incentives and leadership do not yet exist in all cases<sup>29</sup>. Their implementation therefore depends on a number of factors, and realistic, pragmatic approach has to be taken. It is suggested to prioritize options identifying those that are more realistic and quickly achievable.<sup>30</sup>

33. Some of the recommendations can be implemented immediately<sup>31</sup> since they depend only on internal processes within the respective agencies, for example to “assess and expand ongoing pilot programmes jointly undertaken by UNEP and UNDP.” For instance, there are a number of “incremental’ recommendations in the area of cooperation, such as memoranda of understanding, better integration of environmental concerns into economic and development cooperation, which could be implemented without any additional endorsement of Member States and should be pursued without delay<sup>32</sup>.

34. Implementation also depends on the timeframe for action. In order to facilitate implementation, it might be useful to consider a timetable and apply criteria to define which actions will be undertaken in the short, medium or long term. For example, two possible criteria could be (i) build/implement existing agreements or arrangements (e.g. the existing MOU between UNDP and UNEP); and (ii) focus on actions that will be particularly important from an environmental quality standpoint<sup>33</sup>. To be effective there would be need for a clear and strong mandate from the UN members accompanied by specific targets and timeframes with respect to environmental goals and objectives. This would also require the harmonization of priorities of different groups of interest at the country level (ministries, industry, civil society), which have different priorities for the different UN agencies they guide.<sup>34</sup>

35. Other proposals are likely to encounter considerable resistance<sup>35</sup> as they depend on decisions of the General Assembly and, possibly, amendments to international treaties. This is the case for instance of some of the proposals directed to multilateral environment agreements whereby options cannot be implemented without first gaining the support of the General Assembly, Member States, and/or Parties to the MEAs in question. Member States and perhaps the MEAs Secretariats as well as Parties might also

---

<sup>24</sup> UNHCR

<sup>25</sup> CBD

<sup>26</sup> Definition from CITES

<sup>27</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>28</sup> FAO

<sup>29</sup> UNDP

<sup>30</sup> FAO

<sup>31</sup> Many agencies concur on this

<sup>32</sup> UNFPA

<sup>33</sup> WB

<sup>34</sup> FAO

<sup>35</sup> IMO



resist any clustering that might appear to impinge on their identity, mandates or independence. This is especially true since the MEAs are established as a result of international treaty and can only be changed based on amendments to those treaties<sup>36</sup>.

36. Changes summarized in the Co-Chairs' report also need further exploration, including cost-benefit analyses, in order to ensure holistic consideration of individual options and avoid establishing overly complicated coordination and reporting mechanisms<sup>37</sup>.

37. With regard to the 'transformational changes', they are very far reaching, complex to implement, highly political and resource intensive, without assurance of success<sup>38</sup>.

38. Transformative changes might take more time to implement in particular if associated with creating new agencies. An incremental approach to first strengthening UNEP through the application of some of the existing building blocks may be a more effective and lower cost approach. This approach does not prevent the transformation of UNEP into a new agency with a wider mandate, but it spreads it over a longer period of time and a number of steps<sup>39</sup>.

39. It was reiterated that while a process is clearly needed within the UN system to examine the broader transformation of the IEG system, to be realistic such process is likely to extend over a relatively long period of time. Therefore, it would be highly desirable for the EMG members to work in parallel on a set of more modest action-oriented proposals that could result in significant advances in the overall efficiency of the international environmental governance irrespective of the outcome of the more ambitious transformative changes<sup>40</sup>. However, not all agencies are in favour of this option and do not favour a twin-track approach.<sup>41</sup>

40. Overall, substantial progress can be made through the incremental changes proposed in chapter 3 of the Options Paper, allowing sufficient time to take effect and subject to available resources.<sup>42</sup>

#### Have we gone ahead?

41. Some incremental changes and transformations are already taking place in the context of the 'one UN-system wide' change process. In addition it was noted that there is an openness to change which did not exist few years ago. The challenge seems to be to accelerate such process<sup>43</sup>.

42. It should be noted that there is ample opportunities for the UN agencies to complement each other's work by enhancing cooperation and joint action<sup>44</sup>. There exists sectoral coordination bodies such as UN Water or UN Energy which succeed in sharing information, aligning programs and even developing normative policies among the many participating agencies<sup>45</sup>.

---

<sup>36</sup> UNDP

<sup>37</sup> UNFPA

<sup>38</sup> IMO

<sup>39</sup> WB

<sup>40</sup> CBD

<sup>41</sup> FAO

<sup>42</sup> IMO

<sup>43</sup> FAO

<sup>44</sup> ECLAC

<sup>45</sup> UNDP



43. There are several examples of issue-based cooperation. For instance, numerous initiatives have been launched in the area of climate change bringing together all relevant UN bodies to enhance implementation. Examples include:

- The Secretary-General's Policy Committee embarked on ambitious efforts to ensure the full integration of climate change issues into relevant work programmes, and has made similar efforts in the areas of energy and disaster reduction;
- The CEB has initiated a process to develop a system-wide response to climate change;
- The Nairobi Framework was initiated by the SG in 2006 as a collaborative effort by several agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNFCCC, the World Bank and the African Development Bank) to build capacity in those developing countries that are not yet able to access the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism;
- The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change adopted by the UNFCCC in December 2006 has developed into a broad multi-agency effort on adaptation;
- UNFCCC has conducted a study on investments and financial flows required for an adequate response to climate change closely working with UN agencies and multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions, as well as private actors;
- UNEP and UNFCCC have initiated regional preparatory meetings for the climate change COP in Bali this year<sup>46</sup>.

44. As far as organizations are concerned, UNEP for instance has embarked on a broad ranging process to make better use of existing structures in the manner contemplated by the Cartagena package and the Options Paper, which is referred to as UNEP+. This includes activities and initiatives in all the building blocks, as follows<sup>47</sup>:

- enhancing the role of the GC/GMEF as the United Nations high-level environment policy forum;
- enhancing UNEP's science base, including through the reform of the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel;
- enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the secretariat through revitalizing the Senior Management Team and establishing a Strategic Implementation Team for up to three years to help drive the reforms;
- becoming a more results based organization through developing a prioritized, results based Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 and programme of work in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and others, taking immediate steps to move in this direction through the development of new UNEP-wide climate change and ecosystem management programmes by early 2008, and establishing a new Corporate Service Section and Quality Assurance Section within the Secretariat;
- mainstreaming the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building into UNEP's Programme of Work for 2008-2009 ;
- reviewing UNEP's strategic presence through commissioning a Strategic Presence Study to assist UNEP with its thinking on whether the current location of UNEP offices and the deployment of its staff are best configured to meet the expectations of Member States;

---

<sup>46</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>47</sup> UNEP



- making full use of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) as the United Nations primary means of enhancing cooperation on environmental issues within the United Nations system;
- exercising *environmental* leadership within the UN, including *environmental* leadership on climate change where UNEP has been influential in the UN's move towards carbon neutrality and the SG's High Level Event in September 2007 ;
- actively engaging in the IEG discussions, including through participating in various events and processes initiated by governments and civil society and including IEG on the GC/GMEF agenda as a standing item;
- directly engaging in the One UN – delivering as one – pilot programmes by engaging in all 8 pilot countries;
- engaging in deeper and more constructive partnerships with UN agencies and MEAs, including with UNDP through the Poverty and Environment Facility and the One UN pilot programmes, joint initiatives with the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and through establishing an MEA Management Team;
- implementing results based budgeting as part of the moves towards becoming a results based organization.

45. To position UNESCO to make a tangible contribution in the area of global climate change, the Director General (DG) has established an inter-sectoral Task Force on Global Climate Change that is developing a UNESCO strategy to address UN system priorities for climate change action, to be pursued in all UNESCO's fields of competence. UNESCO Executive Board will discuss the challenges of climate change and knowledge societies at the country level at its forthcoming thematic debate (October 2007)<sup>48</sup>.

46. In general, UNESCO is working to develop an integrated approach to address environmental issues that bring these necessary elements together to develop appropriate solutions. Moreover, in the context of multi-agency scientific assessments recently carried out and in which UNESCO has taken an active part, governments have expressed appreciation for the contribution of multi-scale assessments based on site-based evaluations and research driven by local needs and experts<sup>49</sup>.

47. Coordination amongst agencies has also registered other several successes. For its part, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has moved aggressively during the past year to strengthen its working relationships with UNEP through, for example:

- (a) setting up a Joint Poverty Environment Facility in Nairobi;
- (b) establishing joint programmes related to climate change adaptation and chemicals management;
- (c) working more closely with the Environmental Management Group.

48. UNDP already partners extensively with UNEP in a number of areas, such as transboundary and integrated water resources management (through the GEF international waters focal area) and Montreal Protocol<sup>50</sup>.

---

<sup>48</sup> UNESCO

<sup>49</sup> UNESCO

<sup>50</sup> UNDP



49. Through establishing a Working Group on Environment and Disaster a number of organizations are also working together to address common issues of environment and disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, ISDR is working closely with UNFCCC to implement measures for adapting to climate change to reduce further risks<sup>51</sup>.

50. Coordination efforts amongst MEAs are ongoing and trying to translate coordination needs into pragmatic programmes of work. The Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) shows that biodiversity 'clustering' has already begun even though it does not yet include UNCCD or Forests. With regard to the clustering process, experience has been gained in clustering hazardous substances (chemicals/wastes) - which are geographically co-located - and might assist in any subsequent clustering of other MEAs. The Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the three Rio Conventions has developed a new work plan of activities focusing on substantive areas that are common to the three Conventions<sup>52</sup>. MEAs have reduced the number and frequency of their meetings and the chairmen of MEA scientific/technical bodies in the biodiversity cluster recently had a joint meeting<sup>53</sup>.

51. At the regional level, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has also examples of excellent coordination with UNEP and other IGOs, such as the "Environment for Europe", a partnership of the member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations system represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations, regional environment centres, non-governmental organizations and other major groups. Yearly coordination meetings between the UNEP Regional Office for Europe (RoE) and the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division of UNECE have provided a useful and efficient platform for informing each other about planned and on-going activities, for identifying possibilities for synergies and joint projects and for avoiding overlap<sup>54</sup>.

52. On information exchanges and scientific networks, UNECE in the framework of its Conventions on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, respectively, maintains well-established scientific networks with specific expertise on transboundary air pollution and water issues. Those regional thematic networks could be drawn upon by the Environment Watch Strategy<sup>55</sup>.

53. There have been several mechanisms already established also in the Asian and Pacific region with particular focus on environment and selected development challenges, including in particular:

- five-yearly Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005), and;
- Thematic working group on environment and disaster management under the Regional Coordination Mechanism.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> UN ISDR

<sup>52</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>53</sup> CITES

<sup>54</sup> UNECE

<sup>55</sup> UNECE

<sup>56</sup> ESCAP



---

*Additional suggestions and comments on each building block*

*BB1: Scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity*

54. This is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed urgently<sup>57</sup>. Amongst different options, a decentralized network, to which MEAs scientific bodies can contribute, seems to be preferable to any attempt to centralize all environmental information<sup>58</sup>. Scientific assessments require the appropriate interdisciplinary coverage, including the economic and social aspects of the responses to identified environmental problems. In some cases, such as atmospheric pollution and climate change, other specialized agencies need to be equally involved together with UNEP<sup>59</sup>.

55. UNEP programmes should be strengthened through collaborations with external scientific institutions<sup>60</sup> and better use should be made of regional commissions, which have a particular strength in this area, and could contribute to link the scientific assessment to the regional development agendas<sup>61</sup>. Some internal realignment and reinforcement of scientific capacity is also required within UNEP to strengthen the science base of the organization, ideally along the lines of sectoral specialties, in order to facilitate access to credible scientific environmental information when needed. In addition, better systems for accessing and then disseminating such information should be implemented to facilitate the provision and sharing of scientific knowledge and advice.<sup>62</sup>

56. Dissemination of results from UN system assessments on the whole might also be lacking coherence, as various assessments are prepared on different time scales and different cycles, for different audiences, and with results produced in a wide variety of formats, not necessarily presented in a consistent manner. In addition, these results are often not readily accessible to all, and many countries do not have the capacity to take full use of the information. Direct overlaps of UN assessment activities are rare, although linkages among complementary assessment projects should be strengthened and dissemination of results coordinated<sup>63</sup>.

57. Moreover, development of people-centered early warning systems depends not only on the scientific and technical implementation of observing systems, but also on the societal interface with the technical system, which determines what measures can be taken once a warning is issued. This human interface of an early warning system depends on a range of environmental, economic, information, societal, attitudinal and behavioural conditions that must be considered in the development of mitigation strategies<sup>64</sup>.

*BB2: Coordination and cooperation at the level of agencies*

58. It was noted that virtually all options under these two headings relate specifically to actions suggested for either UNEP or the EMG. While these proposals are agreeable in principle, they seem to be very limited. Looking at ways of integrating environmental issues and mainstreaming capacities is not

---

<sup>57</sup> CBD

<sup>58</sup> CITES

<sup>59</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>60</sup> ECA

<sup>61</sup> ECLAC

<sup>62</sup> IMO

<sup>63</sup> UNESCO

<sup>64</sup> UNESCO



only the role of UNEP, but is also necessary of other UN agencies with an active role in environmental issues/projects within their established mandates.<sup>65</sup>

59. Thus, the capacity of all agencies should be strengthened to integrate environmental issues within their programmes. In the case of humanitarian assistance for instance, integration of environmental activities at the operational level in a broader humanitarian assistance and sustainable development frameworks<sup>66</sup>.

60. Also, to ensure improved coordination and cooperation, there is not only a need to establish the EMG as a stronger entity but also a need for UNEP to become more involved in other coordination/cooperation mechanisms within the UN system to promote the environmental agenda more broadly and to ensure the environmental dimension is more consistently addressed and integrated system wide. For instance, it would be important for the EMG and/or UNEP to establish a stronger relationship with other coordinating mechanisms, such as the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) for humanitarian affairs.<sup>67</sup> The role of UNEP as a key partner (and the lead partner in environmental matters) in the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its multi-stakeholder joint activities should be also recognized as a policy and operational requirement<sup>68</sup>.

61. Specific proposals for establishing other joint units, such as the Joint Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/UNEP Unit, should be very carefully considered, as such entities are highly resource intensive both to establish and then to maintain. While the Joint Unit works very well given the respective mandates and work of UNEP and OCHA, the establishment of such joint units may not be appropriate within other UN agencies.<sup>69</sup>

#### UNEP and the EMG

62. Existing mechanisms, among which the EMG is an important one, provide sufficient scope for an effective UN approach to global, regional and national issues related to environment and sustainable development<sup>70</sup>. However, it is necessary to revitalize the EMG, so that with UNEP in the lead it can properly function as an effective mechanism to enhance cooperation on environmental matters for the UN system. Part of such revitalization must be to strengthen the Secretariat support structure to enable a revitalized EMG to carry out its new role<sup>71</sup>. There must be strong links between EMG and related inter-agency bodies focusing on various developmental issues<sup>72</sup>.

63. EMG should be able to raise policy issues requiring the attention and/or action of the Secretary General and Chief Executives of the UN system while maintaining its role as the principal coordinating body on the environment<sup>73</sup>.

64. With regard to future options for the EMG, it seems appropriate that the EMG report to the GA, as it was set up through a GA resolution. Tasking the EMG to ensure better integration of environmental

---

<sup>65</sup> IMO

<sup>66</sup> UNHCR

<sup>67</sup> IMO

<sup>68</sup> UN ISDR

<sup>69</sup> IMO

<sup>70</sup> FAO

<sup>71</sup> UNIDO

<sup>72</sup> UNIDO

<sup>73</sup> UNIDO



concerns into economic policy and strategic planning through IMGs in specific areas was considered ambitious. Implications of this approach should be thoroughly assessed in advance. This, as well as tasking the EMG with better integrating environmental challenges into economic strategies, might go beyond the EMG mandate<sup>74</sup>.

65. There is a general agreement on the need to enhance coordination and linkages between EMG and CEB, although suggestions on modalities for this integration vary from a more autonomous EMG Secretariat to a fully integrated body. A new architecture of the environmental pillar of sustainable development would need to address this point. CEB's environmental cluster should promote and support the environment dimensions of United Nations Development Group (UNDG) processes. In particular, EMG or CEB work that affects country-level operations should make use of existing UNDG tools, such as the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process. In sum, a close and systematic link between CEB, EMG and UNDG is essential and needs further elaboration<sup>75</sup>. At the same time, clear reporting lines are needed for the EMG (either to the GA or to the CEB) and overly complex multi-layered structures should be avoided.<sup>76</sup>

66. Thus, the role of UNEP within UNDG needs also to be clarified. It was also expressed the view that there is not much advantage in tasking UNEP with the chairing of the environmental subgroup of UNDG. There are so many working groups within UNDG that adding on more is more than likely to diffuse substantially the environment as an issue<sup>77</sup>.

67. In general, it was noted that the work of UNEP and other agencies in the field of environment is complementary and potentially synergistic.

#### UNEP-WHO

68. For instance, in the case of UNEP and WHO, one of the principal benefits obtained from management of the environment is protection and enhancement of human lives, and it would be helpful in the context of these discussions to draw the link explicitly. Measures to mitigate environmental risks could reduce the global burden of disease by 25%. There is a strong argument for better coordination between UNEP and WHO, and perhaps with other UN agencies, that deal with the human consequences of exposure to environmental risks. Also, it would be important for WHO and UNEP to work together to encourage coordination at the national level.<sup>78</sup>

#### UNEP-UNDP

69. While the Co-Chairs' Option Paper mentions the existing UNDP-UNEP MoU and recommends that it be fully implemented, in fact it is soon expiring. It is necessary to renegotiate the MoU for signature by the end of the year<sup>79</sup>. This could offer a good opportunity to further clarify roles and responsibilities. In particular the role of the Resident Coordinator needs to be addressed<sup>80</sup>. For instance, UNEP and the Regional Commissions could work together to establish sustainable development strategy learning groups to catalyze the mainstreaming<sup>81</sup>.

---

<sup>74</sup> UNECE

<sup>75</sup> UNDP

<sup>76</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>77</sup> UNIDO

<sup>78</sup> WHO

<sup>79</sup> UNDP

<sup>80</sup> UNDP

<sup>81</sup> ECA



### UNEP-UN/ISDR

The role of UNEP as a key partner (and the lead partner in environmental matters) in the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its multi-stakeholder joint activities should be recognised as a policy and operational requirement<sup>82</sup>. The EMG might want to recognise the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters (HFA), as an important policy tool to reduce impacts of natural disasters on people and on the environment. UNEP could take the lead to implement the Hyogo Framework to reduce underlying risk factors through environmental and natural resource management.

### *BB3: Multilateral Environmental Agreements*<sup>83</sup>

70. In general, a good number of MEAs advocate the need for better coordination and agree that decisions in the various forums should be better linked and possible ways forward must be formulated in terms that are compatible with existing realities<sup>84</sup>. Changes to the institutional structure would require changes to the mandates and lead complex intergovernmental negotiations. COPs are intergovernmental processes, and any proposed changes or clustering should take this into account<sup>85</sup>.

71. An initial package of measures could be developed, provided that they are tailored at level that is broadly acceptable and developed through a transparent process. Such proposals would obviously be inspired by some of the proposals contained in building block 3 of the Co-Chairs' paper, which would result in highly desirable, closer institutional linkages and cooperation among the MEAs. A Helsinki-type process could be considered for other MEAs than the chemicals<sup>86</sup>.

72. The idea of establishing thematic areas of MEAs and to attempt to find synergies through, for example, the establishment of joint institutional/scientific/programmatic structures appears to be a good one, where possible. However, it may be more difficult to achieve in practice. MEAs have varying drivers and institutional frameworks that govern their work, which may or may not be amenable to the proposals put forward under building block 3. Also, within the UN family, this could be equally true as the governing bodies of specialized agencies, i.e. Member States, may not be in agreement with such proposals, for a variety of reasons. It may be possible to integrate some MEA Secretariats, the suggestion that this is necessary in all cases and that UNEP would provide the Secretariat function to these MEAs may not be appropriate<sup>87</sup>.

73. It was noted that a way to induce the vested institutional interests in MEA CoPs and Secretariats to support and implement change is finance. In other words, there would need to be clear linkage between co-operation in achieving the ambitious agenda for clustering in Building Block 3, and the distribution of

---

<sup>82</sup> UNISDR

<sup>85</sup> It was proposed that that the Hyogo Framework for Action be explicitly referred to as a multilateral agreement that UNEP should contribute to, in respect to Member State environmental concerns<sup>83</sup>. (UN/ISDR)

<sup>84</sup> UNCCD

<sup>85</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>86</sup> CBD

<sup>87</sup> IMO



GEF, World Bank and other major environmental resources (e.g. UNF) under the Intergovernmental system<sup>88</sup>.

74. Also, the GA could make positive progress by giving UN recognition to MEAs that are currently not formally UN MEAs. Unlike UNFCCC and UNCCD, most UNEP administered MEAs do not benefit from the formal status of UN conventions. Such recognition would not only encourage COPs to support implementation of recommendations of the UNGA, but would also serve to raise the political profile of such MEAs<sup>89</sup>.

75. There is also the need for a more active participation of global MEAs at regional environmental meetings<sup>90</sup> and more advanced liaison/consultation is needed with MEA secretariats before UNDP, the World Bank or others to undertake national- or regional-level activities related to MEAs.

76. Some consider that it would be unrealistic to pursue an incremental change like MEA clustering (which is actually quite radical) without establishing a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO). Although a UNEO would in all probability still be weaker than many other major UN/Bretton Woods actors including WTO, World Bank, IMF, even UNESCO, it would be impractical to try to introduce clustering in a situation where UNEP was still chronically weak in staffing, finance and, hence, authority within the UN system. Only an empowered UNEO can deliver clustering and the rest of the IEG agenda.<sup>91</sup>

*BB4: Regional presence and activities at the regional level*

77. This building block is seen as entirely UNEP-centric as it does not recognize the role, activities and technical co-operation and capacity building work being carried out by other organizations, which is environmental in scope, but beyond the mandate and/or responsibility of UNEP. By their very nature environmental programmes are cross-cutting, encompassing multiple sectors. Also, UNDP is the established (although not the only) entry point in most countries for capacity-building and the value of this is that UNDP exists in most developing countries, whereas UNEP has few regional offices, each one covering a wide number of countries. It is also unclear that the UNEP regional offices, which are resource intensive in themselves, would be adequately equipped to manage the increased volume that this proposal would involve<sup>92</sup>.

78. Moreover, the role of regional commissions in ensuring a regional approach towards a broader sustainable development framework should be emphasized<sup>93</sup>. Despite coordination efforts, inter-agency coordination mechanisms ensuring holistic approach to three pillars of sustainable development are still not in place. An option should be included to strengthen the role of the Regional Economic and Social Commissions in providing such coordination covering the areas related to all three pillars of sustainable development, as the regional outreach of the UN's Economic and Social Council. This function will be best demonstrated if coincided with the transformation of ECOSOC at the global level; in this case, Regional Commissions could be transformed to the Regional Sustainable Development Commissions<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> CMS

<sup>89</sup> BASEL

<sup>90</sup> UNECE

<sup>91</sup> CMS

<sup>92</sup> IMO

<sup>93</sup> ECLAC

<sup>94</sup> ESCAP



*BB5: Bali Strategic Plan, capacity-building, technology support*

79. It is important to ensure that UNDAFs and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) adequately reflect the needs expressed by governments in regard to the implementation of the BSP. The issue of ensuring that environment and other pillars of sustainable development are mainstreamed in UNDAFs and PRSs should also be emphasized since the PRS is the main operational development strategy for African countries<sup>95</sup>. Options should also cover the importance of ensuring the BSP and MEA work programmes are coherent<sup>96</sup>.

80. The Kyoto Protocol's clean development mechanism (CDM) can be considered as a successful example of a public-private partnership in the area of environment that has had considerable impact on bringing technologies into developing countries<sup>97</sup>.

*BB6: IT, partnerships and advocacy*

81. The options proposed seem to focus on partnerships in the context of environmental advocacy and promoting awareness. It is suggested that partnerships could usefully be addressed as a separate building block, noting the recognition by the international community that solutions to global problems cannot be found without the participation and engagement of all partners, including the private sector and civil society. In the context of IEG options on engaging in partnerships could be more fully explored<sup>98</sup>. It could be also advantageous to list out some examples where issues could be tackled concretely through cooperation on the part of UN agencies at country level, with the partnerships extending more widely than anticipated by the Co-Chairs' Options Paper<sup>99</sup>.

82. It may also be useful to avoid linking the IT component from the advocacy part<sup>100</sup> and rather than an advocacy/information strategy, speak of a communication strategy, including the key, shared messages that all of the UN agencies should be conveying<sup>101</sup>. The UN communications group has been active in enhancing isolated communication efforts by individual secretariats. For instance, a task force under the UNDG on climate change has developed common products, including a joint thematic portal on the UN web site.<sup>102</sup>

83. The concepts of 'virtual scientific platforms' and a 'clearinghouse mechanism' (CHM) for best practices/lessons learned need additional elaboration. Earlier discussions within the EMG showed that CHMs are popular but not always easy to establish as user-friendly tools. There should be partnerships with local communities as well as indigenous peoples and not only with science (including academic/research institutes), civil society (usually NGOs) and business. Partnerships should be balanced among these different groups and not skewed to one or two in particular<sup>103</sup>.

---

<sup>95</sup> ECA

<sup>96</sup> CITES

<sup>97</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>98</sup> BASEL

<sup>99</sup> WHO

<sup>100</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>101</sup> CITES

<sup>102</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>103</sup> CITES

*BB7: Financing*

84. There is a need to ensure that financial resources invested in various environment funds, programmes, conventions and activities serve to support synergies<sup>104</sup>.
85. The options refer only to strengthening the financial basis of UNEP. However, noting that proposals include changes to the structure of MEA programmes and institutions aimed at strengthening the IEG system, MEAs will also need strengthened financial basis (this will not necessarily mean a great increase in the funds available but, rather, more predictable long-term financing). It should also be noted that not all MEAs benefit from access to the GEF (for example, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions)<sup>105</sup>.
86. Also, this part of the Co-Chairs' paper does not really address the relationship between UNEP and GEF. It is not clear what is meant by consolidating the 'accounting infrastructure' of similar MEAs. Combining the acquisition services of co-located MEA secretariats may not necessarily provide better service and cost-savings. As also mentioned above, simplifying and mainstreaming reporting procedures is worth pursuing but easier said than done. Recommendations of the UNEP task teams on resource mobilization and administrative support to MEAs should be cross-checked against the Co-Chairs' Paper<sup>106</sup>.
87. A restructured GEF could benefit from the direct and active participation of relevant UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as implementing agencies, depending on the basis and scope of specific project activities to be implemented<sup>107</sup>.
88. Overall, the paper does not sufficiently address this building block. UN inter-agency cooperation on environmental issues on financing could go much further and consider a combination of approaches including:
- Assessment and consideration on how to promote mainstreaming of environmental issues as part of:
    - Lending activities by major IFIs, MDBs
    - Grants by ODA
    - FDI and policies from ECAs
    - Private sector investments (through improvement of means such as the Equator Principles)
    - Synergy with other issues such as development goals and priorities for sectors under technical assistance/activities provided by various UN specific agencies (e.g. FAO for agriculture, UNDP. etc.)
  - Analysis on how to create innovative mechanisms (such as the carbon markets) to stimulate that value is given to environmental goods;
  - Identification of options for scaling up additional and predictable financial flows from new sources;

---

<sup>104</sup> UNEP

<sup>105</sup> BASEL

<sup>106</sup> CITES

<sup>107</sup> UNESCO



- Analysis of how various UN agencies can collaborate and coordinate policies to encourage private investment and government investment in specific sectors (e.g. energy efficiency standards for internationally traded appliances or standards for climate resilient infrastructure);
- Economic analysis of costs, needs and options to address environmental issues in relation to development needs and goals, and development of possible common goals<sup>108</sup>.

*The letter sent to EMG members on 16 August 2007 including the questionnaire, requested EMG members to focus in particular on questions 1 and 2, on the Co-Chairs Options Paper. Questions 3 to 5 were exploring the issue of IEG and new and emerging issues. While EMG members were asked to answer questions 1 and 2 as a matter of priority, more time was allocated to reply to the last three questions. A number of agencies however provided their views and replies, which are summarized below.*

**QUESTION 3. What is your long-term vision on how the UN family as a whole should deal with the environment? What should be the relationship between UN System actors in the area of the environment? What do we expect from governments in this area (e.g., what kind of guidance) and what do we offer in return (e.g., how coherent is our response?)**

89. If MDGs are to be achieved, environmental issues should be addressed more explicitly. An overall, sustainability-oriented approach is needed in which the environment is given top priority. Inside the UN family, environment-related projects should be carried out in closer coordination between the different organizations in order to prevent gaps and overlaps.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the most important tasks for the whole UN family is to mainstream environmental concerns into all its activities system-wide, particularly development activities and policy advice, not only through environmental policies but also in the fields of economics, population, health, energy, disaster reduction and agricultural policies and emerging situations<sup>110</sup>.

90. Because of the high level of specialization of the agencies, they cover well defined and targeted dimensions of environmental problems<sup>111</sup>. It is crucial to build on the strengths and comparative advantages of each UN agency and define their roles accordingly. Continued dialogue and cooperation is important to this end.<sup>112</sup> While all UN agencies should do what they can within their existing mandates to support an improved environmental management system<sup>113</sup> well coordinated networks of environmental institutions should be supported by increased resources to undertake environmental projects<sup>114</sup>.

91. In particular, it is widely recognised that there is a need for enhanced coordination amongst various actors in the field of environment and development, and at field level, which should further lead to strengthened services to countries<sup>115</sup>. UN's environmental management system needs to be strengthened with a view to better promoting sustainable development. Because UNEP is at the heart of

---

<sup>108</sup> UNFCCC

<sup>109</sup> UN HABITAT

<sup>110</sup> UNFPA

<sup>111</sup> UNESCO.

<sup>112</sup> WB

<sup>113</sup> UNDP

<sup>114</sup> ECA

<sup>115</sup> UNCCD



this system, recommendations of the High-level Panel that UNEP be strengthened are generally welcome. Modalities for this strengthening process should be decided within the UNEP Governing Council and the General Assembly.

92. Strengthening efforts of UNEP should lead to a new mandate and a redefined role. Focus might/should be given on scientific assessment and analysis, consensus building, policy advice and coordination of the various UN bodies on environmental matters<sup>116</sup>. UNEP should remain the system-wide focal point for environment. Specialized agencies should continue to collaborate with UNEP in issues related to scientific assessment, financing for sustainable development, environmental impact assessments, etc.<sup>117</sup>

93. Also, the desired coherency of action by UN agencies needs to be matched by coherency of governance amongst the various agency governing bodies<sup>118</sup>.

94. Overall, the IEG system should be strengthened to work with other institutions like the World Bank to ensure that environmental and other social concerns are mainstreamed into PRS to obtain sustainable development strategies<sup>119</sup>. Sustainable development should be mainstreamed into the work of the UN's Economic and Social Council. Taking into account that the current UN structure does not match the above latest paradigm of sustainable development, UN structure should ensure more holistic approach to the three pillars of sustainable development, for instance by considering the transformation of UN's Economic and Social Council into UN Sustainable Development Council<sup>120</sup>.

#### **QUESTION 4. What environmental issues will the UN need to address looking ahead ten-twenty years?**

95. It was noted that there will be the need to respond to a world with the following characteristics:

- Population growth, primarily in developing countries, accompanied by a continuing trend toward urbanization and migration to countries where employment opportunities are seen to be better.
- Sustained growth in incomes in most developing countries (including Africa) which will drive significant changes in production and consumption patterns (e.g. more meat in diets, restricted land availability, etc). This may be accompanied by a trend in some developed countries to reduce their carbon footprint by shifting toward renewable energies and consuming more products that are produced closer to their homes.
- Increased climate variability and impacts that will affect the stability of production in developing regions such as sub-Saharan Africa. This will be accompanied by ongoing challenges related to biodiversity conservation and land management.
- Shift in geo-political balances in which some countries (e.g. India, China) are able to significantly influence key decisions such as trade regimes, investment in development assistance, and security arrangements<sup>121</sup>.

---

<sup>116</sup> UNIDO

<sup>117</sup> FAO

<sup>118</sup> UN ISDR

<sup>119</sup> ECA

<sup>120</sup> ESCAP

<sup>121</sup> FAO



96. In general, climate change and adaptability; trade-related environmental issues; and poverty-environment are all seen as crucial issues that would increase their importance in the years ahead<sup>122</sup>. In particular, climate change will have a number of impacts on biodiversity, coastal ecosystems, access to safe drinking water, food security in drought-prone areas, resilience and capacity of cities to adapt to rapidly changing environmental prerequisites, including aspects of governance and gender.<sup>123</sup>

**QUESTION 5. What is (are) the specific issue(s) that are of particular concern to your organization**

97. Several were the issues highlighted by agencies, some of which very specific to the mandate and focus of the organization. However, some common issues and concerns have emerged, such as:

- Integrating environmental knowledge into the broader framework of Sustainable Development;
- Relationship between specific focus of agency-organization , environment and poverty;
- Strengthening institutions and governance frameworks for environmental management;
- Climate change and poverty-environment issues<sup>124</sup> ;
- Climate change, biodiversity and land degradation.<sup>125</sup>

---

---

<sup>122</sup> WB

<sup>123</sup> UN HABITAT

<sup>124</sup> WB

<sup>125</sup> FAO