



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

EMG

24th Senior Officials Meeting

Monday 24th September 2018

Briefing note to Senior Officials of the UN Environment Management Group on the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

16 August 2018

This briefing note highlights the key issues relevant to the preparations for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly.

1) Background and state of preparations for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

In March 2018, the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly decided that the theme of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly is as follows: "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production".

The President of the UN Environment Assembly has distributed a Draft Outline for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the Assembly (Annex I) to Member States and stakeholders prior to an upcoming Joint Preparatory Retreat of the two Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, scheduled for 6 to 7 September 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia. Some of the key expected outcomes of the Joint Retreat are:

- Consideration of the Draft Outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document
- Endorsement of the structure of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly and the preparatory Open-Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
- Consideration of draft outline of the background document for the Assembly
- Consideration of themes of the Leadership Dialogues
- Consideration of the draft guidance note on submission of resolutions The agenda of the 2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat, is attached as Annex II.

A senior management internal Task Force meeting to prepare for the UN Environment Assembly will take place on Wednesday 29 August 2018, Chaired by Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme, with focus on strategic aspects of the upcoming Assembly and follow-up actions of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly.

It is requested/suggested that the Environment Management Group organizes a technical level consultation in the month of October/November 2018 focused on collecting good practices on innovations aimed at speeding up the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This compilation will be taken as an input to the Background Report to the Assembly and will form the basis for an event with senior officials during the Assembly.

2) **Theme of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly**

A concept note on the theme has been developed by the Secretariat following extensive consultations with Member States and stakeholders. The following three key focus areas have been identified:

- Sustainable food systems including food security and biodiversity;
- Life-cycle approaches to resource, energy, chemicals and waste management;
- Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change.

The concept is attached as Annex III.

3) **Potential relevance to and contributions from the UN agencies to the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly**

The fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly provides an axis between innovative solutions to address environmental challenges, and sustainable consumption and production (as enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal 12). As such, the theme is therefore highly relevant to several UN Agencies, and the UN Environment Programme would very much welcome active contributions and inputs from relevant and interested UN Agencies to join in the conversation and share their views and contributions towards a successful UN Environment Assembly. Key areas of cooperation include: 1) identifying innovative solutions to address environmental challenges; 2) identifying and participating in new partnerships, including with the private sector, to promote the implementation of initiatives within the framework of the theme of the Assembly; and 3) supporting the implementing the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

4) **Potential event for Heads of UN Agencies organized by the Environment Management Group**

A potential event for Heads of UN Agencies prepared and organized by the Environment Management Group, may be considered to be held during the next UN Environment Assembly Wednesday 13 March 2019 (evening) upon approval by the Executive Office of the UN Environment Programme.

Annexes

Annex I: Draft Outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

Annex II: Agenda of the Joint Preparatory Retreat of the two Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 6-7 September in Tallinn, Estonia

Annex III: Concept note on the theme of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly

“Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”

Vision: To develop partnerships towards sustainable and innovative societies and build upon the theme of pollution with focusing on innovative solutions to key environmental challenges, building on outcomes from previous sessions of the Environment Assembly.

The political message from the Ministers will be informed by the 6th Global Environment Outlook report on key environmental challenges as well as the report of the International Resource Panel on the global status of resource efficiency.

Main priority 1: Ensure the transparency, accountability and comparability of global environmental data and develop science-policy-business partnerships on innovative data technologies and digital solutions.

- Establish comprehensive environmental monitoring systems (including citizen observations and satellite monitoring) to improve data collection and foster cross-border environmental monitoring data exchange, (for example in the form of pilot projects on establishing global real-time air quality and deforestation monitoring systems).
- Ensure everyone has a fair and where possible electronic access to environmental data and develop secure and accessible monitoring databases.
- Develop digital solutions to gain better knowledge on global resource use and productivity, including introducing global product information factsheets in order to make informed decisions.
- Engage regions, countries and municipalities to collect and analyze environmental data, and develop technologies and apps and make scientific discoveries through citizen science.
- Enhance integrated use and analysis of environmental data from various sources (smart devices, mobile applications, environmental monitoring and research).
- Develop global environmental data policy and common data standards.

Main priority 2: Foster sustainable and efficient resource management by promoting de-carbonisation, detoxification and decoupling of resource use, to enhance ecosystem resilience and protection of the planet's natural systems.

- Accelerate the transition towards circular economies and the application of life-cycle approaches for sustainable materials management, in a manner that fosters economic growth, improves competitiveness, creates jobs and safeguards social benefits.
- Foster innovative governance mechanisms that integrate circular economy principles and frameworks into national policies.
- Fully implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.
- Maximize the benefits of sound waste management with the special focus on food, plastics and marine litter.
- Promote sustainable land management to maintain soil health, ensure food security and combat desertification.

- Introduce global product sustainability criteria to stimulate the market for secondary raw materials and sustainable products.
- Accelerate and activate sustainable and innovative financing opportunities and ensure transparent funding of eco-innovative solutions.
- Develop a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) beyond 2020 to ensure non-toxic material cycles and healthier products.
- Commit to accelerate the implementation of the Aichi Targets and consider a new time frame going beyond 2020, to improve the health of the world's ecosystems.

Main priority 3: Support robust engagement of civil society, citizens and academia in promoting innovative approaches for meeting global environmental challenges and sustainable production and consumption.

- Allocate adequate resources to research and development to drive innovation for the environment.
- Ensure access to basic and environmental education worldwide and promote sustainable lifestyles through a wider uptake of innovative approaches in education.
- Identify and promote the wider application of indigenous knowledge about environmentally friendly practices.
- Support the creation of new, innovative business opportunities to eradicate poverty and establish infrastructure for new greener economy.
- Engage citizens in improving their local urban environment, green infrastructure and nature based solutions.
- Promote and raise awareness for sustainable tourism.

Thursday, 6 September 2018		
Time	Topic	Document
9:00 – 9:30	<p>1. Opening of the Joint Preparatory Retreat and adoption of the agenda <i>President of the UN Environment Assembly, H.E. Mr. Siim Kiisler</i> <i>Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, H.E. Mrs. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton</i> <i>The Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Agenda of the 2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives</i> - <i>Annex Practical information for participants</i> - <i>Meeting Summary from the meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly, 20 June, 2018</i>
9.30 – 11.00	<p>2. Theme and main outcomes of the Assembly <i>Introduction by the Secretariat</i> <i>Moderated by the President of the Assembly</i></p> <p><u>Expected key outcome:</u> Guidance provided on the expected main outcomes of the UN Environment Assembly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Concept note on the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly</i> - <i>Overview of main outcomes of the 4th session of the UN Environment Assembly</i> - <i>Communication for the Fourth UN Environment Assembly: A Draft Concept Note for Discussion</i> - <i>Draft outline of the background document for the Assembly</i>
COFFEE BREAK		
11.15 – 13.00	<p>3. Key messages and Ministerial Outcome Document <i>Introduction by the President of the Assembly</i> <i>Moderated by the President of the Assembly</i></p> <p><u>Expected key outcome:</u> Guidance provided on the elaboration of the Ministerial Outcome Document</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Draft Outline document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly</i> - <i>Letter from President on Outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document</i>
LUNCH		
14.30 – 17.00	<p>4. Preparations for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly</p> <p>4.1 Structure of the Assembly and the OECPR 4.2 Themes for the Leadership Dialogues at the High-Level Segment 4.3 Update on the Action Plan towards a pollution free planet 4.4 Engagement of stakeholders, including the private sector 4.5 Guidance to Member States on Assembly resolutions 4.6 Preparatory regional ministerial meetings and other relevant meetings</p> <p><i>Introductions by the Secretariat</i> <i>Moderated by the President of the Assembly and/or the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives</i></p> <p><u>Expected key outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the structures of the Assembly and the OECPR - Adoption of themes of Leadership Dialogues - Adoption of guidance note on Assembly resolutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Note on agenda and draft structures of the Assembly and the Open-Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives</i> - <i>Themes of Leadership Dialogues</i> - <i>Briefing Note – Update on the development of the UNEA-3 Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet</i> - <i>Engagement of Stakeholders</i> - <i>Note on Regional Preparatory meetings for the Fourth Session of UNEA</i> - <i>Tentative Roadmap for the UN Environment Programme Governing Bodies</i> - <i>Draft guidance note on submission of resolutions</i> - <i>Note on budget for UNEA 4</i>
BREAK		

20.00 – 22.00	Working Dinner: Innovation and the Sustainable Development Goals Hosted by the Government of Estonia Moderated by a representative from the private sector
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Friday, 7 September 2018		
Time	Topic	Document
9.00 – 11.00	Working Breakfast: Dialogue with representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders on the preparations for the Assembly Moderated by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives	- Possible written input(s) from Major Groups and Stakeholders - Regional Multi-stakeholder consultation for Europe in preparation for the 2019 UN Environment Assembly
COFFEE BREAK		
11.15 –13.00	5. A long term vision for the global environmental agenda in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda Introduction by the Secretariat Moderated by the President of the Assembly <u>Expected outcome:</u> Guidance on a future vision for the global environmental agenda	- Background note from the Secretariat
LUNCH		
14.30 –16.00	6. Development of a new UN Environment Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-21 Introduction by the Secretariat Moderated by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives <u>Expected outcome:</u> Guidance on the development of a new UN Environment Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-21	- Development of UN Environment Programme's Programme of Work and budget 2020-2021 - Programme of Work 2020-2021 Budget Envelope Options
16.00 –16.30	7. The way forward / next steps Moderated by the President of the Assembly	
16.30 –17.00	8. Consideration of the draft summary from the Retreat, and closure of the meeting Moderated by the President of the Assembly and the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives <u>Expected outcome:</u> Adoption of meeting summary	- Draft meeting summary
BREAK		
19.15 –21.00	Informal dinner Hosted by the Government of Estonia	

Special events

- I. The retreat will be preceded by a **High-level International Environment Conference on 5 September starting at 9.30AM** that will focus on global environmental trends and challenges with the view towards how innovative solutions could provide an answer in moving towards sustainable societies. The conference will focus more specifically on 4 thematic areas:
 - ❖ Governance, partnerships and emerging global issues;
 - ❖ Data and technology innovation;
 - ❖ The economy and new business models innovations;
 - ❖ Life styles and urban environment innovation.
- II. The above-mentioned conference will end on **5 Sept with a high-level dinner hosted by the Estonian Government starting 19.00pm** (by Invitation only; all Bureaux Members are invited).
- III. After the retreat, on the **8 Sept the Estonian Government will organize a nature tour taking place from 10am to 2pm** which will introduce guests to Estonia's beautiful and pristine nature.

Annex: Logistics note provided by the host Government

Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production

Concept note on the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

(REV 03 September 2018)

Background

1. In developing the theme for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the secretariat has been guided by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference), entitled “The future we want”, in which Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives recognized that “poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development” (para. 4).
2. The present concept note takes into account the interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

Conceptual framework

3. Innovative solutions are not goals, but rather means of addressing environmental challenges. Innovative solutions should be considered “business unusual” approaches addressing environmental challenges, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable consumption and production.
4. An innovative solution is not restricted to an invention or a technological innovation but instead encompasses the creation of enabling environments for creative approaches in policy, financing, partnerships, processes and the use of data to understand environmental issues and improve sustainability. Innovative solutions also increase technical capacities, attracts new investments, opens new markets and enhances productivity and sustainability. The United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session will identify innovative solutions for national Governments, the private sector and civil society with a view to tackling environmental challenges that have an impact on society, the economy and the environment.
5. There are numerous environmental challenges that impact on society, the economy and the environment itself, leading to food insecurity, poverty, energy insecurity, loss of biodiversity, pollution, land mismanagement, desertification, among others. Some of these challenges are long standing; therefore, the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly will capitalize on the growing momentum in the international community, national governments, the business sector and the civil society to tackle these challenges by embracing innovative approaches.
6. Sustainable consumption and production address the full life-cycles of economic activities: the extraction of resources, their processing into materials and products, and the subsequent use and discarding of those products. It can also be broken down into specific economic activities to do more and better with less and identify priorities according to their environmental impacts and resource demands.
7. Innovative solutions and systemic changes towards sustainability at various stages of the life-cycle would lead to sustainable consumption and production and address environmental challenges directly. In developing the theme for the fourth session, the

secretariat is promoting a systems approach that connects the flow of resources at each stage of the life-cycle with their use and impact on the environment, economies and societies. The approach includes, but not limited to, the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns and its six thematic programmes adopted at the Rio+20 Conference.

8. To identify recommendations and suggested interventions relevant to the theme of the fourth session, the secretariat took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its relevant Sustainable Development Goals aimed at achieving sustainable development through improving global resource efficiency and decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. In addition, the secretariat took into account Environment Assembly resolution 3/5, entitled “Investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”, other relevant resolutions and the third ministerial outcome document (UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1) of the Environment Assembly, entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”.
9. In that context, and building on resolution 3/5, the secretariat used the following categories to organize and highlight existing and proposed innovative solutions: policy interventions; environmentally sound technologies; sustainable financing schemes; education, research and development, sharing of best practices, capacity-building and awareness raising; and private and public partnerships. Social innovations and new business models that foster sustainable development, including gender considerations, have also been considered. Based on those categories, opportunities for synergistic implementation of actions to address environmental, social and economic challenges have been identified.

Focus areas

10. To enable the Environment Assembly to deliver on concrete outcomes and make efficient use of the time available prior to and during the fourth session of the Assembly, member States have expressed an interest in focusing on a limited number of environmental challenges that can be addressed in whole or in part by promoting innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production, as described under the section on conceptual framework.
11. The following proposed focus areas were set out for consideration by member States based on criteria of global relevance. Each can be addressed by innovative solutions and transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns.
 - a. Environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss;
 - b. Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management;
 - c. Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change.
12. The focus areas have been presented without prejudice to issues and solutions that Member States may wish to raise but will help the secretariat to develop background documentation and prepare solutions-oriented ministerial dialogues.
13. The secretariat will further develop each focus area, considering the proposed conceptual framework set out in paragraphs 3–9 above, and identify strategic partnerships, initiatives and innovative solutions for each area. In further developing the focus areas, the secretariat will also consider contributions that member States will provide to the President of the Environment Assembly during consultations on the outcomes of the high-level segment.
14. The secretariat, in developing further the proposed focus areas set out in the present section, cross-cutting issues will be taken into account, such as mainstreaming of

biodiversity and sound management of chemicals and waste, use of big data, information management, indigenous knowledge solutions, promotion of sustainable lifestyles and efficient use of resources.

15. The proposed focus areas will also contribute towards the implementation plan to tackle pollution.

Elements for an implementation plan to tackle pollution

16. In paragraph 14 of the Ministerial Declaration of the Environment Assembly at its third session, the world's ministers for the environment requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, building on the outcomes of the third session, to prepare an implementation plan on pollution, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, for submission to and consideration by the Assembly at its fourth session.
17. The secretariat continues to consult on the implementation plan, drawing on the above mandate. The proposed plan will be the main vehicle for organizing and presenting the follow-up to the theme on pollution. The plan will build on the outcomes of the third session of the Environment Assembly, as well as previous Assembly sessions, and seek to address the gaps in addressing pollution, and the challenges involved in doing so, that were identified in the report of the Executive Director to the Environment Assembly at its third session.