



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



**2nd meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on System Wide Strategy(ies) on the Environment (SWS)
27 May 2015**

Teleconference, 15:30-17:00 hrs, Geneva time
Chaired by Elliott Harris, Head of the EMG Secretariat

Distribution: EMG Task
Team members

Date: 01.06.2015

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on System Wide (Strategy(ies) on the Environment (SWS)

1. Introduction

The second meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on the System Wide Strategy(ies) on the Environment (SWS) took place by teleconference from 15.30 to 17.00 (CEST) on 27 May 2015, and was chaired by the Director of the EMG Secretariat, Elliott Harris. The list of participants is provided in Annex I.

Following the Chair's opening remarks, the meeting adopted its agenda (Annex II) which involved discussion of the "substantive elements" of the SWS including high-level goals and medium-term objectives, the "process elements" of the SWS including monitoring, review and reporting and finally, the modalities and next steps for preparation of the SWS towards the EMG SOM21.

The meeting discussed and provided comments to the "draft concept note on the future UN system-wide strategy on the environment long and midterm vision" as follows:

2. Discussion on "substantive elements" of the SWS including the high-level goals and the medium-term objectives

The Chair opened by introducing two preliminary notes prepared by UNEP that had been circulated to the consultative process, proposing four long term high level objectives and eighteen medium term vision objectives. He apologised for the late circulation of the notes and explained that the goal was to stimulate discussion towards a common vision of the System Wide Strategy through these proposed objectives, which should in no way attempt to dictate what any agency should do. Instead, a definition of an approach that would allow each agency to articulate its own respective contribution, relating its mandate to these commonly agreed objectives should be encouraged. The Chair explained that the vision and objectives should build on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to create a consensus on what is needed from the UN system.

The Chair elaborated on this further, stating that the four long term objectives may not be achieved in the post-2015 agenda timeframe, but should be seen as the ultimate objectives towards which the UN system works as a whole. The medium term vision and objectives would be closely aligned to the SDGs, that constitute the global value framework agreed by Member States for the next 15 years. He explained that the suggested objectives were derived from the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post 2015 Agenda, the Rio+20 Outcome Document and the Open

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Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals. The Chair then invited feedback on the issue, specifically if agreement could be reached on the high level objectives and the medium term vision, and whether the contents of the working document is environmentally relevant and sufficient.

Key Considerations

The following views and comments were expressed by the Task Team in relation to this issue:

- UNOPS noted that the goals as such do not include gender equity from an environmental perspective.
- UNDP expressed agreement with the proposed in principle but requested a narrative on how the proposed objectives and goals have been selected. It should further be stated, that the system supports all existing environmental long-term and medium term goals that have so far been agreed by Member States. The vision and proposed objectives should be looked at anew once the SDGs have been officially approved.
- UNECE mentioned that a mapping of the organization's work in relation to the SDGs is being undertaken internally, and questioned how the SWS will relate to environmental issues or areas that are not covered by the SDGs. Further, the note left unclear whether there would be an attempt to identify approaches to achieve the medium term vision and goals. The title of the note should clarify that the SWS and its related vision outline how the UN system will support Member States in the implementation of the environmental dimension of the SDGs. I.e., the SWS is a UN System Wide Strategy on the environment in support of the post 2015 development agenda and the SDGs. It was noted, however, that a pure focus on the SDGs would exclude a forward looking approach and the normative work that the UN system undertakes, that may be outside of the policies articulated by Member States.
- UNDESA supported UNDP's remarks and reminded that the SWS to be delivered to SOM and UNEA should be a combination of elements, of which alignment with SDGs is one. In addition, it should look at how coherence of relevant policies can be enhanced and coordination of services best achieved. A focus on mainstreaming may be more useful as an input by the EMG. UNDESA further highlighted that the debate on monitoring, review and reporting aspects of the SDGs has only recently started and restated that the SWS could be looked at as a framework of strategies rather than a strategy per se.
- UN Department of Management inquired whether there is a risk to enhance silos by distilling the environment from the SDGs, that have been drafted taken an integrated approach. The environmental aspects of economic development should be included and more clearly reflected in the Midterm vision.
- CEB expressed caution not to oversee the people element and poverty eradication aspects, which are central to the post 2015 development agenda and cautioned against setting a policy that precedes a decision by Member States. UNFF supported this notion by expressing a concern that working with the OWG proposal implies a certain degree of interpretation of priorities until the goals have been officially set.

- IOM requested a clearer link between the long term vision as the overarching framework and aspirational goal and the medium term goals. UNEP explained that the idea is that the implementation of the medium term goals would automatically contribute to the four high level goals, however, it needs to be acknowledged that the long term goals will require an appropriate economic model in order to be fully implemented, which is something that the SWS will not be able to address.
- UN Habitat wished to see sustainable land use (directly linked to SDG 11.3) as a visible element in the midterm vision

The Chair summarized the issues that require further elaboration in the paper as follows:

- Why/how have the high level and midterm goals been identified and selected?
- What is the link between the long term goals and the midterm vision?
- Why have we chosen to distil the environmental component from the SDGs instead of supporting an integrated approach?
- Does it make sense to build the vision on the draft SDGs before they have been finally agreed by the Member States?

Responding to the questions and issues raised by the consultative process, the Chair emphasized that SWS aims to address the how the UN system plans to align with environmental component of the broader sustainability agenda, justifying a purely environmental focus and making it necessary to identify the environmental aspects of the proposed SDGs. He further stressed that the Member States have stated that the OWG proposal stays as such and will not be opened for renegotiation, hence, it is safe to work based on the proposal already before the UNGA has officially approved the SDGs. The SWS will allow better coordination and alignment of the UN system's activities with the post 2015 development agenda. Parts of the agenda may be specific only to specialized agencies, while some activities that are undertaken by agencies may not be explicitly covered by the SDGs and the related targets. Similarly, the SWS should aim at stating the *main* objectives that the system will pursue, which does not imply that any ongoing activities in the system that are not mentioned should not be undertaken.

Agreed Action :

Based on the feedback received during the meeting, the EMG Secretariat will draft a narrative with particular reference to:

- explaining the long term goal and medium term vision linkage
- highlighting how the concept of how the long term goals and the medium term vision were established
- stating how the framework responds to the EMG mandate, and
- explaining the purpose of the strategic framework, what role it will play and why it is developed

The narrative will serve as an introduction to the draft concept note on the future UN system-wide strategy on the environment long and midterm vision. A caveat will be added, acknowledging that changes may have to be made should the OWG proposal not be adopted as such by the UNGA.

An updated version of the note will be circulated to the consultative process on Wednesday 3rd June 2015. A 10 day consultation period was agreed for internal consultation, whereby the documents can be circulated within each agency. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat by Friday 12th June 2015. The EMG Secretariat will subsequently revert to the consultative process with a revised version on 20th June, 2015.

Members were requested to consider and relate their comments to:

- whether the goals are acceptable and sufficient, or if more is needed to be included/substituted/taken out;
- whether they agree with only focussing on the environmental issues or whether we should reflect the integrated goals;
- what kind of monitoring or reporting process will be appropriate?

3. Discussion on the “process elements” of the SWS including monitoring , review and reporting

This agenda item was not reached due to time restrictions. The note on monitoring, review and reporting will be discussed based on what is agreed on the vision.

4. Modalities and next steps for preparation of the SWS towards the EMG SOM21

This agenda item was not reached due to time restrictions.

5. Next meeting of the Task Team

No date currently agreed. Date and time still to be communicated.

6. Any other matters

There were no other matters raised.

7. Closure of Teleconference

The chair thanked the participants for their attendance and closed the teleconference.

Annex 1 : List of Participants

	Name	Organization
1	Georgina Stickels	WFP
2	Stefan Micafell	IMO
3	Sungmin Patricia Kim	DFS
4	Michiko Okumura	UNEP
5	Maria Teresa Pisani	UNECE
6	Barbara Tavora-Jainchill	UNFF/DESA
7	Ryo Nakamura	UNFF/DESA
8	Federica Pietracci	DESA
9	Salima Hernandez	UNOPS
10	Tim Scott	UNDP
11	Isabel Aranda	UNFCCC
12	Marylene Beau	BRS
13	Tatiana Terekhova	BRS
14	Elliott Harris (Chair) Hossein Fadaei Jannica Pitkanen-Brunnsberg Andrew Wilson	EMG Secretariat
15	Xenia von Lilien	CEB
16	Rafael Tuts	UN Habitat
17	Brennan van Dyke	UN Department of Management

Annex II

Provisional agenda

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Working Documents:

1. Provisional agenda
2. Draft High-Level Vision for the System Wide Strategy(ies)
3. Draft Note on the Monitoring, Review and Reporting of the UN SWS

Reference documents:

Terms of Reference for the EMG Consultative Process on System Wide Strategy(ies) on the Environment

Provisional Agenda

1- Introductory remarks

Background and the overall progress made since the last meeting (teleconference) of the Consultative Process on SWS

2- Discussion on “substantive elements” of the SWS including the high-level goals and the medium-term objectives

3- Discussion on the “process elements” of the SWS including monitoring , review and reporting

4- Modalities and next steps for preparation of the SWS towards the EMG SOM21

5- Next meeting of the Task Team

6- Any other matters

Closure of the teleconference