6th meeting of the Issue Management Group on Tackling E-waste: Towards Eco-design and a Life-cycle Approach for E-products

EMG/e-waste/IMG/
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GoToMeeting from 3:30p.m. to 5:00p.m. (Geneva time).

Distribution: IMG members

Documents:

- Provisional Agenda

- Draft Terms of Reference – Work Stream One

- Draft Terms of Reference – Work Stream Two

- Draft Proposal – Work Stream Three

Draft Report

1. Introduction

The 6th meeting of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on Tackling E-waste took place online on Tuesday, January 23rd 2018 between 3:30p.m. and 5:00p.m. Geneva time, chaired by Mr. Elliott Harris, Director of the Environment Management Group (EMG) secretariat. The meeting discussed the evolution of the three Work Streams of the IMG, which focus on carrying out a programmatic analysis for stronger collaboration on tackling e-waste (Work Stream 1), building a knowledge-sharing platform (Work Stream 2) and addressing UN internal e-waste (Work Stream 3).

After a brief introduction presented by the Chair, who welcomed the participants and communicated the structure of the agenda, the first Work Stream was introduced. Its draft Terms of Reference were discussed, together with the plan to develop a system-wide approach for implementation within the UN system. The discussion moved on to Work Stream 2 and the central platform to be developed to store information on initiatives undertaken to tackle e-waste. Work Stream 3 was then discussed, focussing on providing UN entities with a small collection of key recommendations on revising their organization's ICTs procurement guidelines from an e-waste management perspective. This revolved around improving guidelines and answering questions relating to procurement and to ICTs.

Finally, the idea was introduced on presenting a coalition on e-waste, at the World Summit on the Information Society Forum in March 2018, with the potential to give this IMG a political recognition for its mission.

The list of meeting participants is provided in Annex I.

2. Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

The Chair welcomed the participants to the 6th meeting of the IMG. The Chair opened the discussion by describing the items on the agenda and the relative documents that were previously shared among the attendees. He reminded the participants that Work Stream 1 was going to focus on programmatic collaboration as explained in the Terms of Reference; that Work Stream 2 will work on the creation of a knowledge sharing platform; and that Work Stream 3 will attend to the procurement of ICTs in the UN system. As for the final item on the agenda, the Chair underlined the need to prepare the work for the proposed e-waste coalition at the World Summit on the Information Society Forum.

There were no comments on the agenda, which was subsequently adopted. The Chair then opened the floor to the representative from the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions for an introduction and update on Work Stream 1.

3. Agenda Item 1: Update on Work Stream One – Programmatic Collaboration

Ms. Tatiana Terekhova of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in Geneva began her update by reminding the attendees that Work Stream 1 took off in autumn 2017 with the aim of channeling long-term UN system-wide cooperation to address e-waste. Another key point of this Work Stream will be deciding how to raise awareness about the needs of national stakeholders. Ms. Terekhova presented the Terms of Reference document as composed of two parts.

Part one consists of the preparation of a programmatic analysis aimed at identifying possible gaps in the UN system's means to address each life-cycle stage of electrical and electronic equipment. The analysis will be built on the report conducted last year and undertaken in close contact with UN e-waste actors to best identify and document where the current expertise lays. Ms. Terekhova informed the participants that they will be contacted directly to answer questions and to provide insights. The output of this part of the Work Stream will be a brief descriptive analysis that highlights strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement for progressive collaboration among UN entities.

Part two of the Terms of Reference describes the production of a brief note on potential approaches towards assessing the needs of national-level stakeholders. The study will be limited to one or a small group of countries, and the stakeholders will be of both a traditional kind (as described in the Basel Convention) and a non-traditional kind (such as telecommunication authorities and private sector actors).

After making sure that all participants were in possession of the referenced document, the Chair opened the floor for comments.

Mr. David Padi from the Department of Field Support pointed out that among the documents received, reference was made to guidelines on the procurement of ICTs. He inquired about the participation of procurement staff involved in this topic and asked for clarification on the main direction of the overall project.

The Chair explained that the project is under EMG direction and was therefore agreed upon by various UN entities at the meeting of their Senior Officials.

Mr. Hossein Fadaei of the EMG secretariat reminded the colleagues that the issue of procurement is planned to be addressed through Work Stream 3, featuring later in the agenda.

Mr. Ruediger Kuehr from UNU in Bonn confirmed the support for the design of Work Stream 1 as explained by Ms. Terekhova.

The Chair and Ms. Terekhova agreed on the EMG secretariat sending an email reminder with the discussed Terms of Reference for IMG Members to become acquainted with, in order to reply with further comments.

Ms. Marit Niles of ESCAP pointed out the apparent remoteness of the long-term objective, and asked for clarifications on the timeframe and on the future developments of Work Stream 1.

Ms. Terekhova affirmed that, up to September 2018, the goal is to reach the intermediate step of figuring out the type and amount of resources put on the table by all the 20 or more UN entities that are currently somehow acting on e-waste. This will show how all of them can be connected and, ultimately, reach the overall objective of the project, which is to establish a system-wide approach on e-waste among UN entities.

Adding further, the Chair mentioned the importance, at this stage, of also collecting good practices: since UN entities vary in dimension, resources and dynamics, this analysis is useful to identify examples that can be reported back to the governing bodies as lessons learned.

Mr. Feng Wang from UN Environment's Economy Division, pointed out the importance of not limiting the work to analysis-making and the Chair responded that, since this project requires investments and allocation of resources, what is needed first are a clear platform and narrative. The outcome will be an analysis that can define a financial plan which is presentable to managers and that can't be done at this stage.

Mr. Hossein Fadaei from the EMG secretariat added to the Chair's words by noting that this preparatory work currently underway differs from the report produced in 2017, which underlined the importance of tackling e-waste. Whilst the analysis envisaged in Work Stream 1 studies the programmatic weaknesses and strengths of UN entities. Based on both these foundations it will be possible to submit the project to Senior Officials and ultimately influence the forthcoming processes on e-waste at various levels.

Ms. Vanessa Gray from the International Telecommunication Union asked for explanations on the deadline mentioned for September 2018. In response, Ms. Terekhova explained that in the Terms of Reference it is specified that all Work Streams will be finalized before September 2018, when the 24th Senior Official meeting will take place and where the outcomes of the Work Streams will be presented.

When there were no more comments on Work Stream 1, the Chair moved the discussion on to the second item on the agenda.

Conclusion:
- A programmatic analysis will be carried out aimed at identifying possible gaps in the UN system's means of addressing specific stages of e-waste in its life-cycle. It will highlight strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement, for progressive collaboration among UN entities.
- A short note will be produced on the potential approaches for the involvement of national-level stakeholders. It will highlight the importance of ensuring that all UN actions on e-waste will relate to the national context.
- By September 2018, the goal is to figure out the type and amount of resources put on the table by all the UN entities that are currently acting on e-waste.

Next Steps:

- An email containing the Terms of Reference will be sent, for IMG Members to send further comments.
- IMG Members will then soon be contacted and asked to answer questions and provide insights.

4. Agenda Item 2: Update on Work Stream Two – Knowledge Sharing Platform

The discussion moved on to Work Stream 2 thanks to Mr. Ruediger Kuehr's update on the knowledge-sharing platform, to be developed with the facility to store information on initiatives undertaken to tackle e-waste. Such platforms which currently exist, do not provide any specific information to the entire UN family, nor bring its members together helping each other to tackle e-waste. Work Stream 2 foresees the development of a work plan for a standalone platform which could enable UN entities to share their information and expertise.

Mr. Kuehr explained that this Work Stream has two main focuses: the substantial elements of such a platform, and its operational elements. The former includes what the various UN entities need: the type of information that is not easily accessible now and the topics and themes to be made available on the platform. The latter will focus on figuring out the expected contribution of resources by IMG members, identifying a host or host entities and establishing what procedures are needed to keep the platform constantly updated. The goal is to have the resources necessary to keep the platform running for at least 5 years.

Mr. Kuehr concluded that the desired output of Work Stream 2 is a draft work plan based on further consultation among EMG members.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Marit Niles from UN ESCAP asked for a confirmation whether the platform would be for internal use only and not for member states. This confirmation was provided by both the Chair and Mr. Kuehr.

Ms. Vanessa Gray from ITU underlined the importance of the identity of the hosting agency, suggesting that, due to the kind of resources necessary to keep the platform running and updated, a cooperation would be the best approach involving more than one UN entity.

The Chair asked for other comments and encouraged the EMG secretariat to send a reminder to all participants asking them to share their further comments by Monday, January 29th in order to finalize the Terms of Reference and begin with the work.

The Chair then asked Ms. Hillary Green from Sustainable UN to introduce Work Stream 3.

Conclusion:

- Work Stream 2 foresees the development of a work plan supporting a standalone platform which shall enable UN entities to their share information and expertise.
- The output of Work Stream 2 will be a draft work plan based on further consultation among IMG Members.

Next Steps:

- A reminder will be sent to all IMG Members asking them to share further comments on Work Stream 2 by Monday, January 29th 2018.

5. Agenda Item 3: Update on Work Stream Three – UN Internal E-waste

Ms. Hillary Green reminded the participants that, at their 23rd meeting, the Senior Officials of the EMG had agreed on deepening the liaison between the IMG on Tackling E-waste and the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the UN system. The goal of Work Stream 3 is – where possible – to bring together focal points from the two IMGs, to identify purchasing practices and revise their organizations' existing ICT procurement guidelines from an e-waste management perspective.

Ms. Green suggested that a way to achieve this goal is to include experts from within the UN and to bring them together, such as colleagues from ICT, procurement and facilities' management. Ms. Green encouraged all participants to reach out to related ICTs practitioners within their organizations and to share the six questions with them listed in the note that was included in the invitation to this meeting.

The Chair underlined the importance of this opportunity: for some Member States procurement practices are a sensitive issue, but ICT procurement is not a political threat so carrying out this Work Stream creates the possibility to transplant the resulting practices to other types of procurement. This opportunity goes beyond rationalizing e-waste, as it opens up the possibility of dealing with more politically unstable procurement fields.

Mr. Kuehr again confirmed UNU's support for this idea, pointing out that since much is in the hands of consumers, by showing the UN as a large consumer group itself it can influence many procurement phases and to do so it is fundamental to analyze how things are done internally.

The Chair suggested that it could be beneficial to affiliate ourselves with other international organizations, since reaching broad agreements on the formulation of IT procurement in relation to e-waste, could potentially ultimately influence producers and the market.

Ms. Green seconded such potential and informed participants that outreach to other international organizations is already underway through the Climate Neutrality work and that there is a great potential to also reach out to these organizations on e-waste management and ICTs procurement.

Mr. William Abi Abdallah from UNICEF informed the group that an internal assessment was launched in his organization to analyze the countries where UNICEF has headquarters and regional offices in relation to how they deal with e-waste, how they dispose of it and what kind of recycling infrastructure is available. The final report will be available by the end of June 2018 and could be an interesting starting point.

Mr. Martin Guard from UN Environment pointed out that it is important to also consider the disposal of this kind of waste and to ask UN entities if managing it is a problem for them in their location. He suggested that this context be added to the six-questions listed in the note on Work Stream 3.

The Chair welcomed this idea and pointed out that in their supply contracts, UN entities carry a level of weight that could be used to contribute to e-waste management. He suggested the value of inquiring how this waste is being handled.

Ms. Terekhova suggested that, since different organizations are based in different countries, it is fundamental to look at the Basel Convention, as there are official authorities dealing with waste management and that could be featured or used in this Work Stream.

Mr. Muhammed Omotola from UN Environment confirmed enthusiasm for this Work Stream and the chance it gives to show different cases and different countries but invited the participants to pay careful attention to the fact that procurement differs a lot between various departments and that will need a major coordinating effort.

The Chair agreed and, noticing there were no more comments, moved on to the final point.

Conclusion:

- The goal of Work Stream 3 is to select several UN entities to identify purchasing practices and revise existing ICT procurement guidelines from an e-waste management perspective.
- ICT procurement is not politically threatening so this Work Stream, which creates the possibility to transfer this practice to other types of procurement. This opportunity opens up the possibility of dealing with more politically unstable procurement fields.

Next Steps:

- All IMG Members will reach out to the practitioners within their organizations and share with them the six questions listed in the note on Work Stream 3.
- A question on the disposal of e-waste will be added to the questionnaire.
- Several UN entities will review their organizations' ICTs procurement guidelines from an e-waste management perspective.

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6. Agenda Item 4: Preparation for E-waste Coalition – World Summit on the Information Society Forum (2018)

Mr. Hossein Fadaei of the EMG secretariat discussed the idea, introduced by UN Environment and ITU, to take advantage of the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum and establish a coalition aimed at giving a political boost to the current activities of this IMG. To advance this idea there was an initial exchange of information, now with a proposal to share more information with the rest of the wider IMG membership in case others might be interested in joining. Mr. Fadaei underlined that this initiative does not aim to diverge from the work of this IMG, but instead to give it a degree of political recognition and consequently to ensure more engagement from the Heads of organizations.

Mr. Cosmas Zavazava from ITU confirmed the points raised by Mr. Fadaei and added that the idea is to link together the Sustainable Development Goals with work on ICTs, based on the fact that they're both

very important and also rather connected to the e-waste challenge. It was pointed out that WSIS will see, as attendees, various NGOs, ministers and members of the private sector, which would make it a good forum for giving a political boost and some publicity to the work of this IMG.

Mr. Fadaei confirmed the likelihood that the private sector will be engaged through this coalition.

After asking whether there were any further comments, the Chair requested Mr. Fadaei to make sure a document is put together explaining the character of this coalition to be shared with IMG Members.

Conclusion:

- A coalition is being built to give this IMG a higher degree of political recognition.
- It is likely that NGOs, ministers and members of the private sector will be present during the signing of this coalition.

Next Steps:

- A document will be circulated among all participants explaining the character of this coalition.

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7. Other matters

No other matters were raised by participants on the call.

8. Closure of the meeting

The Chair reminded all attendees that a further few days will be given until Monday, January 29th for any additional comments on each Work Stream. A brief overview will be shared with the IMG outlining the characteristics of the proposed E-waste Coalition. The Chair also asked for the supporting entities of each Work Stream to provide a timeline of proposed deliverables for each Work Stream.

The Chair reaffirmed the clarity of the next, upcoming steps and thanked all participants for attending.

The Chair closed the meeting at 5:00p.m. Geneva time.

Annex 1 (List of Participants)

	Name	Organization
1	Mr. Alfredo Cueva	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
2	Ms. Arianna Luccarelli	Secretariat of the Environment Management Group
3	Mr. David Padi	Department of Field Support
4	Mr. Cosmas Zavazava	International Telecommunication Union
5	Mr. Elliot Harris	Secretariat of the Environment Management Group
6	Mr. Feng Wang	UN Environment
7	Mr. Garam Bel	Secretariat of the Environment Management Group
8	Ms. Haddy Guisse	UN Environment
9	Ms. Hillary Green	Sustainable UN
10	Ms. Hitomi Nakagome	International Labour Organization
11	Mr. Hossein Fadaei	Secretariat of the Environment Management Group
12	Mr. Jun Sun	International Maritime Organization
13	Ms. Marit Niles	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the pacific
14	Mr. Martin Guard	UN Environment
15	Mr. Muhammed Omotola	UN Environment
16	Mr. Nelson Manda	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
17	Mr. Ruediger Kuehr	United Nations University
18	Ms. Tatiana Terekhova	Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
19	Ms. Vanessa Gray	International Telecommunication Union
20	Mr. William Abi Abdallah	United Nations Children's Fund