



# 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

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## 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group

1 November 2012

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Senior Officials segment: 3 – 6 p.m.

EMG/SOM.18/03

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LRC Room, 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the UNDP FF-building,  
304 E 45<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10017.

## Progress report on EMG's ongoing work and suggested directions for further work

### Note by the Chair

### Executive summary

The present note is developed with the aim of supporting the relevant provisional agenda items of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Environment Management Group (EMG). It reports progress on ongoing work, including by the Issue Management Groups (IMGs), and proposes actions and directions for further work of the EMG including its contribution to the implementation of the Outcome Document of the Rio+20; and following the implementation framework of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General on responsibilities of the UN system in contribution to the Outcome Document, it suggests that the Senior Officials:

I) Noting the decision of the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) on the contribution of the EMG to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan; and following the EMG Biodiversity Report, decide to continue the work of the IMG on biodiversity to: 1) further develop the synthesis report on the mapping of IMG members contributions to the Aichi targets as a basis for further synergies, cooperation and planning of future actions by the UN system in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-2021; and 2) to prepare a strategic approach for cooperation at national level including in the review and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPS).

II) In response to the decision of the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD COP10) and following the EMG Drylands report, decide to extend the IMG on land to prepare a UN system-wide Action Plan on drylands for its consideration by UNCCD COP11 and respond to any follow up requests made to the IMG.

III) In response to paragraphs 66-68 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document on green economy, and in follow up of its report "Working Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy, A UN System-wide Response", decide to extend the IMG for another year to serve as a mechanism for UN system-wide outreach, information sharing, awareness raising and coordination on inclusive green economies building on the information, knowledge and

experiences of the EMG members. In the light of the mandates given by Rio+20, co-chairing arrangements for the IMG would be considered to ensure that the work of the IMG incorporates the three dimensions of sustainable development. The deliverables of the IMG could include a collation of toolkits and best practices, building on existing materials with a higher level of specification to address practical challenges in major country groupings; b) a collation of analytical/assessment methodologies that exist within the UN system and preliminary suggestions for an integrated approach;

IV) Following its report “A Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System”, and in response to paragraphs 91-96 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document, decide to extend the work of the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN for another year to further define the UN Framework on Environmental and Social Sustainability, and develop a roadmap that provides an implementation and operational model that can be adapted and used by individual UN entities.

V) Recalling their approval of the Strategic Plan for Environmental Sustainability Management in the UN system in their 17th meeting in September 2011 by which they have committed to move towards a consistent, systematic and cost-effective approach to sustainability management, the Senior Officials agree to establish a Common Sustainability Office (CSO) hosted by UNEP and supported by other EMG members. Also request the Chair of the EMG to inform and seek guidance from the Chief Executives Board (CEB) at its 2013 session on the follow up and implementation of the Strategic Plan as well as the modalities of the operation of the CSO.

VI) Following the EMG Options Paper for Peer-reviews of Environmental Profiles of EMG members, requests further developing of the peer-reviews approach in consultation with the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management and the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability. Undertake two or three pilot and voluntary peer-reviews of agencies based on the agreed approach to share lessons learned and progress made at its next session.

VII) In contribution to the Secretary General’s implementation matrix on responsibilities and contributions of the UN system to Rio+20 Outcome Document, decide to continue cooperation on its current issues, and respond to any requests from the post Rio+20 process including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of the post 2015 development agenda that warrants a contribution from the EMG.

VIII) Approve the work plan for EMG for the period 2013 – 2014, based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.18/04 to ensure that it fully reflects the actions agreed by the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources.

IX) Welcome the opportunity to inform the UNEP Governing Council, and through the Council the UN General Assembly, about its work. Senior Officials also appreciate the guidance received from the Council and request the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of *the report by EMG on its work to the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNEP Governing Council* and to members of the Group for their comments.

X) Request the EMG secretariat to circulate to members of the EMG the *date and venue for the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of Senior Officials*, and to consult with members on its agenda.

## Introduction

1. The present note reports on the progress on ongoing work of the Environment Management Group (EMG), including by its respective Issue Management Groups (IMGs), as well as suggested actions for further work. The note is developed to support the provisional agenda items of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Group.

### 1. The IMG on biodiversity

2. The 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG held in September 2011 welcomed the positive response to the EMG report, “*Advancing the biodiversity agenda –A UN system-wide contribution*”, from the CBD COP10, the UNEP Governing Council and the UN Secretary-General’s Policy Committee. In response to the follow up decision of COP10 on the contribution of the EMG to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan (2011-2020) through inter-agency cooperation on biodiversity, the Senior Officials requested the IMG to accelerate its efforts to develop a practical and pragmatic approach to the implementation of the tasks entrusted to the EMG, and to report on progress to the Secretary-General, to the UNEP Governing Council and to the Bureau of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the COP 11 through the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI) and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The Senior Officials decided to extend the work of the IMG until 2012 and expand its terms of reference to include a wider and longer term coordination role so as to advance synergies and inter-agency cooperation on biodiversity in close coordination with existing mechanisms such as the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Senior Officials also invited the CBD secretariat to serve as a permanent Co-Chair of the IMG with other members serving as Co-Chairs on a rotational basis.

3. The 5<sup>th</sup> IMG Meeting on biodiversity was convened on 9 November 2011 in Montreal, hosted by the Secretariat of the CBD. The meeting was held to review the progress made and the follow up actions by the Group in preparing a UN system wide approach to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 based on the guidance received from the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG (SOM17).

4. The IMG agreed to prepare a response by the UN system at two levels: 1) a global level response by preparing, through a simple matrix, a synthesis mapping report on IMG members’ strategic objectives and key functions *vis-à-vis* the Aichi Targets; and 2) a national level response with respect to cooperation at national level in support of the Strategic Plan, including the process of reviewing and revising National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

5. A briefing was provided by the EMG Secretariat to the joint SBSTTA<sup>1</sup> and WGRI<sup>2</sup> bureaus on 8 November 2011 on the work of the EMG in support of the Aichi Targets.

6. The UNEP Governing Council at its XII Special Session in February 2012 in its decision XII/2 expressed its appreciation for the Group’s contribution to the implementation of the international agenda on biodiversity and, in particular, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

7. The 4<sup>th</sup> CBD WGRI meeting (7-11 May 2012-Montreal, Canada) in its recommendation 4/6<sup>3</sup> requested the CBD Executive Secretary, amongst other issues... “to compile, review and update the various recommendations for synergistic activities and to cross-map the existing and potential contributions of the biodiversity-related conventions, the Rio conventions and other relevant conventions and organizations, with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, through the ongoing work of the Issue Management Group on biodiversity of the Environment Management Group”.

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<sup>1</sup> Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

<sup>2</sup> Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation

<sup>3</sup> WGRI recommendation 4/6: Cooperation with other conventions: the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, is available in CBD website: <http://www.cbd.int/recommendations/wgri/?m=wgri-04>,

8. At its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting in Montreal on 8 May 2012, the IMG reviewed progress of its work in preparation of the above mentioned response. The IMG considered the first draft synthesis report prepared by inputs provided by members. It agreed that the report should be further improved to provide a more focused, complete and aggregated picture of agencies' and conventions' contributions to the Aichi targets as well as areas of cooperation, apparent gaps and country level priorities. Further improvement was needed in the introduction to better define for decision makers the added value of the mapping, its scope and its application. It was agreed that the report should provide: 1) a brief synopsis of the relevance of the Aichi Targets for the work of each agency; 2) information on existing targets, goals or objectives, established by each agency and/or endorsed by the governing body of the agencies that contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Targets; 3) information on existing or planned policy-relevant, strategic or programmatic activities/functions, in particular capacity building, or other support to countries that contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Targets and related agency-level targets, goals or objectives. The mapping can be used to identify targets where there are current gaps and how the IMG can build a coalition to address them. The IMG also requested the UNDP, UNEP and CBD to revise the draft note on cooperation at national level including a matrix for identifying areas of agencies' contribution to the revision and implementation of NBSAPs and possibilities for coordination at the national level.<sup>4</sup>

9. Paragraph 89 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document invites "Parties to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to consider further measures to promote policy coherence at all relevant levels, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication, and enhance coordination and cooperation among MEAs, including the three Rio Conventions as well as with the UN system in the field". EMG is considered as one of the responsible actors in the Secretary General's implementation matrix for contribution to this element of the Outcome Document.

10. An information Note on the work of the IMG in response to the relevant decisions of COP10 in support of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan containing the draft synthesis mapping report was provided by the Chair of the EMG to the CBD Secretariat for circulation as information document to the COP 11 in Hyderabad, India (9-18 October 2012).<sup>5</sup>

11. The preliminary findings of the synthesis mapping report show that a number of EMG members are involved in supporting the Aichi Targets through a diverse range of activities as part of their own strategies. Most EMG members could, however, greatly enhance their contributions to the implementation of the Aichi Targets through the existing mechanisms for cooperation. The UN system provides a diverse capacity support to national actions including tools for monitoring and evaluation, information exchange, awareness raising and resource mobilization. The report suggests further work for the IMG on biodiversity to:

- *Continue mapping strategies, activities and responsibilities at the global, regional and national levels to serve as a living tool for cooperation, planning and reporting on progress*
- *Identify approaches for development sectors support to the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as a mainstreaming and integrative tool in the countries*
- *Better integrate existing policy documents on biodiversity into the work of the UN agencies*
- *Integrate all the biodiversity-related Conventions into the updating and implementation of NBSAPs*
- *Identify cooperation at the regional level in support of the Aichi Targets*

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<sup>4</sup> The full report of the IMG 6<sup>th</sup> meeting is available at [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org)

<sup>5</sup> The information Note containing the synthesis report is available in the EMG website: [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org)

***Suggested action I: Directions for the Issue Management Group (IMG) on biodiversity and its support to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan and Aichi targets as well as the Rio+20 Outcome Document***

The Senior Officials decide to continue the work of the IMG on biodiversity to: 1) further develop the synthesis mapping report of EMG members' strategic objectives and key functions *vis-à-vis* the Aichi targets as a basis for further synergies and cooperation, coordination and planning of future actions by the UN system to support implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan; and 2) to prepare a strategic approach for cooperation at national level including in the review and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs).

## **2. The IMG on land**

12. The 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials of the EMG extended the mandate of the IMG on Land to: 1) implement the findings of the report “*Global Drylands, A UN system-wide Contribution*” and the statement by Heads of EMG members; 2) respond to any requests made to it from: the UNGA high-level event on desertification and, degradation and drought in September 2011; the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); the Rio+20 preparatory process including the possible consideration of other land-related issues which warrant action by the IMG; and 3) discuss proposals by member agencies, such as the security of tenure indicators by UN-Habitat, and modalities for cooperation mechanisms such as United Nations Development Group and UN Water.
13. The EMG Drylands report was submitted as an information document <sup>6</sup> to UNCCD COP 10 in October 2011 in Changwon, Republic of Korea. A presentation of the report was made by IMG members in a side event in the margins of the COP which was well attended by member states and other stakeholders.
14. The report provides a ‘One UN’ response in support of the Drylands Agenda and contributes to the 10 year strategic plan of the UNCCD. It highlights the importance of global drylands to key emerging issues on the international agenda, including climate change, food security and human settlements, together with options for follow-up action.<sup>7</sup> The report sets out a common vision and agenda for UN-wide action on drylands management and its role in addressing climate change and food security, through a *positive* drylands development and investment approach.
15. COP10 welcomed the EMG report and took note of the proposed coordinated action of the UN system on drylands as contained in the EMG Drylands Report and called on the UNCCD Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the EMG to work on a concrete action plan for 2012–2018 for promoting and strengthening relationships with other international organizations, institutions and agencies.<sup>8</sup>
16. The UNEP Governing Council at its XII Special Session in February 2012, in its decision XII/2, supported the work of the EMG in preparing for consideration by COP11 of the UNCCD, a United Nations system-wide action plan for the period 2012–2018 as a follow-up to its report on drylands
17. Paragraphs 205-209 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document reiterates.... “the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, and forecasting and

<sup>6</sup> ICCD/CRIC(10)/INF.1,

<sup>7</sup> A feature was included on the current crisis in the Horn of Africa, highlighting UN efforts to build resilience, reduce vulnerability and enhance capacity for disaster management. This situation also emphasises that a long-term, pro-investment approach offer the opportunity to support the population of the Horn of Africa to respond to drought: not only this time, but for the many droughts to come.

<sup>8</sup> Decision: ICCD/CRIC(10)/L.8/Rev.1

early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. In this regard, we invite States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems.” In the Secretary General’s implementation matrix EMG is considered as one of the actors responsible for contributing to this element of the Outcome Document

18. The IMG organized its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in the form of a teleconference on 16 May 2012 to discuss the steps for follow up of the Drylands report, preparation of an Action Plan and needed coordination for the Rio+20 Conference. The IMG affirmed its readiness to support follow up work on the Global Drylands Report and preparation of the Drylands Action Plan to prioritize issues to follow up and clarify responsibilities. It was agreed that a strong political leadership is needed to champion and advocate issues raised in the Global Drylands Report and that the UNCCD is best suited to lead the process. Participants also stressed the need to explore mechanisms for implementing an ambitious action plan. The IMG proposed establishing a global drylands initiative (GDI) similar to the Spanish Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Fund. Rather than addressing all possible development issues in drylands which is the present status of the EMG report (table 6 page 74), the GDI should rather focus on activities which are able to make a real difference in the short/medium term, in decision-making, and in investment level, in countries and across countries. GDI implementation should be done progressively, and could start with a pilot phase (4 years) in selected pilot countries covering the regions, which are backing up the GDI, at the highest political level.
19. A special catalytic fund should be made available (e.g. \$5-10 million per country, for the pilot phase), and distributed among few UN leading agencies, according to clear terms of reference, based on comparative advantages of these agencies. The GDI funding (100 millions USD, as a start for the pilot phase) could be managed by a UN fund, and fed for example by grant contributions from GEF, Development Banks and donors. Management of the fund should be very light, based on trust rather than on heavy control, and avoid bureaucracy
20. The GDI should probably try to emulate a “green and fair economy” tailored to dryland conditions, with the support of the private sector, and the civil society. One of the GDI activity could be on "state of the art knowledge for dryland development”, focusing on what works and doesn't work, best lessons learned, good practices, voluntary guidelines etc, focusing on the high quality of the knowledge, and on consensus building, rather than on quantity of information. The IMG also stressed the need to identify potential donors or financiers for the initiative.<sup>9</sup>

***Suggested action II: Continuation of the work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on land for developing a UN Drylands Action Plan and implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document.***

The Senior Officials, in response to the UNCCD COP 10 and UNEP Governing Council decision, also decide to continue the work of the IMG on land to prepare an Action Plan on the implementation of the EMG report “Global Drylands, A UN system-wide Contribution” for consideration of 11<sup>th</sup> COP of the UNCCD.

### **3. The IMG on green economy**

21. The 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the EMG in September 2011 approved the EMG report “*Working Together Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy: A*

<sup>9</sup> The full report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> IMG meeting is available at the EMG website: [www.unem.org](http://www.unem.org)

*UN System-wide Perspective.* The report was submitted on 1 November 2011 by the EMG Chair to the Co-chairs of the Bureau for the Preparatory Process of the Rio+20 as EMG contribution to the compilation document of the Conference. The report was presented to the member states in a joint side event with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in New York on 14 December in the margins of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Inter-sessional Meeting of the UNCSD, co-chaired by the Ambassadors of Costa Rica and Mexico.

22. The report which was prepared by contributions from 40 UN entities aimed to facilitate a common understanding of the green economy approach and the measures required for a transition to a green economy. It provided an assessment on how the UN system could coherently support countries in transition to a green economy.
23. The report reflects a growing recognition of the shortcomings of business-as-usual approaches practiced by both the public and private sector institutions over the last two decades and assesses how the UN system can coherently support countries in transitioning to a Green Economy. It highlights the need for more integrated approaches between different international agencies and government departments, as well as more targeted investments across the environmental, economic and social domains. It also emphasizes that a Green Economy has to be a “people-centered economy” as it requires a healthy, educated and informed workforce; and it must improve the daily lives of billions of people, including those living in poverty, those who are unemployed, the working poor and youth. The UN Secretary General in his statement in the report mentions that “The United Nations entities are keenly aware of the resource challenges that countries face in meeting the needs of a growing and urbanizing world population. The human and economic toll of natural disasters and the volatility of commodity prices reflect worrying trends in global climate change, the growing scarcity of some natural resources and the decline of many ecosystems. The report highlights how these challenges can and must be addressed as part of integrated development models that focus on poverty and human well-being.” The report promotes a UN system-wide understanding of the Green Economy approach to achieve sustainable development and offers a range of instruments that governments can use to impact investment choices and consumer behavior. These include mobilizing financial resources, full cost pricing, regulatory instruments, sustainable trade and green markets, innovation and technology, and indicators for measuring progress towards transition.
24. The report also calls for public spending to target green infrastructure and research and development that can spur green technologies and innovation, as well as better health care and education. The report notes numerous UN-backed initiatives already underway, such as: Climate Smart Agriculture by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Cleantech Investment by the International Finance Corporation/World Bank, Recycling of Ships by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Green ICT standards of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Green Jobs by International Labour Organization (ILO), Green Economy Initiative by UNEP, Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production by UNEP and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Education for Sustainable Development by UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Cities and Climate Change by UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Green Economy e-Learning by UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Safe Access to Fuel and Alternative Energy by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), Greening the Health Sector by the World Health Organization (WHO), Green Technology Markets by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Energy Solutions by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
25. The report finds that the UN entities, along with the Bretton Woods Institutions and other intergovernmental agencies, are well-positioned to support the transition towards a balanced and inclusive Green Economy at the national level where they can provide a range of technical advice and capacity support to governments.

26. A Summary of the Report was prepared to better communicate the key messages of the green economy report as requested by the Co-chairs of the side event.<sup>10</sup>
27. The IMG prepared and organized a side event on 16 June 2012 in Rio+20 to share with a wide audience the UN system-wide perspective on the transition towards inclusive green economy pathways and the support they can provide to member states in achieving sustainable development through a green economy approach. The side event provided an opportunity for a discussion between the UN agencies and member states to explore how the UN system can mobilize its capacities in a more coordinated manner to assist member states in their efforts to move onto inclusive green economy pathways as follow up to the EMG report.
28. The Rio+20 Outcome Document in its paragraphs 66-68 on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, invites a coordinated UN system-wide contribution “to support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development, including through, inter alia, green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in particular in least developed countries”. In the Secretary General’s implementation matrix EMG is considered as one of the actors responsible for contributing to this element of the Outcome Document
29. A conference call among IMG members took place on 28 September 2012 which considered and suggested actions contained in the box below for further work of the IMG for consideration of the 19<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials meeting of the EMG.<sup>11</sup>

***Suggested action III: Continuation of the work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on green economy to support implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document***

The senior officials express their satisfaction with the results and the processes of the IMG on Green Economy which contributed significantly to an improved understanding by Member States and other stakeholders of the UN system-wide approach to on inclusive green economies. They express appreciation to all the IMG members for their collaborative efforts.

The senior officials consider it important for the UN system to further coordinate activities on inclusive green economy in the post-Rio+20 era. They recognize the potential for the IMG based on the mandates given by Rio+20 to play a central role in response to Paragraph 66 of the Rio+20 outcome document and the SG’s matrix on Rio+20 follow up, which calls for the UN system to provide support to interested countries by matching them with partners that are best suited to support them, and providing toolkits, best practices, and methodologies, and facilitating related platforms.

The senior officials decide therefore to extend the work of the IMG for another year to serve as a mechanism for UN system-wide outreach, information sharing, awareness raising and coordination on inclusive green economies building on the information, knowledge and experiences of the EMG members. . In the light of the mandates given by Rio+20, co-chairing arrangements for the IMG should be considered to ensure that the work of the IMG is led in a way which reflects that it is carrying out tasks that transcends the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The IMG should focus and discuss to prepare the following key deliverables:

1. Improve the existing EMG green economy website into a UN system platform to: host and share the relevant knowledge and expertise of the EMG members with the public; enhance communication within the UN system and coordination between its various green economy programmes and initiatives; enable the EMG members to engage in interactive discussions; and establish linkages with other relevant websites to avoid overlaps and ensure complementarity.

<sup>10</sup> The summary of the summary of the Green Economy Report is available at EMG website: [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org)

<sup>11</sup> The report of the IMG meeting is available at EMG website: [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org)

Explore the feasibility of providing important information in several languages. Explore options for the future hosting of the website to ensure that all three dimensions of inclusive green economies are appropriately exposed.

2. A collation of green economy resources including toolkits, best practices, models and good examples, and analytical/assessment methodologies that exist within the UN system and preliminary suggestions for an integrated approach;. building on existing materials but with a higher level of specification to address practical challenges in major country groupings. The resources will be catalogued and made publicly available through an appropriate platform; such as UN green economy resource library.

3- Gather agencies assessments toolkits and materials of specific relevance to inclusive green economy, focusing on what works and what does not in different country contexts and share those that were proved useful through the integrated platform.

4- Engage and represent the work of the IMG in an integrated manner in major global policy processes related to inclusive green economy such as the Global Green Growth Summit, the Global Green Growth Forum,(GGKP) annual meetings, and other relevant global event as well organization of regional workshops through the UN regional commissions.

The senior officials agree to contribute resources on a voluntary basis in support of the basic capacity needed for the EMG Secretariat to perform the coordination functions under the IMG.

#### **4. Consultations on environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system**

30. The 17th Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG endorsed the report “A Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System,” (Sustainability Framework) including the joint heads of agencies statement and the sustainability framework contained in the Report. The meeting requested the Chair of the EMG to inform the Secretary-General of the initiative and invite the Secretary-General to provide the foreword to the Report, and to then send the Report to the preparatory process for the UNCSD. The Chair of the EMG was also requested to bring the issue to the attention of the meeting of the CEB in the spring of 2012. The Consultative Process on environmental and social sustainability was extended for another year in order to support the implementation of the Sustainability Framework. This includes: the work to develop a Community of Good Practice or Resource Centre to share knowledge and lessons learned; further coordinate with the IMG on (Environmental Sustainability Management) to ensure synergies; explore options for issues under consideration, such as a common support function, accountability, and identification of ways to go beyond managing risks and benefits and also “do good”; and to identify options to ensure comparable social expertise to complement the environmental competence held by EMG members. Progress is being made on all fronts, though it has become imperative to engage more social expertise in the process. However, the post-Rio+20 inter-agency process may provide an opportunity to take the full sustainable development scope of the Sustainability Framework forward.
31. The recommended approach in the Sustainability Framework is flexible and phased but ensures a minimum level of real engagement by all while allowing each agency to implement the Sustainability Framework in a manner appropriate to its circumstances. The Sustainability Framework proposes: 1) a common vision, rationale and objective; 2) individual actions to be taken by each UN entity to internalize environmental and social sustainability measures; and 3) collective actions for the system to undertake, such as a support and knowledge sharing function, minimum requirements, and a centralized reporting structure.

32. In November 2011, the Chair of EMG shared the Sustainability Framework with the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Process for the UNCSD as EMG's contribution to the UNCSD Compilation Document. The Chair of the EMG brought the Sustainability Framework also to the attention of the spring meetings of the CEB in 2012, after consideration by the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) in April 2012. The HLCP welcomed the Report and the Sustainability Framework. They agreed on the need for the UN system to capitalize on efforts of the EMG and a commitment by the UN system to implement the Sustainability Framework. It was suggested that the Chairs of the subsidiary machinery of the CEB (HLCM, HLCP, and UNDG) and the EMG Chair may wish to consider how the Sustainability Framework could be considered by the UN system. It was also suggested that this issue could be a relevant subject for a future CEB side-event. The HLCM took note of the Sustainability Framework, with a view to reviewing it in connection with its financial and other implications related to management, following consideration of the Sustainability Framework by the CEB at its Spring 2012 session.
33. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMG Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability was held in the form of a teleconference on 31 May 2012 to review the progress made and to discuss a road map for its further work<sup>12</sup>. There were brief presentations from participants on their current activities on sustainability, in line with the Sustainability Framework. They also described how the Sustainability Framework could be internalised for implementation. A number of agencies have made progress, including through developing policies and tools or by refining existing sustainability systems or practices. A good level of knowledge and experience already exists in the UN system which could be shared through an on-line platform. This could be mutually beneficial to Agencies to identify challenges and needs and to help each other in addressing them. Some agencies are new to the process and might need more time to engage and implement the Sustainability Framework. The level of action by each agency could vary depending on their organizational priorities, boundaries and limitations. So a flexible and phased approach in implementation was considered highly advisable. The main conclusions of the meeting were:
- i. *To keep the CEB and its subsidiary bodies informed on the development and implementation of the Sustainability Framework and solicit its guidance and support for the next steps.*
  - ii. *To translate the policy-level framework into a "Roadmap" which will help UN entities develop their own implementation plans. In the process, priority should be given to issues which are mostly and immediately needed by agencies in advancing their sustainability work and implementing the Sustainability Framework*
  - iii. *Create an on-line platform and work space to allow EMG members upload their sustainability materials and exchange knowledge and best practices on their sustainability work*
  - iv. *Prepare a work plan based on the above activities for the future work of the Consultative Process for consideration and approval of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials of the EMG*
  - v. *Convene a small open-ended Drafting Group (composed of UNEP, UNDP, WFP, WHO, IFAD and FAO) to advise and support the EMG Secretariat in preparing the agreed actions in particular the work plan and the road map.*

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<sup>12</sup> The report of the meeting is available in the EMG website: [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org)

34. The Consultative Process agreed on a draft work plan for 2013-14, which is attached as Annex I, to be implemented subject to the availability of resources. A preliminary version of the online platform for knowledge and information sharing has been developed, with support from UNDP.
35. The ongoing work of the Consultative Process to move the Framework towards a roadmap that can be applied by UN entities would contribute to the implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. The Outcome Document in several places underlines enhancing sustainability measures in the work and operation of the UN system. Paragraphs 91-96 invite the UN system ..... *“to further enhance mainstreaming of sustainable development in their respective mandates, programs, strategies and decision-making processes, in support of all countries in particular developing countries’ efforts in the achievement of sustainable development.”* Paragraph 94: *“We invite the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the UN development system to consider appropriate measures for integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions across the UN System’s operational activities.”* Paragraph 96 also adds that *“We call on the UN system to improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness, and in accordance with legislative frameworks, including financial rules and regulations, while maintaining accountability to Member States.”*

***Suggested actions IV: Consultations on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the UN system to support implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document.***

Senior Officials agree to continue the ongoing Consultative Process on Environment and Social Sustainability for one more year in order to support the implementation of the Sustainability Framework , including ensuring that the IMG, through EMG:

- (a) Translates the policy-level Sustainability Framework into a roadmap that provides UN entities with an implementation and operational model, including further development and clarification of elements of the Sustainability Framework essential for implementation and for adopting a common approach
- (b) Explores options for a common support function and establish a knowledge sharing mechanism.
- (c) Keeps the CEB and its subsidiary bodies informed on the development and implementation of the Sustainability Framework and solicit its guidance and support for the next steps

## **5. IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the United Nations system**

36. At its meeting in September 2011, Senior Officials of the EMG considered the progress made by the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management and discussed the “Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management” presented by the IMG to move the UN system towards a consistent, systematic and cost-effective approach to environmental sustainability management.
37. The strategic plan was approved and the importance of a common UN-wide structure to support its implementation was acknowledged. In this regard, Senior Officials requested the EMG Secretariat to identify possible options for a common structure to support implementation of the Strategic Plan and for resourcing its operations.
38. As requested by the Strategic Plan, Senior Officials also committed to implement organization-specific sustainability management systems (SMS) drawing on existing work

(e.g. emission reduction strategies) and to endeavour to identify appropriate resources for implementation.

39. Given the nature of this decision and its bearing on how United Nations organizations will be managed in the future, Senior Officials requested the chair to inform the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board (CEB) about the Strategic Plan to support the establishment of sustainability management systems in all UN organisations.
40. Below are some highlights of activities between October 2011 and September 2012:

#### ***Climate neutrality***

41. The third *common greenhouse gas inventory* for the UN system - *Moving towards a climate neutral UN –The UN system’s footprint and efforts to reduce it-* was published on 22 April 2012. The report included the greenhouse gas emissions inventories from 54 UN organizations for 2010, and described their emission reduction efforts in 2011. It also included interviews with sustainability focal points that provided insights into the practical work of selected agencies. The data shows that the footprint of the UN system in 2010 was 1.7 million tons CO<sub>2</sub> eq.
42. The UNEP Sustainable UN (SUN) team finalised the UN-wide *inventory management plan* (IMP) for the years 2009-2010 and some agencies started work on agency-specific IMPs to record in detail how their GHG inventories were prepared to ensure full transparency. IMG members progressed in the preparation of their *emission reduction strategies* (ERS) by defining targets and timelines for specific activities. Over 30 UN organizations have submitted their draft ERS to SUN for review. Approval of the organization-specific strategies, and their linking to the UN-wide sustainability management strategy, has been at the core of IMG activities throughout 2012 and will continue to be so in 2013. The *help desk* service has been maintained to provide IMG members with training and tailored advice on inventories, emissions reduction strategies and other issues relevant to the implementation of the UN climate neutral strategy.

#### ***Emission reductions and sustainability management: travel, facilities, sustainable procurement, field operations, communications***

43. In collaboration with the IMG and the UN travel network, SUN finalised the report *Making policies work for sustainable travel* in May 2012. The report sets out options for rationalising UN travel policies and practices. In close consultation with the IMG, the *sustainable procurement* working group of the HLCM Procurement Network moved to a more advanced phase of work in which help desk services are being provided on specific tenders by UN agencies on demand. There has been a clear increase in tenders reflecting sustainability requirements as well as growth in the number of UN agencies developing sustainable procurement policies and practices (UNHCR, UNDP, WFP, etc.).
44. The UN campaign *Greening the Blue* continued in 2012 and received an average of over 13,000 visits a month, compared to 7,000 for 2011 and followers on Facebook and Twitter increased to over 3000 each. Initiatives such as the Pledge-athon, inviting UN staff to pledge to a set of “greening” actions, received hundreds of pledges with an excellent spread of interest from many different agencies. Since its launch in June 2010, the *Greening the Blue* website has showcased 47 case studies and over 130 stories of best practice from across the whole UN system. It remains the reference point for UN staff to know what is happening in the UN system and to connect to it.
45. In response to a request from the IMG membership to assist in bringing the issue of environmental sustainability to the attention of managers, SUN has undertaken a series of interviews with over 20 Heads of UN organizations to canvass their opinions on the future of UN internal sustainability. The report, called *Visions of a sustainable UN in 2020*, inclusive of an interview post Rio+20 with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, has been submitted to Senior Officials for their information.
46. The IMG has also worked on the development of concrete guidance material on *sustainability management systems* and on illustrating the connections between sustainability management and existing work on emissions reduction. A final draft of the

guidance materials will be ready in the course of 2013, inclusive of agency-specific case studies and SMS checklists. The IMG continues its close collaboration with the EMG Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to the internal sustainability of the UN system and is closely involved in the work on the proposed peer review process.

### **Interagency discussion on sustainability management**

47. In response to the request made in September 2011 to identify possible options for a common structure to support implementation of the strategic plan and for resourcing the structure's operations, the IMG has considered various scenarios and held a number of informal consultations within the UN system to design the building blocks for a UN Common Sustainability Office (CSO). Elements considered were the institutional location of such an office and the corresponding funding mechanism. The name of the structure was also discussed as having an important bearing on the way the CSO will be perceived in the future. Further key elements considered were :
- (a) The Rio+20 Outcome Document "The future we want", Paragraph 96: " We call on the UN system to *improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness,...*" The document outlines clear expectations of member states on matters related to the internal sustainability management of UN organisations.
  - (b) The Secretary-General's letter to executive heads dated 13 June 2012 that draws the attention of CEB members to the strategic plan and to the need to strengthen the efforts already underway both at individual organisation and system levels. In this letter, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon requests a CEB discussion on sustainability management in 2013.
48. After consultations within the IMG, UNEP, the HLCM and the EMG and UN Secretariats, the IMG recommends the following as the best solution for a common structure charged with the responsibility of supporting and enhancing existing efforts to integrate environmental sustainability practices into the management of UN organisations:
- a) The CSO function should be filled by the existing Sustainable UN facility (SUN). The latter should be confirmed as a permanent function under the EMG and be hosted by UNEP. This will allow the CSO to maintain a strong interagency connotation while being consistent with UNEP's mandate to support environmental sustainability in the UN system. It will build on the existing successful record of SUN and the IMG and furthermore respond to the specific request made in this sense by member states (paragraph 96 of "The future we want" above).
  - b) Because of the nature of the services the CSO will provide (help desk, yearly reports, regular meetings and seminars), it will be able to operate only if it has access to a stable source of funding. UNEP has offered to maintain a basic level of financial commitment to meet the CSO's staffing and administration costs. UNEP calls on other agencies to co-fund the costs of the services that the CSO will provide for all on an ongoing basis.
  - c) A quid pro quo of shared funding by other agencies will be regular CSO consultation with contributing entities to agree the CSO's work plan and performance expectations. The IMG welcomes this prospect. The IMG further recommended that a clear link be established between the CSO and the highest inter-agency mechanism in the UN system charged with the responsibility of coordinating management matters (HLCM).
49. The document containing detailed options for the CSO is submitted to the attention of Senior Officials in annex II
50. The IMG highlighted that the importance of agency support for the CSO in no way replaces the ongoing need for individual agencies to pursue sustainability management practices for their own organizations from within own resources. The commitment made in September 2011 by EMG Senior Officials to implement organization-specific

sustainability management systems (SMS), building on their existing emissions reduction strategies, should remain the basis for all further work at the individual agency level.

51. Given its management character, the IMG recommended that this decision and the “Strategic plan for sustainability management” be clearly communicated to the HLCM and that the HLCM be asked to endorse minimum criteria for sustainability management systems in the UN system. Due to its financial implications, the IMG also recommends that the CSO proposal be brought to the attention of the CEB through its subsidiary bodies so as to seek a coordinated decision on the matter and deliver a system-wide response to the call of member states to integrate sustainable development considerations into the management of UN facilities and operations, as contained in the outcome document “The future we want” endorsed by the General Assembly in July 2012 (resolution 66/288).

***Suggested action V: Strategic plan for sustainability management and Common Sustainability Office***

1. The Senior Officials recall the approval of the Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN system in their 17<sup>th</sup> meeting in September 2011 by which they have committed to move towards a consistent, systematic and cost-effective approach to sustainability management.
2. The Senior Officials consider the proposal on a Common Sustainability Office as presented by the IMG and agree to establish such an office with a mix support model in which UNEP provides the secretariat costs (staff and operating costs) and other UN entities contribute to the financing of its activities.
3. The Senior Officials request the Chair of the EMG to inform and seek guidance from the CEB at its 2013 session on the follow up and implementation of the strategic plan as well as the modalities of the operation of the Common Sustainability Office
4. In the meantime and until the operationalisation of the Common Sustainability Office, decide to extend the IMG until the end of 2014 to continue knowledge sharing, communication, training and awareness-raising activities, in particular based on the greening the blue platform, on issues such as sustainable facilities, procurement, events, travel, e-communications; and to maintain the links created with related interagency networks.

## **6. Peer-Review of Environmental Profiles of the UN system**

52. The Senior Officials at their 17<sup>th</sup> meeting considered a proposal from the Chair to explore the establishment of an approach for peer review of the environment portfolio and management procedures among members. Such an approach could be inspired by the OECD peer review process. While it was felt that a review from peers could add value, it was also felt that consideration should be given to how such reviews would fit in with the monitoring and evaluation procedures of each institution. The approach could perhaps be tested on a voluntary basis to gain experience. Senior Officials requested the EMG secretariat to develop an options paper on such a peer review approach.
53. Accordingly, the paper: “peer reviewing the environmental profile of members of the EMG, a conceptual review of options” has been prepared by the EMG Secretariat with comments from EMG members including UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, UNECE, UNIDO, UN-OCHA and UN-ESCAP. The paper was circulated as information

document<sup>13</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> EMG Senior Officials meeting as an information document: EMG/SOM.18/Inf 1. The executive summary of the paper is attached as annex III.

54. Peer reviews have proven to be an important tool for international co-operation and progress, over the last few decades and in a variety of policy fields, including environmental policies. While this instrument is used in several intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the IMF country surveillance mechanism, the WTO trade policy review mechanism, the EU reviews for national labor market and social inclusion policies), it is most commonly associated with the OECD experience with it. The OECD has used peer reviews over several decades and it conducts systematic peer review programs covering all its member countries<sup>14</sup>, for economic, environment, energy<sup>15</sup>, aid<sup>16</sup> policies, and this for several decades. This instrument has also been used by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) since 2004. The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the African Union has covered 14 countries since 2006.
55. These peer review processes rely on mutual trust among peers and confidence in the peer review process itself. They contribute to enhanced individual and collective performance of participating entities. The Peer Review Reports include factual evidence, independent evaluation and non-binding recommendations and are approved by the peer review body.
56. The paper recognizes that the UN entities have engaged in a range of activities concerning (e.g. indicators, objectives, guidelines, safeguards, frameworks, strategies, actions), which together provide a solid basis for conducting peer reviews of sustainability management of member entities, and also provide room for individual and collective progress, moving along the sequence of intentions, actions, and results in effectiveness and efficiency.
57. The paper establishes that the tool can easily be adapted to peer review the 'in house' environmental management of members of the EMG. The paper provides a blueprint for such reviews. It identifies four options to choose from, bringing together two options for the substantive focus of the reviews (i.e. 'corporate environmental management' applying to facilities and operations of members of the EMG or 'corporate environmental and social sustainability' applying to strategies and plans, programs and projects, facilities and operations of members), as well as two options for the program of reviews (i.e. a 'gradual' option with a pilot phase or a 'fast track' option with a more rapid start).
58. The paper compares these options against a number of criteria, and suggests focus on corporate environmental management. It leaves the choice open and documented between a gradual option (A1) and a fast track option (A2). This choice may take into account the availability of resources, the benefits generated, the dynamics of volunteering for being reviewed; the confidence in drawing from the experience of companies or countries with environmental management.
59. The paper considers that, based on the accumulated international experience so far, the proposed peer review mechanism for the review of the environmental profiles of UN EMG members, is a resource efficient tool to provide voluntary participants with non-obligatory recommendations and sharing of best practices.
60. Also, the proposed peer review mechanism is potentially seen as providing significant and multiple benefits (as demonstrated by existing international peer review programs) for the UN as a whole and for its individual entities. These benefits include transparency and accountability, consistency and coherence, credibility and exemplarity. The peer review

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<sup>13</sup> EMG/SOM.18/INF 01

<sup>14</sup> As well as some other countries (e.g. economic reviews of Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa).

<sup>15</sup> OECD-IEA.

<sup>16</sup> For donor countries.

mechanism is further seen as important in promoting effectiveness (towards assigned environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives) and resource efficiency in achieving these objectives, including cost-savings making simply 'good business'. Overall, the proposed peer review mechanism is seen as a major tool to foster improved individual and collective performance.

61. The proposed peer review mechanism is also a way to strengthen the UN's leadership role and its support to Member States in furthering the global sustainability agenda. This is in line with the Rio+20 Summit outcomes and the UN Secretary General determination to have the UN lead by example and maintain sustainability as top priority

***Suggested action VI: Environmental Peer reviews of the EMG members***

The Senior Officials welcome the Options Paper for Peer-reviews of Environmental Profiles of EMG members and requests further developing of the peer-reviews approach in consultation with the Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management and the Consultative Process of Environmental and Social Sustainability. Based on the finalized approach, undertake two or three pilot and voluntary peer-reviews of agencies to share lessons learned and to provide a progress report at the next session of the Senior Officials meeting.

## **7. Support to the follow up processes and implementation of the Outcome Document of the UNCSO, Rio+20**

62. Following the decision of the 17th Senior Officials meeting, a summary of strategic discussions of the 17th meeting on the EMG on Rio+20 Conference was submitted by the EMG Chair to the UNCSO secretariat for the Rio+20 preparatory process highlighting: the work of EMG on the green economy, drylands and biodiversity; the development of a Framework for Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system and views of EMG members on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.
63. The Outcome Document in several places refers to the need for UN system-wide coordination and cooperation on issues such as biodiversity, land, green economy, sustainability in the UN system work and the process for Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary General's implementation matrix on responsibilities and contribution of the UN system to the Outcome Document also includes roles and responsibilities for the EMG on the above mentioned areas.
64. The EMG members may want to discuss possible contribution of the EMG to the Rio+20 follow up processes in particular in response to the requests that may arise from Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development processes.

***Suggested action VII: Support the implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document including contribution to the relevant Post Rio+20 processes***

1. The Senior Officials underline the importance of inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the Rio+20 Outcome Document and welcomes the Secretary General's suggested framework for implementation of the Outcome Document by the UN system.
2. The Senior Officials agree to continue cooperation in the implementation of the Outcome

Document based on the implementation framework by the Secretary General, and respond to any requests arising from the post Rio+20 processes including contribution to the sustainable development goals and the post 2015 development agenda.

3. The Senior Officials request the EMG secretariat to provide a progress report on the work and contribution of the EMG in implementation of the Outcome Document for its consideration and any further follow up at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMG Senior Officials

## **8. EMG work plan for 2012–2013**

65. The 17th Senior Officials Meeting of EMG adopted the 2012-2013 EMG work plan. The plan has been updated to a 2013-2014 EMG work plan which reflects the suggested action put forward in the current note as presented in document EMG/SOM.18/04.
66. It is proposed that the work plan as was decided last year be given a two year horizon, i.e. be a plan for 2013 to 2014 (both years included), which is subject to annual approval by the Senior Officials. The reason for this approach is to capture activities which have a longer time span than one year. The plan gives an overview of forthcoming activities and milestones for the next 24 months. The plan is organized according to four main expected accomplishments as they pertain to programmatic, management and operational issues as well as overall cooperation.
67. The work plan remains un-costed as long as there is no common budget for EMG activities. It is recommended that the work plan is implemented through in-kind contribution subject to the availability of resources. The in-kind contribution will be budgeted, programmed and reported on by each member and the UNEP secretariat within their own administrative processes.

### ***Suggested action VIII: Approval of the work plan for EMG for the period 2013 – 2014***

1. The Senior Officials approve the work plan for EMG for the period 2013 – 2014 based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.18/04 to ensure that the plan fully reflects the actions agreed by the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources.

## **9. Process for reporting to the UNEP Governing Council**

68. The 17th Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG requested the Chair to circulate a draft report on the EMG to the 12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum for their comments. The draft report was circulated to the Governing Council members for comments and then presented as document UNEP/GCSSXII/10 to the 12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya 20-22 February 2012.
69. The Council in its decision GCSSXII/2 on “Enhanced Coordination Across the United Nations System including the Environment Management Group” expressed its appreciation of the progress report prepared under the guidance of the Senior Officials of the EMG at their seventeenth meeting and as presented by the Executive Director of UNEP. It commended the EMG on its progress in facilitating cooperation across the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the environmental agenda.

70. The Governing Council welcomed and supported the work of the EMG in contributing to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and preparing for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD at its eleventh session, a United Nations system-wide action plan for the period 2012–2018 on follow-up to its report on drylands. It also encouraged the Group to continue its consultations on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system and to move towards environmental sustainability management systems and climate neutrality in the United Nations.
71. The Governing Council requested UNEP Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the EMG to provide a progress report on the Group’s work to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh session as well as the governing bodies of the Group’s member organizations, through the heads of those organizations, for their information.
72. The Council also invited the Executive Director, in the context of the development of the UNEP draft programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015, to submit, for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, proposals relating to the allocation of resources for the Group’s activities to reflect better the workload of the Group secretariat.
73. The UNGA is informed of the work of the EMG through the submissions of the proceeding of the UNEP Governing Council. The UNGA requested to be informed about the work of the EMG in its resolution A/RES/58/209.

***Suggested action IX: Reporting to the Governing Council of UNEP***

1. The Senior Officials welcome the opportunity to inform the UNEP Governing Council, and through the Council the UN General Assembly, of its work. The meeting appreciates the guidance received from the Council and requests the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of the report by EMG on its work to members of the Group for their comments, and submit the final report to the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNEP Governing.

**10. Date and venue of the next Senior Officials Meeting**

74. In preparing for the Senior Officials Meeting, the Chair has continued the practice of seeking the views of members on the agenda and to informally consult on dates and venues. This practice will be continued for the 19<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting scheduled to take place in September 2013.

***Suggested action X: Date and venue of the next Senior Officials Meetings***

1. The Senior Officials request the EMG secretariat to circulate to the members of the EMG the date and venues for the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Senior Officials, and consult with members on its agenda.

## ANNEX I

### DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (2013-14)

The 15th Senior Officials meeting of the EMG in September 2009 established the consultation process to prepare a report on options for enhancing environmental and social sustainability of the UN system. EMG members had expressed interest to work collectively in developing a common approach to internalize sustainability principles into its policies, program and management in a systematic and coherent manner to prevent and mitigate the environmental and social impacts of their operation and to optimize resource use. Though a number of norms and standards exist, there is no single institutional strategy operational across UN agencies.

With this objective, in 2011, the Consultative Process prepared the report “A Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system”. The report provides a broad policy framework for joint action and a Heads of agencies statement. The recommended approach is flexible and phased but ensures a minimum level of real engagement by all while allowing each agency to implement the framework in a manner appropriate to its circumstances. The framework proposes: 1) a common vision, rationale and objective; 2) individual actions to be taken by each UN entity to internalize environmental and social sustainability measures; and 3) collective actions for the system to undertake, such as a support and knowledge sharing function, minimum requirements, and a centralized reporting structure.

The next step for the Consultative Process is to translate the policy-level framework into a roadmap that provides an implementation and operational model that can be adapted and used by individual UN entities. In that process, it will need to build upon the existing framework and explore implementation considerations and enhance information sharing and lessons learned among UN organizations. It also needs to consult with relevant networks with social expertise in the UN system that could support improving the social dimensions of the framework.

To respond to these needs, the Consultative Process has developed a draft work plan for 2013-14, as detailed below, to be implemented subject to the availability of resources

#### DRAFT WORK PLAN (2013-14)

#### CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE UN

No	Activities	Period	Lead
<b>1</b>	<b>Translate the policy-level framework into a roadmap that provides UN entities with an implementation and operational model, including further development and clarification of elements of the Framework</b>		
1.1	Conduct a survey across UN entities to provide inputs into the development of the roadmap based on agency experiences as well as help UN entities begin to apply the Framework to conduct a gap analysis.	August 2012- May 2013	WHO, UNDP, Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
1.2	Develop an initial roadmap for UN entities to begin to operationalize the Framework 17, which will continue to evolve based on the following activities	June - October 2013	Drafting Group, EMG

<sup>17</sup> This will be an interim road map, which will be updated based on the outcomes of activities being proposed. The road map for Management/Operations will be aligned with the ongoing work on it through the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management

			Secretariat
1.3	Prepare a concept note clarifying a common approach that could be adopted on E & S “Principles” and “Minimum Requirements”	January-October 2013	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
1.4	Develop a report on resource requirements for the implementation of the Framework, using few examples of early movers within the UN system <sup>18</sup> .	November 2013- July 2014	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
1.5	Develop options for a common approach towards the use of National (Country) Systems	January – December 2013	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
1.6	Develop options for a common approach related to an accountability mechanism (including compliance, grievance, oversight and public disclosure issues)	January – December 2013	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
1.7	Develop elements of a common reporting format for the implementation of the Framework	November 2013 – October 2014	EMG Secretariat
1.8	Prepare a brief paper assessing legal and managerial issues related to the implementation of the Framework, in consultation with DOM, OLA, others	November 2013 – October 2014	EMG Secretariat
1.9	Voluntary pilot testing of the Roadmap by agencies	2013-2014 (agency specific timeframes)	Agencies
1.10	Update the “Roadmap” based on the above activities	January - December 2014	EMG Secretariat
1.11	Pilot test the finalised Roadmap	December 2014 onwards	EMG Secretariat
<b>2</b>	<b>Explore options for a common support and knowledge sharing function</b>		
2.1	Develop a concept note on a “Common Support Function” <sup>19</sup>	April-October 2013	EMG
2.2	Develop a knowledge sharing platform	September 2012- January 2013	UNDP & EMG Secretariat
2.3	Develop a strategy for awareness raising of UN staff on the Framework and initiate a communication campaign	January 2013 – October 2014	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
2.4	Develop a strategy and contents for a capacity building programme on the Framework for UN staff, and initiate training programmes	January 2013 – October 2014	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
2.5	Update the table of existing UN sustainability practices and compile case studies of how different UN and outside entities managed to “do good”, beyond managing risks and benefits. This will be supported by a survey on the progress in implementing the Framework	January 2013 – October 2014	EMG Secretariat

<sup>18</sup> Efforts will be made to link this to a Cost Benefit Analysis exercise being planned by UNEP SUN on the environmental aspects of management/operations

<sup>19</sup> The IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management is now exploring the option of having a more formal, long term common support function for its work on Management/Operations. The feasibility of sharing a common support function for the work on all 3 entry points of the Framework, including the work on Management/Operations, will be explored

2.6	Convene a knowledge sharing event to bring together UN agencies, experts in the field, etc.	Second half of 2013	Drafting Group, EMG Secretariat
<b>3</b>	<b>Keep the CEB and its subsidiary bodies informed on the development and implementation of the Framework and solicit its guidance and support for the next steps</b>		
3.1	Prepare documents and reports for consideration of the CEB and its subsidiary bodies	January 2013 – October 2014	EMG Secretariat
3.2	Respond to requests and comments from the CEB and its subsidiary bodies	January 2013 – October 2014	EMG Secretariat

## Annex II

### DRAFT

#### Proposal on a UN common sustainability office with system-wide ownership including a draft decision for consideration of the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB)



### Sustainable UN facility

Proposal for a UN common sustainability office with system-wide ownership

- 1) The purpose of this document is to provide senior officials of the Environment Management Group (EMG) with a rationale and options for the ongoing existence of a UN common sustainability office (CSO). It was drafted by the UNEP Sustainable United Nations (SUN) team in consultation with the EMG secretariat and the Issue Management Group on environmental sustainability management (IMG). *It is a living document* that will be updated in line with discussions with stakeholders and as the institutional setting and funding mechanisms for the CSO are further defined by high level UN officials.
- 2) *The document is based on the same assumptions, rationale and expectations as the 'Strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system' that was approved by UN heads of agencies in their capacity as members of the EMG in September 2011. Its intent is not to revisit the justification for such a coordination mechanism, but rather to provide more detail on the services the mechanism will provide, and options for its institutional setting and resourcing.*
- 3) Once a final decision on the CSO has been reached, the updated document will become an operational appendix to the Strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system..

#### Background

- 4) In September 2011, EMG senior officials approved a Strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system. The plan includes two different and connected commitments:
  - a) step by step implementation by UN entities of internal sustainability management systems;
  - b) creation of a common support mechanism to support individual efforts, facilitate exchange of experiences and coordinate common reporting.

In particular, senior officials “requested the EMG secretariat to identify possible options for such a common structure and for resourcing the structure’s operations”.

- 5) In June 2012, the conclusions of the Rio+20 conference effectively commended UN agencies for their work to date and urged them to do more to promote both sustainability and cost efficiencies in the management of their facilities and operations:

**The future we want: section IV. Institutional framework for sustainable development**

96. We call on the UN system to improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness, and in accordance with legislative frameworks, including financial rules and regulations, while maintaining accountability to Member States.”

- 6) Work on internal sustainability therefore now has a clear mandate from high level UN officials and from member states for continuation in each agency and at system level through a common support structure as described in the strategic plan.

#### ***What is sustainability management?***

- 7) The ‘Strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system’ provides a definition of sustainability management as follows: *”The term “Sustainability Management Systems” (SMS) refers to a systematic approach to managing the sustainability aspects of the organization. The SMS proposed in this Plan is largely based on the ISO 14.001 standard for environmental management systems, but is simplified for ease of implementation across the many diverse organizations in the UN system.”*
- 8) Given also the clear message from member states, sustainability management needs to focus on the efficient use of resources that, over time, translates into cost containment and savings. Less energy, less travel, less waste and less water mean less money. Sustainability management therefore sets up the policies, implementation systems and processes for achieving reductions in these areas via technological, procedural and behavioural change.

#### **From Sustainable UN (SUN) to a Common Sustainability Office (CSO)**

- 9) Shared UN system requirements for climate neutrality and sustainability management have so far been absorbed and funded by UNEP through the EMG and the Sustainable UN facility (SUN), assisted by generous contributions from a few other UN agencies and member states (Norway and Switzerland).
- 10) SUN was created in 2008 at the request of the UN Secretary-General to support the implementation of the UN climate neutral strategy decided by the CEB in October 2007. The SUN facility is however time-bound and is scheduled to be phased out at the end of 2013.
- 11) The common sustainability office (CSO) that the strategic plan proposes would build on positive lessons from SUN’s experiences and, rather than being a single agency initiative, would be more securely anchored in the UN system and benefit from a balanced approach to stable funding.

#### **Recommendation of the IMG for the common sustainability office**

- 12) The secretariat of the Environment Management Group (EMG) and the members of the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management (IMG) have been working to develop concrete options for the creation of a common support structure after 2013. It has been agreed that the best solution for an uninterrupted provision of services of the same level and quality as those delivered by the SUN facility is as follows:
  - a) After 2013 the SUN facility will be confirmed as a permanent function, a common support office (CSO), under the EMG. This will allow the facility to maintain a strong interagency connotation while being consistent with the UNEP’s mandate to support sustainability in

the UN system. As the UN system's common sustainability office, the reconfirmed structure will draw from the successful record of SUN and the IMG and respond to the specific request made in this sense by member states (paragraph 96 of "The future we want").

- b) Because of the nature of its services (help desk, yearly reports, regular meetings and seminars) the CSO will be able to operate only if it has access to a stable source of funding. Between 2008 and 2012, donor funding allowed SUN to kick-start the creation of exemplary inter-agency collaboration on climate neutrality and sustainability. From 2014 on, UNEP is willing to maintain a basic level of financial commitment to ensure that the CSO's overheads are met (staffing and office costs) but also calls on other agencies to recover the cost of the services that the CSO will provide for all UN organizations on an ongoing basis.
- c) In return for the agreement on cost recovery, the work plan and performance of the CSO will be subject to increased scrutiny. A simple set of mutual responsibilities will be agreed (see below 'Shareholder responsibilities').
- d) A clear link needs to be established between the CSO and the HLCM. The CSO will report on its work program to the HLCM, via the EMG, modalities for this will need to be established.

**The IMG further agreed that – should UN entities agree with sharing the ownership of the common sustainability office- the following shareholder responsibilities will apply:**

- 13) The CSO will prepare a 4 year medium term work plan and a more detailed 2 year work plan containing specific tasks and measurable outputs. These plans will be submitted to the EMG (SOM) for approval and to the CEB (HLCM) for information and comment every two years.
- 14) The CSO will deliver the agreed services, implement its work program, facilitate exchanges among agencies and welcome input for its work plan from the contributing agencies (see Table 1)
- 15) The IMG will be maintained as an inter-agency network that will contribute to the collective program of work through technical expertise and experience-sharing. Network members will liaise with their respective senior management on the CSO's program and for the release of agencies' cost recovery contributions.
- 16) Individual agencies will continue to be responsible for the implementation of their individual sustainability efforts as well as for participating and providing quality input in the work of the IMG; this includes sharing of experiences, cost efficient measures taken, policies on relevant matters such as cleaning products or services, waste management, energy efficiency, communications and training.

**Benefits of the CSO for UN entities' internal sustainability**

- 17) In the spirit of One UN reform, it is important that UN system organizations follow a common standard and approach to their sustainability work. A CSO, responsible for providing common functions /services to all UN organizations, will not only enable long-term coherence and comparability of the UN's sustainability efforts, but will also offer the most effective path towards efficiency improvements.

18) Pooling UN system resources will ensure economies of scale and offer savings for each agency in meeting some key requirements. To date, a collaborative approach has enabled UN agencies to build greenhouse gas management capacity more quickly than could have been achieved individually, has provided system-wide tools, resources, and training at a fraction of commercial costs, and has facilitated individual and collective opportunities for awareness-raising campaigns and behavioural change. The resultant knowledge-sharing network has also allowed agencies facing common challenges to work together to identify and implement best practice solutions. An ongoing collective approach is considered vital as agencies expand their activities from greenhouse gas management to more comprehensive and cost effective sustainability management systems, as advocated by member states in the Rio+ 20 outcome text.

19) The **main services** proposed for delivery by the CSO will therefore be:

- a) **Help desk function:** Provision of specific technical advice and development of tools, training packages and methodologies that can be useful to and owned by everyone because developed with the input of the network;
- b) **Catalyst function:** Capacity building of agencies and focal points to develop sustainability management systems consistent with international best practice; support for systematic integration of sustainability management into organizations' strategic plans, policies on risk management, and approaches to improving efficiencies; promotion of inter-agency cooperation and experience sharing, use of benchmarking and positive competition as a tool for improvement;
- c) **Communications function:** Help in maintaining staff interest at a high level (e.g. through common Greening the Blue website), provision of advice and ready-to-use tools for internal campaigns, maintenance of a system-wide context for individual agencies' internal communications efforts, on-line and on-demand training for network members on how to effectively communicate with and mobilise staff on matters of internal sustainability;
- d) **Reporting and knowledge retention function:** Ensuring that emission reductions are captured and communicated across the UN system, recording and communicating progress and achievements to donors and member states, provision of a shared repository for institutional knowledge so that the system-wide data base remains robust over time.

20) Confirmation of a common sustainability office as a permanent feature of the UN's management landscape is a direct response to the request in paragraph 96 of the Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", that the UN system's work on internal sustainability should "build on existing experiences". Demonstrating that the UN is able to act as one on an issue of such global importance also has intangible benefits for the UN system's image in the eyes of donors and member states.

### **Cost recovery options**

21) IMG discussions in May and June 2012 focused on ways to ensure a minimal level of services on a stable basis. Voluntary and ad hoc support from agencies for specific projects, in kind or in cash (eg, to enable extra training sessions, special reports, additional online tools, etc.) is one thing; stable funding to enable the CSO to deliver core services on an ongoing basis is another.

22) As illustrated in Table 1 below, excluding staff and office costs (provided by UNEP), the core support and coordination services are projected to cost around 435,000USD/year. Assuming the

number of entities called upon to contribute will be the same as the number of entities reporting on their GHG emissions<sup>20</sup>, these costs could be shared in one of the following ways:

- a) Each of the 54 entities contributes a flat rate of 8,055USD/year.
- b) The 54 entities contribute in ways differentiated according to parameters commonly applied in other interagency networks:
  - i. The 10 top agencies (based on agency staff and expenditure) provide 20,000USD/year each and the remaining 44 agencies contribute a flat rate of 5,340USD/year.
  - ii. The 20 biggest agencies (based on agency staff and expenditure) contribute: 21,750USD/year. Others contribute the same (or a different) amount on a voluntary basis
  - iii. 20 agencies, big and small, contribute as in point ii on a rotating basis according to an agreed calendar

23) A waiver could be applied to agencies that provide tools or support for specific projects valued that can be established for instance at more than 50,000USD/year (see Table 4).

24) Agencies which made no financial (or equivalent) contribution would continue to participate in the greenhouse gas inventory and benefit from help desk services for that purpose. They would also benefit from visibility on the UN environmental sustainability website, Greening the Blue, but not from UN system training or other agency-specific advice. Their comments on SUN’s work programme would be welcomed, but they would not have a voice in its official approval.

25) 435,000USD covers only the basic operations of the CSO. Joint fundraising is envisaged for projects on specific matters (for example a new software for the sustainability management inventory to include waste and water data).

### Costs savings from common sustainability office

26) Services provided in common typically lead to economies of scale. The contributions proposed to support the activities of the common office are small compared to the costs each agency would incur should the service not be there. In particular, were UN organisations to implement the strategy for a climate neutral UN on their own, they would have to procure commercially the following services:

**Table 1 : Expected savings from a common sustainability office and the related network**

Core services so far	Approx market cost	Risk of going alone
Greenhouse gas emissions inventory system: credible methodology, reliable calculators	300,000USD	No benchmarking with other agencies, no “One UN” tools.
Help desk services on emissions measurement, emissions reduction and reduction strategies; advice on sustainable tenders; access to a common UN library of information and lessons from the experiences of others; packaging of individual agency	500-1000USD/day in costs for experts multiplied by subject and agency	Time waste in hiring multiple experts, reinventing the wheel, no overarching system-wide approach

<sup>20</sup> As per “Moving towards a Climate Neutral UN” report 2012 edition page 12

efforts into a system-wide strategy		
Total cost for 2-3 training seminars a year on issues such as sustainable procurement, ISO methodologies, emissions reduction, energy, water or waste management. Cost based on UNEP previous SP training sessions expenditure.	At least 10-20,000USD	No UN-wide learning, methodology proliferation, commercial trainers would cost more
Communications platform for internal sustainability - facilitation of on-line discussions, collection and publishing of news stories and case studies, daily conversations on social media; plus agency-specific profiling in an annual UN-wide report on internal sustainability	100,000USD	No system-wide vision or single cohesive brand (Greening the Blue is now widely known inside and outside the UN system), relegation of agency efforts to little-visited agency internet pages, no strength in numbers, undermining of system solidarity

- 27) As is highlighted above, and as has been demonstrated in practice by SUN, the value added of the common sustainability office will be of two kinds.
- a) One is the increased efficiencies and cost savings through the provision of services that would otherwise be more expensive.
  - b) The other is the ongoing sharing of experiences with similar organisations, the common reporting, the visibility afforded to excellence (whether for small or large agencies) on a common public platform, and the positive synergies and project partnerships that come from functioning as a cohesive “One UN” operation.

## Conclusions

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**Table 2 : Expected costs for the SUN facility after 2013**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost USD per year</b>	<b>Source of funds</b>
<u>Help desk services</u> on emissions reductions and SMS, eg, help with sustainable tenders, advice on measures to take at facilities level; development of strategies and policies	160,000	
<u>2-3 free (collective) training seminars</u> a year on various issues, eg, sustainable procurement, ISO, energy, water or waste strategies, CSR communications	25,000	
<u>Assistance with inventories</u> (GHG; but in future also water and waste)	60,000	
Visibility through <u>Greening the Blue</u> (website maintenance and software updates) and <u>knowledge management</u> (eg, discussion blogs, collection of case studies, animations, facilitation of on-line discussions)	160,000	
<u>UN sustainability report</u> (drafting, lay out and publication)	30,000	
SUN staff post 2013: 2 staff	500,000approx	UNEP
Office costs (computers, rent, maintenance, stationery, communications, travel)	70,000 approx	UNEP
<b><i>Total secured</i></b>	<b><i>570,000</i></b>	<b><i>UNEP</i></b>
<b><i>Total unsecured</i></b>	<b><i>435,000</i></b>	
<b><i>Grand total</i></b>	<b><i>995,000</i></b>	

**Table 3 : Sustainable UN facility funding (staff, projects, travel) 2008-2013 and sources**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Cost USD</b>	<b>Source</b>
2008-2012	4,108,784	Norway
2009-2012	1,194,652	Mixed donors
2010-2011	944,164 <sup>21</sup>	UNEP
2012	19,520	Switzerland
2013 to come		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 967,120</b>	

<sup>21</sup> SUN plus half UN sustainability advisor in 2012-2013

**Table 4 : In-kind support from agencies for work of Sustainable UN facility from 2008 to June 2012**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Estimated cost USD since 2008</b>	<b>Source of in kind support</b>
UN greenhouse gas inventory (estimate based on commercial cost of similar calculator & yearly maintenance)	300,000	UN DFS
ICAO calculator	290,000	ICAO
UN sustainability training	50,000	UNDP
Sustainable events guide – give your large event a small footprint	50,000	UNON
<b>Total</b>	<b>690,000</b>	

## **DRAFT Statement of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination**

### **Sustainability Management in the United Nations**

**PREAMBLE:** *to be drafted* - will include reference the UN framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability, existing positive efforts, the Climate neutral strategy and the Rio call from member states, efficiencies, cost effectiveness, etc.

#### **CORE DECISION:**

We, the Heads of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, hereby commit to the development and implementation of sustainability management systems in each of our organizations, through a gradual and flexible process as described in the ‘Strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system’ approved by senior officials of the Environment Management Group (EMG) in September 2011 (attached).

In particular, by the beginning of 2014, building on existing efforts for the measurement and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions under the strategy for a Climate Neutral UN (CEB/2007/2), we will:

- a) Design agency-specific strategies to measure and reduce waste production and water consumption, complementing existing strategies for the measurement and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and including measures to increase staff awareness of their role in this process
- b) Implement regular monitoring of progress in the reduction of waste production and water consumption, and incorporate with existing monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions in an annual UN-wide report
- c) Strengthen UN organizations’ internal capacity to reach these goals through allocating the necessary human resources towards the continuous improvement of environmental sustainability management.

We make this commitment for our headquarters and United Nations centres with a view to broadening our environmental sustainability efforts beyond emissions reduction to include other key environmental impacts from our facilities operations and travel.

In addition, we request the EMG and Sustainable United Nations facility (SUN) to continue their work of coordination, technical support and reporting, noting the related associated system-wide benefits of efficiencies, knowledge-sharing and centralized evaluation and accountability. We request SUN to report to the HLCM through the EMG on collective achievements and forward planning.

Recognising that enhanced efficiencies in individual organisations' sustainability management efforts that can be realised only through a collaborative approach, we further agree to contribute to the cost recovery of the services provided by the Sustainable United Nations facility, as described in the "Proposal for a UN common sustainability office with system-wide ownership" (attachment Nr xxx).

## PEER REVIEWING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE OF MEMBERS OF THE UN EMG

### A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF OPTIONS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of Senior Officials of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) (New York, 19 September 2011), requested the EMG Secretariat ‘to prepare an options paper on an approach to peer review the environment portfolio and management procedures among Members for the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials meeting of the EMG’. The present paper responds to this request, and presents the concept without detailing the program.

#### *Peer reviews as an important tool for international co-operation and progress*

Peer reviews have proven to be an important tool for international co-operation and progress, over the last few decades and in a variety of policy fields, including environmental policies. While this instrument is used in several intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the IMF country surveillance mechanism, the WTO trade policy review mechanism, the EU reviews for national labor market and social inclusion policies, the UN ECE environmental reviews), it is most commonly associated with the OECD experience. The OECD has used peer reviews over several decades and it conducts systematic peer review programs covering all its member countries and a number of others (such as BRICS), for economic, environment, energy<sup>22</sup>, aid<sup>23</sup> policies. This instrument has also been used by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) since 2004 (Annex 1). The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) of the African Union has covered 14 countries since 2006.

These peer review processes rely on mutual trust among peers and confidence in the peer review process. They contribute to enhanced individual and collective performance of participating entities. Review reports include factual evidence, independent assessment and non-binding recommendations and are approved by the peer review body.

#### *Options for a program to peer review the environmental profile of UN EMG members*

The paper identifies four options to choose from, bringing together: i) two options for the substantive content of individual reviews (i.e. ‘corporate environmental management’ applying to facilities and operations of Members of the EMG, or ‘corporate environmental and social sustainability’ applying to strategies and plans, programs and projects, facilities and operations of Members), as well as ii) two options for the aggregated program of reviews (i.e. a ‘gradual’ option with a pilot phase, or a ‘fast track’ option with a more rapid start).

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<sup>22</sup> OECD-IEA.

<sup>23</sup> For donor countries.

The paper recognizes that the UN entities have engaged in a range of activities (e.g. indicators, objectives, guidelines, safeguards, frameworks, strategies, actions), which together provide a basis for conducting peer reviews. They also provide an asset for individual and collective progress along the sequence intentions-actions-results towards ultimately achieving objectives . The paper further establishes that the tool can easily be adapted to peer review the environmental management of Members of the EMG (relating to operations and facilities), but less so at this stage to peer review the environmental and social sustainability of Members (relating to strategies and plans, programs and projects, as well as facilities and operations).

The paper compares these options against a number of criteria, and presents the argument of favoring a focus on corporate environmental management. It leaves the choice open between a gradual option (A1) and a fast track option (A2). This choice may take into account the availability of resources, the benefits generated, the willingness of EMG members to volunteer to be reviewed; the degree of confidence in drawing for UN entities from the experience of companies or countries with environmental management.

### *Significant and multiple benefits*

The paper considers that, based on the accumulated international experience so far, the proposed peer review mechanism of the environmental profiles of UN EMG members, is a resource efficient tool to provide voluntary participants with non-obligatory recommendations and sharing of best practices.

It also considers that, the proposed peer review mechanism will provide significant and multiple benefits for the UN as a whole and its individual entities. These benefits include transparency and accountability, consistency and coherence, credibility and exemplarity. The proposed peer review mechanism is further seen as most valuable in promoting effectiveness (towards assigned environmental, social, and economic sustainability objectives) and resource efficiency in achieving these objectives (including cost-savings which are simply ‘good business’). Overall, the proposed peer review mechanism is a major tool to foster improved performance for individual entities and the UN as a whole..

This proposed peer review mechanism is also a way to strengthen the UN leadership role and the UN support to its Member States in furthering the global sustainability agenda. This is in line with the Rio+20 Summit outcomes and the UN Secretary General determination to have the UN lead by example and maintain sustainability as top priority.