



# UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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

联合国环境规划署



<b>21<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Management Group Technical Segment</b> 9 September 2015 (3-5pm GVA time) <b>by video-audio conference</b> 21 September 2015 (9am-12pm NY time ) <b>in-person meeting</b> in New York ( Venue to be confirmed)	EMG/SOM.21/04 1 September 2015 Distribution: EMG members
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## Strategic Directions for the EMG and its future work

### Note by the Chair

#### *Introduction*

The Senior Officials, under agenda item 3, are invited to engage in a strategic and forward looking discussion to provide their perspectives on enhancing UN system-wide coordination and coherence on the environment. This discussion will take place in the context of the historic launch of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the increased expectation of more coherence and enhanced coordination from the UN system, as expressed in the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, the first meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), and the outcome document of the September 2015 Sustainable Development Summit.

The increased focus on environmental issues in the UN system has been significant, reflecting both the rising importance assigned to these issues by Member States and the public at large, as well as the growing competence and capacity of the system in environmental matters—many agencies now have strategic approaches on the environment as part of their overall strategic and programmatic frameworks. However, ensuring the fully effective implementation of these strategies and their alignment with the SDGs requires greater coherence and better coordination among the various UN entities involved.

The meeting of the Senior Officials marks as well the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EMG, which was established by the UN General Assembly in 1999 with the stated purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide interagency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements. This year's deliberations of the Senior Officials will therefore be a timely opportunity to consider the adequacy of the EMG's Terms of Reference and give direction on its future focus, priorities and modalities of work, so as to ensure it fits the purpose of contributing effectively to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the achievement of the SDGs.

In their deliberations, the Senior Officials may consider the progress reports by the EMG's Issue Management Groups and Consultative Processes, most notably, the Consultative Process on the System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment, and the EMG Task Team on Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

### ***Thematic panel discussions***

In light of the above, it is proposed that the Senior Officials provide their perspective and visions on :

- I. The follow up of the environmental dimensions of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda and the value of coherence and coordination, including through a System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment;
- II. The potential role of the EMG and maximizing its effectiveness in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

To facilitate addressing these issues with maximal engagement of all Senior Officials in an interactive and open manner, two panel discussions are envisaged over the following themes:

#### **Panel I: Responding to the Environmental sustainability dimensions of the SDGs and supporting their effective implementation.**

Panelists: UNEP, BRS (tbc) and UNDP (tbc)

Moderator: Elliott Harris

The senior officials are invited to address the following questions in this panel discussion:

- 1) What are the main implementation challenges associated with responding to the Environmental Sustainability dimensions?
- 2) How do we most effectively handle the nexus issues that cut across institutional boundaries (such as environment and health; environment and land management; environment and energy, etc.)?
- 3) How do we contribute to deepening and enhancing the effectiveness of the integrated approach to policy formulation and implementation?

#### **Panel II: Contribution of a System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment and ways of maximizing the EMG effectiveness in supporting the post 2015 development agenda and the SDGs.**

Panelists: UNECE (tbc) , HABITAT (tbc) and WMO (tbc)

Moderator: Elliott Harris

a) A System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment

- 1) What has been done or needs to be done in each agency to align their existing environmental-related strategies with the SDGs? Has this been done or undertaken as part of an overall alignment of the agency's strategy, or an exercise specifically related to the environmental component of the SDGs?
- 2) How would the agencies make sure that their SDGs strategies are informed by the already established goals and targets under the MEAs?

b) Role and contribution of the EMG in the follow up of the post-2015 development agenda and ways of maximizing its effectiveness

- 1) Would the response of the UN system to the environmental dimension of the sustainable development agenda benefit from enhanced coordination among the agencies active in these areas, and if so, what form should such enhanced coordination take?
- 2) What are potential and existing substantive environmental areas that need coordination and for which the EMG could make an effective contribution, taking into account the environmental sustainability dimensions of the post-2015 sustainable development context?
- 3) How can the EMG most effectively serves its UN Members, and contribute to the work of their respective governing bodies, particularly to UNEA?
- 4) In what areas should the EMG have an institutional role in the collective efforts to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and how can that role best be defined and realized?