



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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Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 21st Senior Officials Meeting

06 May 2015

By video-audio conference

from 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. Geneva time.

EMG SOM21/mid-term

08 June 2015

Distribution: EMG

members

Report of the Meeting

I. Summary of proceedings

1. The second mid-term technical segment meeting of the senior officials of the Environment Management Group (EMG) was held by video-audio conference on 6 May 2015. The meeting was organized in preparation of the 21st Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), with the purpose to provide an update on the progress made by the EMG since SOM20, prepare for the 21st meeting of the SOM and initiate a discussion on strategic and possible future issues for consideration and inclusion in the EMG 2016-2017 Programme of Work.

2. The meeting considered a provisional agenda which consisted of two main items (Annex I); (a) a progress report presentation by the lead agencies and the EMG Secretariat on the on-going work and future focus of the EMG Issue Management Groups and (b) preparations for the 21st SOM including a consideration of options for arranging the meeting(s) of the technical segment a deliberation of strategic issues that would benefit from a high level discussion during the senior segment.

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of 19 member agencies (Annex II). The working and information documents of the meeting are available on the EMG website: www.unemg.org.

II. Considerations and Conclusions

A. Overview of progress made by the EMG Issue Management Groups and Consultative Processes and their future focus

1. The IMG on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes

4. On behalf of the EMG Secretariat, Elliot Harris summarised the progress made with reference to the ToR of the IMG on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes. The IMG has met three times since the last SOM, with a focus on the draft Synthesis Report analysing the results. Mr. Harris informed that a final version of the Synthesis Report will be available in time for the SOM, and will be presented through an intervention, a side event and a possible joint statement at the SAICM ICCM4. He further explained, that the IMG has yet to discuss whether there is a need to continue the IMG into 2016, to follow up on chemicals and waste management in

the context of the post 2015 development agenda and mainstreaming/integration of chemicals across the broad range of actors in the UN system.

5. In response to the report, UNDP stated that it endorses the proposed next steps, specifically with reference to discussing a possible continuation of the IMG in close cooperation with the IOMC and secondly with regard to further work by the IMG on composite indices and the integration of chemicals across the SDGs.

2. Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system

6. Ms. Michaela Pfeiffer, WHO, briefed the technical segment on the progress made within the Consultative Process on ESS, with a focus on the piloting of the ESS Framework and the related Interim Guide. Ms. Pfeiffer informed that the Framework is being piloted in 8 agencies across the UN system, a process which was kicked off during an inception meeting hosted by WHO in March 2015. Preliminary results of the pilots will be presented to the senior officials in September. Recommendations for further work of the Consultative Process are yet to be discussed by the its Drafting Group.

7. Mr. Elliot Harris described the degree of enthusiasm for the pilot shown during the inception meeting and stressed that the pilot team will keep the EMG focal points informed of the process as it proceeds. He thanked Ms. Pfeiffer and other members of the Drafting Group for their efforts in promoting this work and highlighted the linkages with the Sustainable Development agenda and the discussion of UN's fitness for purpose.

8. UNDP seconded Mr. Harris and expressed appreciation for the progress made since SOM20 and the number agencies participating in the pilot.

9. UNDESA voiced its support for the work done and reported that it has given prominence to the work of the consultative process in the Secretary-General's reports on mainstreaming sustainable development in the UN system, and is keen to continue doing so. Furthermore, the importance of linking this work with other ongoing processes and communities that are working on similar topics to avoid silos, was stressed.

10. It was suggested that a side event of the ESS process could be arranged in connection with the meeting of the High Level Political Forum, to update and promote what has been done so far to enhance environmental and social sustainability in the UN system. Another possibility would be to hold a side event in connection with the UN General Assembly in September. The Framework could also be presented at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Network to raise awareness.

11. WHO supported taking the opportunity to promote the Framework as a way to stimulate discussion on what implementing it could imply.

14. The meeting discussed the SOM20 decision requesting the Consultative Process to make recommendations to the next EMG senior officials meeting on steps to enhance resilience and business continuity in the face of shocks in the UN system, and whether an EMG input in this area and at this point in time would add value. The CEB Secretariat informed that HLCM had approved in October 2014 the UN system organizational resilience management system, its associated performance indicators and the supporting maintenance and review regime. It was recommended that EMG consult with HLCM to make sure that the two processes were linked. UNDP suggested to continue following the issue not to give it priority over other tasks. It was stated that a lesson

learned in this regard is to make sure that issues are raised in advance of the SOM through the technical segment in order for SOM to make well informed and timely decisions. WMO expressed interest in taking a more active part in this exercise after the World Meteorological Congress in June 2015.

15. The technical segment decided not to pursue the issue of “enhancing resilience and business continuity in the face of shocks in the UN system” as a priority at this point in time.

3. Consultative Process on UN System Wide Strategies on the Environment

16. The technical segment was briefed on the progress made on the preparations of a UN System-Wide Strategy(ies) (SWS) on the Environment by the EMG Secretariat. An overview of mandates and existing strategies in the field of environment has been prepared by UNEP to support the process, and a system wide high level environmental vision fully consistent with the SDGs, that could guide the work of the UN system is being drafted. It was stressed that the SWS is not a strategy that agencies would need to adopt, but rather intended to serve as an umbrella framework that will help ensure that the UN system is consistent in its environmental work, highlighting potential areas for strengthened cooperation. The consultative process is scheduled to meet in the end of May to agree on the next steps.

17. DFS indicated interest in joining the consultative process and requested to be included in the mailing list.

18. UNDESA informed that it had not been able to contribute to the inventory of mandates and strategies due to time constraints in relation to providing a meaningful input. DESA added that the format and structure of the overview is rather narrow and insufficient to accommodate all ranges of environmental activities and serve as a good baseline for the next steps.

19. UNDP, supported by UNECE, appreciated the progress made but shared the challenges described by DESA. In responding to this concern, the EMG Secretariat explained that the overview was not intended to be fully comprehensive, but rather serve as an overall indicator of whether the main elements compared to the high level environmental vision, are covered or not. If the overview lacks an essential perspective of ongoing environmental work, this can still be flagged when the final version of the overview is shared with the consultative process.

20. WMO shared the concerns expressed with regard to the overview and requested that attention be paid to the format of the analysis and the way it is presented to better match its purpose. Furthermore, WMO saw a need in escalating the process considering the work remaining in order to be ready in time for the SOM.

21. It was concluded that the issues raised will be discussed by the consultative process at its next meeting.

4. Task Team on Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda

22. The EMG heard an update on the progress made by the Task Team on Maximizing EMG’s Effectiveness by Mr. Achim Halpaap, UNITAR. Mr. Halpaap described the process by which views on the EMG’s work, modalities and mandate had been sought, and informed that a report summarizing insights emerging from the analysis of the interviews with agencies, will be made

available for comments and reactions in advance of the next meeting of the Task Team in mid-May. The report will make no attributes to the agencies that participated in the interviews and will be shared with the Task Team as a whole, not only with those interviewed. Furthermore, he suggested that the second part of the Task Team's mandate that deals with a system wide input to the work on the SDGs, would focus on how the UN system can support Member States in mapping how already agreed environmental goals and targets to which the countries are committed, support the implementation of the SDGs alike.

23. UNDESA stressed the importance of directing any effort towards the implementation of the SDGs rather than trying to analyze the adequacy of the environmental dimension at this stage in the negotiations.

24. UNDP supported a focus on implementation and suggested in this regard, that the Task Team keeps in mind the work of the UNDG.

25. The technical segment decided to recommend that the Task Team's ToR is amended to reflect a focus on implementation with regard to its work on SDGs

5. The IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the United Nations System

26. The technical segment was briefed on the progress of the IMG by Ms. Isabella Marras of the Sustainable UN Initiative (SUN). The meeting was reminded of the Secretary-General's call to the UN system to commit to climate neutrality by 2020, a call to which the IMG has responded by producing a roadmap for how climate neutrality can be reached. The next Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN report will be published in connection with the UNFCCC COP in December 2015. The technical segment was further informed that four agencies/offices have been selected to pilot the introduction of an Environment Management System (EMS) in partnership with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

27. UNFCCC expressed appreciation of the progress made and stressed that climate neutrality is to be reached by 2020 at the latest, preferable earlier. UNFCCC confirmed its willingness to support SUN with the planning and modalities of the report release during the COP. The message of the planned press release should be encouraging, taking into consideration those agencies that face challenges in becoming climate neutral such as the need for an official decision by their governing body. SUN informed that no side event is planned during the COP.

28. The CEB Secretariat confirmed that CEB, at its first regular session for 2015, had endorsed the HLCM report, including the system-wide roadmap for UN climate neutrality by 2020.

29. UNECE requested guidance on how to prepare for the data provision for the next footprint report in order to facilitate internal coordination.

6. Peer-Reviewing of environmental management profiles of United Nations organizations

30. The EMG Secretariat briefed the technical segment about the progress made, reporting that the second phase of the peer reviews so far include discussions only with a small number of

agencies. IMF will be peer reviewed during the summer 2015 and UNOPS has indicated interest in being peer reviewed at a later stage.

31. UNFCCC confirmed its commitment to be peer reviewed during 2016.

32. UNDP raised the issue of developing guidelines and documenting best practices as a possible action item in addition to simply suggesting that the peer review reports that come out of the process are shared.

33. It was agreed that a clear decision on the sharing of the existing reports would be worked on as part of the suggested items to SOM.

B. Discussion on strategic issues for consideration of the 21th meeting of the EMG senior officials and possible future issues

34. The Chair informed that the EMG Secretariat had received no suggestions for new issues to be included in the EMG's work programme for the coming operational year, in response to the request for such made in connection with the meeting invitation. Instead of focusing on new issues, the technical segment was asked consider which strategic issues that would benefit from a high level discussion at the next senior segment of the SOM and to consider how a high level participation in the SOM can be ensured.

35. Chair suggested that by focusing the senior segment discussion on one or two issues of high strategic importance, high level participation could be made more compelling. He continued by proposing that two such issues could be the follow up of environmental sustainability in the UN system and secondly, maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda.

36. Furthermore, the Chair proposed a new modality for the SOM, in which the technical segment would meet on a separate day in advance of the senior officials to allow agencies to coordinate internally and avoid rushed decisions or spontaneous proposals by the senior segment. By concentrating the larger part of the running issues to the technical segment, the senior segment could focus mainly on strategic discussions of system-wide importance, making it more interesting for heads of agencies to attend in person. The technical segment could take certain decisions on behalf of the senior segment, in order to dedicate the senior segment to strategic decisions as much as possible.

37. The technical segment supported the Chair's proposal for a new modality for SOM. UNITAR added that the interviews with agencies on the topic of maximizing EMG's effectiveness also had suggested that the technical segment could have an additional preparatory meeting a few weeks before the SOM to give the focal points time to brief and coordinate internally. This would further strengthen the decision making capacity of the technical segment on behalf of the senior segment, at the meeting of the technical segment in connection with the SOM.

38. The meeting then discussed which two issues of strategic importance that should be the focus of SOM21. It was proposed that the overarching theme for this year's discussion could be how the EMG could enhance its fitness for purpose in the context of the post 2015 development agenda, a theme which brings together the EMG's work on the SWS and its effectiveness study and allows a forward looking discussion.

39. UNITAR, supported by DESA and UNEP, suggested that the Emerging Insights report that is prepared as part of the study on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG could be scanned for recommendations that would require senior engagement.

40. WMO cautioned against mixing the two proposed working streams together, risking confusion among the senior officials.

41. UNDP agreed that both issues (SWS and EMG effectiveness) need separate decisions, however, the discussion of the two themes should be prepared in an interlinked fashion.

42. DFS said that a discussion on SWS is clearly compelling, however, it would be challenging to generate its director's interest in the theme of maximizing EMG's effectiveness, as this is seen as something outside of the DFS work. A field operations angle to the discussion could help to generate interest.

43. UNITAR suggested that executives could be further encouraged to attend the senior segment, if they were given formal roles as panel members, co-moderators etc. during the meeting.

Agreed Action

44. The technical segment agreed that its meeting should be held on a different day than the senior segment meeting, and that the technical segment would convene an additional time two weeks prior to the SOM. All routine issues will be dealt with by the technical segment during its two preparatory meetings.

45. The technical segment agreed that the focus of the senior segment discussion during SOM21 should be on the system-wide strategy on the environment (SWS) and maximizing EMG's effectiveness from the perspective of fitness for purpose in the context of the post 2015 development agenda. A letter from the EMG Chair will be sent to the EMG members, inviting them to formally share their views on the two topics at the SOM.

46. The EMG Secretariat will prepare the SOM21 agenda that encourages clear and separate decisions while recognizing the linkages between the two focus themes.

C. Date and Venue of the 21st Senior Officials' Meeting

47. The 21st Senior Official's Meeting will be held in the margins of the 70th General Assembly in New York. Agencies were requested to inform the EMG Secretariat of the schedules of their executives in order to select a suitable date for the SOM, and further to encourage their executives to attend the senior segment in person, considering the new modality.

48. Information about the date and location will be communicated to the EMG members by the EMG Secretariat as soon as possible.

D. Any other business

49. No other issues were discussed.

E. Closure of the meeting

50. The chair closed the meeting at 5.00pm GVA time.

Annex 1



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from 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. Geneva time.

EMG SOM21/mid-

term/Rev1

30 April 2015

**Distribution: EMG
members**

Provisional agenda

3:00–3:05 p.m.

Item 1: Opening remarks by the Elliott Harris, Director of the EMG Secretariat

item 2: Adoption of the agenda

3:05–4:30 p.m.

Item 3: Overview of progress made by the EMG Issue Management Groups and Consultative Processes and their future focus including:

- (a) The IMG on the sound management of chemicals (led by EMG Secretariat)
- (b) Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system; (led by WHO)
- (c) Consultative Process on UN System Wide Strategies on the Environment (by the EMG Secretariat)
- (d) Task Team on Maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the post 2015 development agenda (led by UNITAR)
- (e) The IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management; (led by SUN)
- (f) Peer-Reviews of environmental management of United Nations organizations; (led by the EMG Secretariat)

4.30-5:00 p.m.

Item 4: Discussion on strategic issues for consideration of the 21th meeting of the EMG senior officials and possible future issues

Item 5: Date and venue of the 21st EMG senior officials meeting

Item 6: Any other business

Annex 2



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List of Participants for the Mid-Term Technical Segment Meeting on 06.05.2015

	Name	Title	Organisation
1	Heidi Huusko	Programme Manager, Environment and Climate	UN Global Compact
2	Federica Pietracci,	Senior Economic Affairs Officer	UNDESA
3	Brenda Behan	Senior Regional Engineering Officer	WFP
4	Monika G MacDevette	Deputy Director Division of Early Warning & Assessment	UNEP
5	William Abi Abdala	Environmental Focal Point Division of Management & Administration	UN WOMEN
6	Maria Teresa Pisani	Economic Affairs Officer	UNECE
7	Christian Blondin	Director Cabinet of the Secretary-General and External Relations Department	WMO
8	Michiko Okumura	Junior Programme Officer	UNEP
9	Marina Maiero	Technical Officer, Health and Climate Change Team	WHO
10	Michaela Pfeiffer	Technical Officer , Department of Public Health and Environment	WHO

11	Rodel Urmatan	Sustainable Project Management Practice Group	UNOPS
12	Daniele Violetti	Chief of Staff, Executive Direction and Management	UNFCCC
13	Neil Pratt	Senior Environmental Affairs Officer	CBD Secretariat
14	Cecilia Lopez y Royo	Partnerships Advisor & Liaison officer	UNOPS
15	Achim Halpaap	Senior Manager, Environment and Green Development	UNITAR
16	Daniela Morra	Climate, energy and tenure division Natural Resources Department	FAO
17	Mohammed Yunus		UNECA
18	Timothy Scott	Policy Advisor Environment and Natural Capital Sustainable Development Cluster	UNDP
19	Sungmin Patricia Kim	Environmental Officer	DFS
20	David Osborn	Director IAEA Environment Laboratories	IAEA
21	Daniel Ramos	Legal Officer	WTO
22	Carolina Ferreira e Silva	Administrator - Environmental Strategy	ILO