



**Report of the first meeting of the UNEP/UNDP Co-chaired Issue Management Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (IGSP),
8 November 2004, Geneva, Switzerland**

A. Opening of the meeting

1. The first meeting of the Issue Management Group (IMG) was held back to back with the 9th meeting of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) on 8 November 2004 in Geneva. The UNEP and UNDP co-chairs, Mr. Adnan Amin and Ms. Bo Lim, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.
2. In his introductory remarks the UNEP representative underlined that the objectives of the meeting were to inform the IMG members on the status of the IGSP process, review the contribution of the EMG to the Intergovernmental Process, including the input provided by the EMG to the Second IGSP, and on that basis develop a UN system consolidated input to the third IGSP meeting which would be held in Bali, Indonesia from 2 to 4 December 2004. He hoped that the IMG could agree on the outline/structure of the consolidated input, which would be further developed by the EMG Secretariat and in close consultation with the IMG members through electronic means.
3. The list of participants is contained in annex 1 to the present report.

B. Adoption of the Agenda

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda
 2. Background and the status of the IGSP Process & the contribution of the EMG
 3. Discussion on the UN system consolidated input into the third meeting of the IGSP (Bali, Indonesia, 1-4 December 2004)

4. Date and agenda for the next meeting
5. Any other business
6. Closure of the meeting

C. Background and the status of the IGSP Process

5. The representative of UNEP informed the Group on the background of the IGSP process and the results of the first and the second IGSP meetings (held in NY on 25 June 2004 and in Nairobi on 2-4 September 2004).

6. He underlined that the IGSP was one of the six areas originating from the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum's (GC/GMEF) decision on International Environmental Governance (IEG) adopted in Cartagena, Colombia, in February 2002. Those areas included strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, universal membership of the UNEP Governing Council, enhancing coordination and synergies with MEA's, strengthening the financing of UNEP, establishment of the IGSP, and enhancing coordination within the UN system, including the role of the EMG.

7. The main goal of the IGSP as adopted by the UNEP GC/GMEF in Cartagena was to improve the effectiveness of the UNEP capacity building activities so that it could play a more prominent role particularly in supporting country-level capacity building and training, and the national-level coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development. The GC/GMEF underscored the importance of enhanced cooperation between UNEP and UNDP in implementation of the IGSP, particularly in country level capacity delivery. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) also affirmed the role of UNEP in the area of promoting capacity building.

8. He then briefed the Group on the process which led to the establishment of the IGSP and particularly the outcomes of the first and second meetings of the IGSP which were held on 25 June 2004 in NY and from 2 to 4 September 2004 in Nairobi.

9. The 22nd session of the GC/GMEF in February 2002 requested UNEP's Executive Director, in consultation with UNDP and the GEF, to prepare a draft strategic plan for presentation to the eighth Special Session of the Governing Council. The eighth Special Session, which took place in March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea, considered the proposed elements of the Plan and decided to establish the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group with the mandate to prepare an IGSP for consideration at the 23rd session of the Governing Council in February 2005. The decision emphasized the need to receive inputs from relevant organizations and stakeholders, in particular the GEF and UNDP, as well as international financial organizations, UN agencies and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

10. The first IGSP meeting mainly discussed the procedural issues and engaged in the initial exchange of views, as an input to the “chair’s building block’s paper” for the preparation of a draft strategic plan at the second and third IGSP meetings.

11. The second IGSP meeting engaged in negotiating the Strategic Plan’s building blocks proposed by the chair which resulted in a compilation text that reflected proposals by governments. The chairman also prepared his own findings of the meeting’s discussion as an optional document for the consideration of the IGSP at its third meeting. Issues emphasized by governments at the second IGSP meeting included:

- Different levels of implementation (national, regional, global)
- South-South cooperation
- Information sharing, monitoring and reporting on implementation (emphasized mostly by donor countries)
- Use of existing institutional mechanisms needed for implementation of the Plan
- Role of the regional offices
- Coherence in the UN system in relation to implementation of the seventh Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on environmental sustainability, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)
- Country ownership and tailoring capacity building and technology support to countries’ needs

12. He underlined that the IGSP process was participatory and transparent as it had incorporated the views of experts and civil society, as well as the EMG in its deliberations. Meetings had also been held at different regional and sub-regional levels (Latin America, Asia Pacific, and the Group of Arab countries) to ensure that the regional priorities were solicited. Those priorities, if better understood, would ultimately determine the picture of the plan.

13. He then highlighted the IGSP’s expectations from the UN system and called it the core issue for the Group’s discussion. Elaborating on the diverse views of governments regarding the scope of the Plan, he referred to the EU position, which supported a Plan with a UN system wide characteristic, as opposed to the US position, which considered the Plan to improve UNEP’s capacity building strength only.

14. In that regard he emphasized that the plan could not be prescriptive for other UN agencies, given their specific mandates and independent regulatory frameworks. Nonetheless, and as far as the UNEP mandate was concerned, the plan could provide a platform for enhancing synergy and cooperation through, inter alia, further exchange of information and experiences.

D. Discussion on the UN system consolidated input to the third meeting of the IGSP

15. After this briefing, the Co-Chairs suggested that the IMG at its present meeting focus on the UN system wide aspects of the Strategic Plan, including the role of the EMG and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

16. On the role of the EMG, the representative of UNEP mentioned that the results of the two surveys on environmental capacity building in the areas of biodiversity and chemical management would be formally presented to the third IGSP meeting in Bali. The task managers (UNITAR and UNEP/WCMC) of the two surveys would inform the Bali meeting on the results of the studies.

17. He observed that the UNDG was supposed to improve the effectiveness of UN development work at the country level and should contribute to mainstreaming environmental issues into country level frameworks such as UNDAF and PRSP's.

18. The Co-chairs informed the meeting that the UNEP-UNDP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which was ready to be signed, would be the framework for future joint cooperation between the two organizations, particularly at the country level and based on the respective mandates of the two organizations.

19. The IMG members were then invited to provide their views on the preparation of the consolidated UN system input to the IGSP and the role of the EMG.

20. The Representative of the World Meteorological Organization mentioned that his organization had closely followed the IGSP process. He stressed that the definition of capacity building in the area of environment might differ from one organization to another. Therefore it should be defined what is meant by capacity building, particularly from the point of view of implementation. He underlined that the role of the EMG could be first to enhance information sharing on which basis it could play a role in identifying areas of joint cooperation among agencies. He observed that system wide implementation of the Strategic Plan would be a challenge given the different mandates and legislative bodies of UN organizations.

21. The Representative of the UNFCCC expressed that if the Plan worked well his Secretariat would certainly be willing to be involved and benefit from it. He highlighted that the IMG's input to the IGSP should mainly reflect the existence of the cooperation between UN agencies and MEA's and the importance of further interagency cooperation, particularly between UNEP and UNDP. He observed that on the basis of the MOU, UNEP and UNDP should clarify the areas and means of joint cooperation on the basis of which the MEA's could define their role and provide added value. The idea of information exchange through establishing a clearinghouse in the context of the EMG was interesting but not realistic given the diverse interests of the agencies in information exchange and the level of transparency in providing the information.

22. The Representative of UNDP reiterated that capacity building could not be defined in a similar way for all agencies, given their different mandates and that neither of the two organizations (UNEP –UNDP) wanted to be prescriptive for others. She said that the focus of the meeting was on the interagency coordination at the global level and not at the country level and that the national processes should be respected.

23. She underlined the importance of establishing mechanisms such as a clearinghouse for information sharing, as the existing information needed to be

distilled and managed to meet the needs of the organizations. She confirmed that the UNEP-UNDP MOU was ready for signature and that the two organizations would do their best to work together. She suggested that the EMG could play a role in addressing the environmental component of the UNDG issues.

24. The representative of UNEP reiterated that the IGSP would be helpful in identifying the gaps and the areas of cooperation, without being prescriptive for other UN agencies, and that the EMG could act as a clearinghouse or market place which facilitates interaction and information exchange between governments, donors and the UN agencies.

25. He underlined that the UNDG's role was more in mainstreaming environmental concerns at the country level and as such the nature of its issues were different from those of the EMG. On the role of the EMG, he agreed with UNDP representative that the EMG could consider environmental components of the MDG's in its future work and in the context of the preparation for the next UNEP GC/GMEF and the mid term review of the implementation of the MDG's.

26. The representative of UNITAR stressed that the environmental capacity building per se did not exist, but was made up of sectoral activities in areas such as biodiversity, chemicals, climate change, etc. Each of those areas had their networks and it was through those networks that practical coordination should take place, as shown by the example of the IOMC. Thus a general clearinghouse mechanism at the EMG level was not likely to work. Therefore the EMG could focus on specific environmental sectors and assist in enhancing coordination and information sharing between the concerned organizations and MEA's.

27. The representative of UNEP Chemicals stressed the importance of coordination at the country level. In the recipient countries the coordination of multiple national frameworks was important in order to identify national priorities and objectives and to solicit and use international support more effectively. The donor countries should contribute more coherently to the implementation of internationally agreed goals and priorities. He also highlighted that addressing the financial needs of agencies was a prerequisite for the realization of many capacity building activities, particularly those which required interagency cooperation. He underlined that GEF funds should be further integrated into UNEP programs and activities, particularly in the area of capacity building. Referring to the experiences of the IOMC, he highlighted that identifying common needs and benefits was the determining factor for success of interagency frameworks such as EMG. He suggested that the EMG could consider the MDG's and prepare a study on the cooperation of EMG members in the implementation of those goals.

28. The representative of UNFCCC provided his suggestions on the structure and the content of the Group's statement. The Group should clarify the definition of capacity building at the strategic level. It should inform the intergovernmental Process on the UN agencies' existing cooperation on capacity building at different levels in a positive way. The statement should reflect as well the areas in which the UN system needed more focus and cooperation. Establishing appropriate means, such as a clearinghouse, would require more analytical work and time. The importance of priority setting at the country level should be emphasized as well.

29. The representative of the UNU proposed that the statement should include the UN system success stories of cooperation and plans and needs for future cooperation.

30. The representative of UNEP added that the statement should highlight the importance of national coordination, particularly in the area of needs-assessment and in frameworks such as the GEF National Capacity Building Self Assessment (NCSA), which were crucial in improving coordination of capacity building activities among UN organizations. On financing of the capacity building activities, the issue of aid effectiveness and the role of the UN system should be stressed.

31. The representative of WMO underlined the importance of national coordination and the identification of regional priorities, which could be a basis for assessing the capacity building needs at the country level.

32. On the basis of the above discussion and suggestions, the IMG established a working group to identify the elements of the EMG's statement to the third IGSP meeting. The working group met immediately and provided its proposal to the IMG. The IMG ultimately agreed on the elements of the statement, and decided that the EMG Secretariat would draft an outline and circulate it to the working group for comments. Once additional feedbacks were received the Secretariat would prepare the draft statement and send it to all IMG members for final comments. The paper should be finalized in the third week of November. It would be sent to all EMG members and be submitted to the UNEP Secretariat for advance distribution to the third meeting of the IGSP in Bali.

E. Date and agenda for the next meeting

33. The Group agreed to hold its next meeting back to back with the next meeting of the EMG in the first week of February 2005 in Geneva.

F. Closure of the meeting

34. The Co-chairs thanked the participants for their attendance and their useful contributions and declared the meeting closed.

ANNEX I

List of Participants
Meeting of the UNDP/UNEP Co-Chaired IGSP IMG
08 November 2004

Name	Organization
Bo Lim	UNDP (IGSP IMG Co-Chair)
Adnan Amin	UNEP New York Office (IGSP IMG Co-Chair)
Nelson Sabogal	Basel Convention
Stephen Nash	CITES
Mike Campbell	IAEA
Alexander Ntoko	ITU
Nuria Castells	UNCTAD
Mahenau Agha	UNDP
Levis Kavagi	UNEP
John Whitelaw	UNEP Chemicals
Janos Pasztor	UNFCCC
Neslihan Grasser	UNFPA
Valentine Ndibalema	UNHCR
Achim Halpaap	UNITAR
Craig Boljkovac	UNITAR
Jessica Green	UNU
Yinka Adebayo	WMO
Monika Linn	EMG Secretariat
Hossein Fadaei	EMG Secretariat
Stephanie Hodge	Consultant