

Environment Management Group (EMG)
Informal “brainstorming” meeting
UNDP, New York, 8 May 2007

Summary of outcomes

1. Given the informal nature of the event, it was agreed at the outset that there would be no formal minutes. At the end of the meeting, however, the two co-chairs (Philip Dobie, UNDP and Janos Pasztor, EMG) agreed that they would write up a summary of the outcomes, so that the rest of the EMG – those who could not make it to the New York meeting would also be informed. Also, since the first formal meeting is only expected to take place some time in September or October, it would be important to communicate to the whole EMG the outcomes, to allow the secretariat, and the interested EMG members to proceed with at least the first two issue management projects immediately.
2. The Director of the EMG Secretariat (Janos Pasztor) made a brief introduction (see document in Annex 1) on the approach of the EMG, based on bilateral discussions he had with various EMG members, with some representatives of governments, as well as following consultations with the Chair of the EMG – Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP. There was a very encouraging positive response from the participants to the key ideas presented, in particular on the issue of redirecting the work of the EMG back to its original mandate to enhance inter-agency cooperation through working on issues with concrete, time-bound issue management projects, relying on a lead agency, with clear outcomes and results.
3. Achim Halpaap (UNITAR) provided a very useful progress report on the status, and initial outcomes of the “Stocktaking Exercise”. While thanking the many EMG members who have contributed, he noted also that many have not, which makes it difficult to make a comprehensive analysis. It was useful to hear that the initial analysis of the inputs from EMG members was consistent with the discussions at the 8 May brainstorming meeting. The participants encouraged UNITAR to complete the exercise this year, basing the analysis on the information available (i.e., already contributed, or on information that some EMG members may still send in now).
4. The key outcomes of the meeting were as follows:
 - (i) General agreement amongst the participants on what the EMG should do, what it should not do, and generally how we should go about those – along the lines of the introductory presentation made by the director of the EMG secretariat;
 - (ii) Agreement that in this initial period during 2007 the EMG should focus on the “**greening of the UN**”, or more correctly speaking on “Sustainable Management of UN Operations”. There was also agreement that this broad concept of the Sustainable Management of UN Operations could be broken down to two concrete issue management projects at this stage: one on **Carbon- or Climate-neutrality**, and the other on **Sustainable, or green Procurement**.

- (iii) There was also a third issue that was brought up by a number of participants in the area of **adaptation to climate change**, and in particular looking at how we as the UN system respond collectively to these challenges – especially in view of the fact that the changing climate is having impacts on the already agreed development goals (e.g., MDGs), making it in many cases more difficult to achieve these goals, and thereafter to maintain them.
- (iv) A number of other ideas were also expressed that could be taken on as EMG issues at some stage, including focusing on the next CSD; looking at geosecurity implications of climate change, and of other major environmental issues; sustainable urbanization; development of standards; development of system wide guidance on the environment in support of the UNDG; and consideration of population aspects of EMG issues. It was also suggested that priority issues considered by the EMG could be used as bases for high-level discussions of those issues in the General Assembly.
5. A clear consensus emerged at the meeting that the EMG should focus on the two issue management projects referred to in paragraph 4(ii) above, namely the climate neutrality of the UN (C-neutral) and the sustainable or green procurement in the UN. The EMG could also explore how to implement the interesting idea proposed during the meeting that we would do this also in the UN premises in “one UN” countries.
 6. It was also agreed that the EMG secretariat would discuss further with interested members on how best to formulate an effective issue management project on the third topic of adaptation to climate change (as mentioned in paragraph 4(iii) above), and the relationship to the agreed development goals, with a view to folding this into our work programme later, but not before the 4th quarter of 2007.
 7. There was also willingness by the participants to continue discussions on the other topics, and indeed perhaps other topics that may arise from the work of EMG members, and when they can be formulated as concrete issue management projects, they could be proposed for inclusion in the EMG work-programme – either at the formal meeting later this year, or at any time through correspondence.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Introductory presentation by Janos Pasztor, Director, EMG
Annex 2: List of Participants at the informal meeting