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UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

United Nations Environment Management Group

High-Level Forum of the United Nations Environment Management Group

09:00Hrs, 24 January 2006,
International Environment House 2 (IEH)
7, chemin de Balexert
1219 - Chatelaine
Geneva

Invitation letter to the High-Level Forum of the United Nations Environment Management Group



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة · 联合国环境规划署
 PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
 ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

Our Ref:

Date: 8 November 2005

I wish to bring to your attention the measures that I propose to take to revitalize support arrangements for UN system-wide cooperation and coordination in the field of environment, in response to increasing demand from our Member States and underscored by the Outcome document of the 2005 World Summit.

The UN system is faced with more demand for coordinated approaches, coupled with decreasing resources to expend on such arrangements. The outcome of the 2005 World Summit specifically accorded priority to system-wide coherence and underscored the importance of environmental issues for sustainable development. The Outcome document specifies the need to ensure “more efficient environmental activities in the United Nations system, with enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation... and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building”. In light of this, I believe that it is essential that we have at our disposal an effective venue at which we can discuss and agree in a more productive and cost-effective manner, on common and co-ordinated approaches to the environmental challenges of our time.

In this regard, you will recall that the Environmental Management Group (EMG) was established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide coordination and coherence in the field of environment and human settlements. In resolution 53/242, the General Assembly proposed a comprehensive series of measures designed to enhance coherent action within the United Nations system. The EMG was created to provide a UN response to the emerging environmental and human settlements issues, facilitate joint action in finding solutions, promote interlinkages and information exchange and contribute to synergy and complementarity between the activities of its members and adding value to the existing inter-agency cooperation.

I believe that new and emerging challenges, particularly those outlined in the Outcome document, provide compelling reasons for reinvigorating EMG and refocusing its terms of reference. I am thus asking for your support in revitalizing the EMG to enable it to become a results-oriented mechanism which will allow the UN system to craft more coherent, multi-disciplinary approaches, as well as foster coordinated action on specific environment and human settlement issues.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P.O. BOX 30552, Nairobi, Kenya ♦ Tel: [254 20] 623416/3652/3386 ♦ Fax: [254 20] 21719/614275
 E-Mail: agnes.atsiaya@unep.org

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In order to facilitate this approach, I have recently appointed a new Director for EMG, Mr. Halifa Drammeh, who I have asked to undertake broad consultations to ascertain the perspectives and views of the parties concerned on the way forward for the work of the EMG. He has already visited most of the concerned institutions to gain the views of senior staff on what will be required to rejuvenate EMG and engender a sense of shared ownership among its members.

I had also commissioned an independent evaluation of the work of the EMG over the previous years, to guide us in reviewing its procedures and modalities and finding ways as well as means of strengthening its working arrangements.

I intend to present the results of the ongoing consultations, as well as the findings of the evaluation, to a high-level brainstorming forum to be convened in Geneva towards the latter half of January 2006, to enable us to agree on the way forward and a strategic work plan for the EMG. I accord a high degree of importance to the participation of your organization in this very important forum. It is critical that representation at the forum be at the senior level to ensure collective decision-making and commitments. I intend to chair the forum and give it my full personal attention. I shall soon be transmitting to you the necessary working documents as well as a provisional agenda for the forum for your consideration. In the meantime, I would welcome receiving from you proposals and suggestions you may wish to include in the deliberations at the forum.

Further, in close cooperation with the Government of Switzerland -- host country of the EMG Secretariat, I intend to invite key development cooperation partners, representatives of the Group of 77 and other groups, to a special segment at the forum to discuss their perspectives on the way forward and to enlist their support for and commitment to the strategic work plan of the EMG.

It is my hope that the forum will agree on a strategic work plan for the EMG which will be formally launched during UNEP Governing Council at its 24th Session.

I believe that we all stand to gain from more collaborative and coordinated approaches on environmental issues, particularly in view of the rapidly increasing recognition of their importance throughout international and national policy agendas. I look forward to your early response and to working with you closely to ensure a successful outcome of the forum and the emergence of EMG as an effective system-wide coordination mechanism to which we can all turn.

Yours sincerely,

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director