



**Report of the Environmental Management Group on its Meeting of 3 July 2003  
Geneva, International Environment House**

**A. Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) was held on 3 July 2003 at the International Environment House, Geneva, Switzerland. The Chair of the Group, Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

2. In his opening statement, he referred to developments in international cooperation since the EMG's last meeting, in particular the international environmental governance process (IEG) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which both endorsed the role of the EMG as an instrument to strengthen inter-agency collaboration in the fields of environment and human settlements. He introduced Ms. Monika Linn as the new Head of the EMG Secretariat and Secretary to the EMG. With regard to the future work of the EMG, he suggested to discuss how the group could best contribute to the implementation of the WSSD outcomes, with a focus on the environmental and human settlements aspects of sustainable development. The Group should demonstrate that it is able to forward collective views and recommendations of its members to the relevant intergovernmental bodies, and include consultations with NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders in its work. The EMG should closely coordinate its work programme with the agenda of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

3. In her opening statement, the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, Ms. Anna Tibajuka, expressed her support for the work of the EMG. She emphasized that UN-HABITAT's work is part of the larger environmental agenda, with a focus on 'brown issues' related to human settlements and equipment.

4. The list of participants is contained in the annex to the present report.

## B. Adoption of the Agenda

5. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
  1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
  2. Discussion of the programme of work of the EMG in light of recent developments in international cooperation
  3. Progress report on the work of the IMG on 'Harmonization of information management and reporting for biodiversity-related conventions' by UNEP/WCMC
  4. Date and venue of the next meeting
  5. Other business
  6. Closure of the meeting

## C. Discussion of the programme of work of the EMG in light of recent developments in international cooperation (Agenda item 2)

6. The Secretary to the EMG introduced the discussion paper entitled 'Enhancing collaboration for implementation: A new programme of work for the environmental management group'. She referred to important developments in international cooperation since the last meeting of the EMG, in particular the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which has set a challenging agenda for the implementation of sustainable development during the next decade. The EMG should take these developments into account and focus its work on practical contributions to the implementation of this agenda. It should aim at becoming an instrument for all its members to share their views or concerns on issues of common interest, review progress or identify obstacles, set policy directions, and convey their views and recommendations to intergovernmental forums, like the UNEP Governing Council, the UN-HABITAT Governing Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). In line with the spirit of the Johannesburg Summit, the EMG should involve NGOs, the private sector, scientific organizations and other stakeholders in its work.

7. In terms of thematic issues to be addressed by the EMG in the near future, she suggested for the group to consider how it could best contribute to furthering implementation of the water agenda, bearing in mind that water, sanitation and human settlements will be addressed by next two-year cycle of the CSD and by the next Global

Ministerial Environment Forum in Seoul in spring 2004.

8. Issues to be considered by the EMG in the medium term might include the development by UNEP of an intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building and modalities of strengthening the scientific basis of UNEP's work to address global environmental change.

9. The Chair added that the Group had to define which specific issues on the water agenda it would address and suggested to focus on the linkages between freshwater and oceans (Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities) and regional seas. The Group might furthermore consider taking on some of the follow-up work on production and consumption patterns agreed by the International Expert Meeting on the 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production, which was recently held in Marrakech. He then invited the participants to proceed to an initial exchange of views.

10. The representative of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change complemented the EMG Secretariat on the discussion paper. He welcomed the new approach for the EMG to provide input into the discussions of the CSD as well as the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The EMG should focus on the environmental dimension of issues addressed by the CSD and look at potential gaps in the analysis of these issues. In addition to the suggested themes of water and sustainable consumption and production patterns, the EMG might address questions related to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), law, energy, environmental change and technology transfer. He supported holding an EMG meeting back-to-back with the meeting of the GMEF, and to be proactive in working with civil society groups and the private sector.

11. The representative of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) suggested that reports of the EMG should also be forwarded to the Conferences of Parties of MEAs. The EMG's work programme should allow for new and emerging issues on the international agenda to be taken into account. Modalities of strengthening the scientific basis of all EMG member organizations should be addressed rather than focussing on UNEP's work only.

12. The representative of the Ramsar Convention supported that the EMG address water related issues, with a focus on environmental aspects, such as ecosystems management.

13. The representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stressed the importance of closely coordinating the EMG's work on the water issue with the UN-Water Group. He supported a focus on the environmental dimensions and highlighted the importance of involving civil society organizations and the private sector. He referred to the Ecosystem Conservation Group (ECG) as a mechanism including both civil society and international organizations and sought clarification on its relationship with the EMG.

14. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) observed that there was no UN system-wide coordination mechanism on energy and suggested that the EMG address energy issues in addition to the water issue. The EMG's work should include an overview of organizations' activities in the respective areas. The outcomes of the EMG's work should be reported to the UNEP Governing Council.

15. The Secretary to the EMG, in response to the issues raised, clarified that the EMG was established pursuant to UNGA resolution 53/242 and was not a UNEP body, although its Secretariat is hosted by UNEP. The EMG is supposed to report to the UNEP Governing Council, but should also keep the Conferences of Parties of MEAs and other relevant intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies well informed about its work. She explained that the Secretariat was undertaking consultations with the UN-Water Group to avoid any duplication of work in the area of water.

16. The Chair added that he would welcome a fully independent EMG structure available to service the whole UN system. He thanked the Government of Switzerland for its financial contribution to the costs during the starting-up phase of the EMG Secretariat. With regard to the ECG, he supported its continuation and contribution to the EMG's work in its areas of competence.

17. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) expressed the view that the EMG should rather focus its work on a single issue and avoid a shopping list of issues to be dealt with in parallel. He stressed that the Group's mandate went beyond information sharing and that it should aim at strengthening coordination at all levels, in particular with regard to implementation on the ground.

18. The representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) supported the new approach for the EMG's work. He underlined that the overall focus of the follow-up process to WSSD was on implementation. The EMG should address specific issues related to the environment within the broad areas for action and focus on deliverables in a well-defined time frame. He supported working on specific aspects of water and sustainable consumption and production, and added that there might be other issues to be addressed, e.g. the chemicals agenda.

19. The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reminded participants that the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) had set up working groups on some of the issues mentioned for the work of the EMG, and that the EMG should take developments within the HLCP into account.

20. The representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggested radiation protection as well as ship-scraping and vehicle recycling as additional issues for the EMG's work. He was supported by the representative of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. She added that the EMG was also expected to contribute to strengthening linkages between MEAs. The representative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

expressed interest in working on radiation protection as well as on communication in the event of natural disasters.

21. The representative of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) strongly supported the approach outlined for the EMG. She said that the water agenda was relevant for the inland and coastal/marine programmes of the Convention and also supported work of the EMG on technology transfer.

22. The representative of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) expressed support for the EMG's new direction and suggested that the EMG consider natural disasters as an emerging issue for its work. The representative of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) supported the establishment of an 'implementation matrix', as suggested by WMO.

23. With regard to the Issue Management Group on environmental education, which was established by the EMG in a previous meeting, UNESCO as the lead agency suggested to take recent developments in this important area into account, e.g. the upcoming United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, and offered that UNESCO provide a brief report on these matters at each future EMG meeting.

24. The representative of the World Trade Organization (WTO) expressed support for the work of the EMG and said that WTO would actively contribute in its areas of competence.

25. After this discussion the Group agreed that a substantive paper defining more specifically the EMG's work on water would be prepared by UNEP and circulated to members in due time before discussion at the next EMG meeting. The EMG Secretariat would also explore with UNEP and UNDESA a contribution of the EMG in the area of sustainable consumption and production. Participants were invited to elaborate further on other issues suggested for the EMG's work programme.

#### D. Progress report on the work of the IMG on 'Harmonization of information management and reporting for biodiversity-related conventions' (Agenda item 3)

26. A presentation was made by the representative of UNEP-WCMC, in which he provided a report on progress made to date. Since the last meeting of the EMG bilateral meetings on harmonization issues were held with the secretariats of all global biodiversity-related conventions, several regional agreements, and some international programmes. Harmonization pilot projects coordinated by UNEP had continued in four countries, and were beginning to deliver results. A draft harmonization action plan had been prepared, and UNEP had begun to undertake several of the activities included in the

action plan, and a number of additional supporting actions. A next version of the action plan would be available in a few months and be distributed via the EMG Secretariat. The representative of CITES commended the work of the IMG as a very useful project and proposed as a next step to turn the results into a management tool.

E. Date and venue of the next meeting (Agenda item 4)

27. The Group agreed to hold its next meeting on Friday, 26 September 2003, in Geneva. The Secretary to the EMG indicated that official invitations to the meeting would be sent out at the earliest opportunity.

F. Closure of the meeting (Agenda item 6)

28. The Chair thanked all the participants for their constructive contributions and declared the meeting closed.