
Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 25th Senior Officials' Meeting

20 May 2019

Video-audio conference

3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. CET

Minutes

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr. Satya Tripathi in his capacity as EMG Secretary, opened the meeting by highlighting the two central agenda items: the update on the progress of the various working areas of the EMG, and the preparations for the upcoming 25th Meeting of the Senior Officials of the EMG and the EMG work plan for 2020.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

2. Overview of progress made by the EMG Issue Management Groups and Consultative Processes in response to SOM24 decisions

a) IMG on Tackling E-waste

ILO provided an overview of progress made in the IMG on Tackling E-waste. The IMG is focusing on establishing the UN E-waste Coalition, agreeing on its vision, mission, governance structure, membership and core functions to be summarized in Terms of Reference. The emerging Coalition now consists of 10 members after the World Health Organization, International Trade Centre and UN Human Settlements Programme signed the Letter of Intent in April 2019.

b) Sand and Dust Storm Coalition

WMO informed that the first meeting of the Coalition with members from 15 UN entities was held in February. A concept note and draft Terms of Reference for the Coalition have been prepared to be discussed at the Coalition's next meeting in June. The Coalition is planning an activity during the UNCCD COP in India in September during the day specifically dedicated to sand and dust storms.

c) Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system

UNDP provided an overview of progress made in the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability. Focus continues to be on sustainability in programming and on the finalization of the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming and the related self-assessment tool. The draft Model Approach was released for public comment from November to January and has since been revised to take the comments received into account. A few issues where agreement is yet to be found remain to be resolved, before the final version can be published on the EMG website along with an overview

of the comments received. Several agencies are already using the Model Approach as a basis for updating or putting in place programming standards. Future work of the Consultative Process will focus on shared learning, deep-dive discussions on implementation of standards and mapping of related key tools.

In response to questions by EMG members, UNDP informed that the World Bank, GCF and GEF standards have been carefully considered in the development of the Model Approach. It was further clarified that the concept Model Approach was preferred over a Common Approach, to take into account that it is voluntary and the need for flexibility to apply the standards depending on the agency context and praxis. Applied consistently, the Model Approach is nevertheless intended to move the UN in the direction of a more common approach to standards in programming.

d) IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management

The IMG has largely focused on the development of a Sustainability Strategy for the UN System for 2020-2030 in collaboration with the Consultative Process on ESS, the first phase of which is dedicated to environmental sustainability in management. The SUN Facility informed that Phase 1 of the Strategy has been endorsed by the HLCM in April and the CEB in May. Future work will be dedicated to the development of targets and indicators as well as roadmaps for the implementation of the strategy. In parallel, the EMG will start developing Phase II of the Strategy which will expand the scope to cover social in addition to environmental sustainability as well as programmes and policies, in addition to facilities and operations.

e) Peer Reviews of environmental management of United Nations entities

The EMG Secretariat gave an overview of the status of the works of the Peer Review process. The results of the peer review of the Kakuma refugee camp has been shared with UNHCR. A new peer review of the UNECA facilities in Addis Ababa is planned to take place in 2019, for which a fact finding mission has been undertaken. The idea is to conclude the peer review process by carrying out reviews in the regions. Peer reviews of ESCWA and the UN mission in Colombia are being discussed. The peer reviews have helped agencies to set baselines for their internal sustainability work, and have brought agencies together to benefit from shared learning. The EMG Secretariat will look into ways in which this peer to peer methodology could be useful in the future. It was suggested that a peer to peer mechanism could be put in place for environmental mainstreaming in the UNDAFs.

f) IMG on Environment and Humanitarian Action

The UNEP-OCHA Joint Unit shared an update on the IMG that has worked on joint messaging and advocacy around the impacts of climate change on humanitarian action, and worked closely with the other sustainability processes, including those on the Model Approach to Standards as well as the Sustainability Strategy. There is an identified need for specific guidance on how to apply the Model Approach/standards in emergency operations. Members of the IMG have also come together in the context of the Coordination of Assessments for Environment in Humanitarian Action (The Joint Initiative) which has developed the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+). This group is working together with the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations to pilot the tool in displacement settings.

g) Consultative Process on a UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS)

The EMG Secretariat reported that the first thematic report under the SWFS on biodiversity will soon be shared with focal points for comments. The thematic reports aim to provide input to specific conferences of events. The SWFS report on biodiversity will look at how UN entities are contributing to the implementation of the biodiversity related SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, providing input to the CBD COP in 2020. EMG members encouraged further outreach and post-production efforts following the

release of the SWFS reports, to strengthen their utility.

h) EMG Nexus Dialogues

The EMG Secretariat made reference to the five nexus dialogues that have been organized since the last SOM, reminding EMG members that all reports and findings are available on the [EMG website](#). One more dialogue on sound chemicals management in the context of textiles and fashion is planned to be held in October 2019. A dialogue on sustainable finance is proposed to be held in Luxembourg in 2020. For 2020, the EMG Secretariat will prepare a concept note proposing an approach to selecting topics for the nexus dialogues, taking into consideration the SDGs discussed at the HLPF and international events such as COPs. EMG members who are interested in hosting a dialogue on a specific topic were encouraged to contact the Secretariat.

The Chair encouraged EMG members to come forth with suggestions for how the Nexus Dialogue format could be improved.

WMO said that the dialogues should be direct towards future follow-up actions and stressed the importance that the results of the dialogues can be used in practice and benefit Member States. The dialogues should be limited in number and focus on strategic, high impact issues on the environmental agenda.

UNFCCC saw value in the dialogues making clear linkages between the different Goals and Targets, and supported the suggestion to focus on only a few prioritized topics that link a number of issues. Focus should be on issues that have concrete impact on the ground and that support Member States in implementing the SDGs.

UNEP saw the nexus dialogues as a useful tool in considering interactions among the SDGs and how they can be coherently implemented at the national level. The dialogues on environmental law and sustainable food systems were both successful in creating an energized atmosphere for discussing among different stakeholders, helping to get information across both the UN system and Member States.

The Chair suggested to circulate a poll to seek EMG members' advice on what topics the dialogues should tackle in 2020.

3. Preparation for the 25th meeting of the EMG Senior Officials

The Chair informed the participants that the Senior Officials Meeting will likely take place on the 25 September. He further informed EMG members about the Secretariat's plans to organise a lunch for principles/deputies on 15 July in the margins of the HLPF. The Secretariat will be in touch with EMG Focal Points to seek the availability of Heads of Agencies.

Five new issues were proposed to be presented to the EMG Senior Officials for inclusion in the EMG agenda in 2020.

a) Sustainable food systems

UNEP presented a proposal to create a task team under the EMG on Sustainable Food Systems, as a follow-up action to the Nexus Dialogue held during the 4th UNEA in March. Food systems are linked to 12 out of the 17 SDGs, and therefore possess a potential for considerable crossover action among multitude of actors. Within the UN system, there is a clear need to involve organizations in the collaboration which work peripherally on food systems. UNEA 4 passed a resolution on *Promoting sustainable practices and*

innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste, including a call for a food systems approach and a call for global and regional collaboration.

The chair suggested to focus the discussion on the contours of action to make sure that the coordination role the EMG can add is significant and efficient.

WMO stressed that issues on the EMG agenda should not necessarily be seen to be determined solely by UNEA.

UNFPA mentioned an event it will organize in 2020 that looks at food production, consumption, sustainability, and population. UNFPA was encouraged to make reference to its work in this context during the SOM.

CBD referred to the recent report by IPBES, which could be used as a reference document in this work.

b) UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

UNEP briefed EMG Members of the upcoming UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). UNEP and FAO are reaching out to EMG members to seek their views, expectations, advice, and guidance on how to make the Decade impactful, and how to link with other existing and forthcoming International Decades, and with relevant International Days.

UNESCO requested synergy between this and other decades, including the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030) and the ongoing International Water Action Decade (2018– 2028).

c) Marine plastic litter and microplastics

UNEP made reference to the recent UNEA 4 resolution on Marine plastic litter and microplastics, inviting the EMG to “engage in and contribute to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics by providing inter alia a mapping of all relevant United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and expertise with relevance to marine litter including plastic litter and microplastics”. Three more meetings of the Expert Group are expected to be held in November 2019, May 2020 and November 2020. The mapping of initiatives should preferably be submitted to the meeting in November. For this purpose, it is suggested that the EMG Chair invites EMG members to nominate focal points to a task team immediately following the Midterm Meeting.

d) Sustainable Infrastructure

The EMG Secretariat presented the proposal on behalf of UNEP, making reference to the EMG Nexus Dialogue on ‘Sustainable Infrastructure for the SDGs held in February, which issued an outcome statement that called for engagement by the UN system and other relevant partners through a network to promote integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure. In March, UNEA 4 passed a resolution that urges the international community to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue to ensure that stakeholders and policymakers are well-equipped to apply a holistic approach to infrastructure development. UNEP sees a role for the EMG in taking stock of existing work on sustainable infrastructure within the UN System and help to facilitate more coordinated, integrated approaches and a shared understanding of these.

e) Climate-altering technologies and measures

The Chair briefed EMG members of the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee decision (8 May) to request the EMG to conduct an assessment and mapping of climate-altering technologies such CDR and SRM in the lead-up to the release of the IPCC Sixth Assessment, and to develop a shared UN policy and narrative on climate-altering technologies and measures in collaboration with the UNFCCC. The

Secretary-General had emphasized the importance of increasing knowledge and the UN system's reflection on these technologies. The EMG effort should focus on providing a full and comprehensive analysis of what is on offer, what the technologies are, etc.

WMO stressed the need for continued focus on emission reduction measures, while technologies may be discussed in the context of keeping to the 1,5 degrees' target.

UNFCCC saw an EMG contribution as helpful in preparing for discussions at its next COP.

CBD inquired if there is a link between this work and UNEA. The Chair replied that there is no reference to UNEA in the Executive Committee decision, and that no resolution was passed at UNEA in this regard.

The Chair will request UNEP's Chief Scientist to prepare an issue note, outlining an interagency effort in this regard.

FAO expressed concern about all five issues being brought to the 2-hour meeting of the Senior Officials. The Chair suggested requesting written comments from EMG members in advance of the meeting, in order to ensure that there is enough time for the strategic discussion among principles.

Draft decisions on the above new issues will be prepared for the Senior Officials Meeting in September.

Any other business

No other issues were discussed.

Closure of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Geneva time.

List of Participants

	Name	Organisation
1.	Andy Cole	WFP
2.	Daniele Violetti	UNFCCC
3.	Koko Warner	UNFCCC
4.	Emilia Wahlstrom	UNEP/OCHA JEU
5.	Federica Pietracci	CEB
6.	Ferran Pérez	World Bank
7.	Flavia Barlassina	Ozone Secretariat
8.	Fredrik Haag	IMO
9.	Georgina Stickels	WFP
10.	Heidi Savelli-Soderberg	UNEP
11.	Holly Mergler	UNDP
12.	James Lomax	UNEP
13.	Brennan Van Dyke	UNEP
14.	Mamadou Kane	UNEP
15.	Julie MacKenzie	WFP
16.	Kamal Gueye	ILO
17.	Katherine Theotocatos	Ozone Secretariat
18.	Marco Keiner	UNECE
19.	Maria Cristina Cardenas	BRS
20.	Neil Pratt	CBD
21.	Paul Egerton	WMO
22.	Laura Paterson	WMO
23.	Sandra Amlang	UNDRR
24.	Benjamin Schachter	OHCHR
25.	Sheilagh Henry	OCHA

	Name	Organisation
26.	Tim Christophersen	UNEP
27.	Victor Owade	WIPO
28.	Zitouni Ould-Dada	FAO
29.	Na Hae Kim	UNFPA
30.	Daniel Schensul	UNFPA
31.	Sinead Brophy	UNODC
32.	Anna Kaplina	UNHCR
33.		UNESCO
34.	Garam Bel	ITU
35.	Isabella Marras	SUN
36.	Satya Tripathi	EMG Secretariat
37.	Hossein Fadaei	EMG Secretariat
38.	Emma Thomson	EMG Secretariat
39.	Jannica Pitkanen	EMG Secretariat