



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

EMG

27th Senior Officials Meeting of the United Nations Environment Management Group Senior Segment, 7 th October 2021 (14:00 -15:30 CEST) Online	EMGSOM.27_5 Distribution: EMG Members
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Discussion Note 1

A pollution-free planet including the sound management of chemicals and waste

At the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2017, Member States adopted a Ministerial Declaration calling for heightened efforts to address pollution and requesting UNEP to prepare an implementation plan for this purpose. [The implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”](#), developed in consultation with Member States, was endorsed by [UNEA4](#) as the key vehicle for implementing the Declaration. The plan proposes solutions for how to fill capacity gaps in addressing pollution and contributes to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sound management of chemicals and waste is key to ensuring a pollution-free planet.

The move towards a pollution-free planet is a collective responsibility. The implementation plan looks to Member States as well as to development partners, United Nations agencies, faith-based groups, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and communities, businesses, the financial sector, and young people to deliver on this vision.

Many UN agencies address pollution through their mandates, expertise, and operations, promoting improved environmental quality and human health, supporting multi-stakeholder action in a variety of sectors, and advancing efforts at all levels from global to local. Nevertheless, existing efforts could benefit from stronger synergies, common narratives, and more coordinated action for increased impact.

In that regard, Senior Officials are invited to engage in a discussion around the following questions:

- What are opportunities for stronger investments and actions by the UN system as a whole that could accelerate the move towards a pollution-free planet and sound management of chemicals and waste?
- What existing mechanisms could enable greater synergy and collaboration in the UN system to accelerate action on pollution and chemicals and waste management?

- What challenges do we face in ensuring a greater focus on pollution prevention and chemicals and waste management in UN policies, programs, projects and operations?
- What capacity gaps do UN agencies face at various levels in tackling pollution?

The outcome of the Senior Officials discussion could contribute to a system-wide, coordinated approach to deliver deeper, broader impacts.

The issue of a pollution-free planet was brought to the attention of the EMG following [a proposal by UNEP to the medium-term meeting of the EMG on 30 June](#). The proposal invites the EMG to establish a consultative process on this issue, aiming to prepare a UN system-wide approach towards a pollution-free planet, following the example of the [UN common approach to integrating biodiversity](#), which was approved by the CEB in May 2021.