

<p>27th Senior Officials Meeting of the United Nations Environment Management Group</p> <p>Technical Segment, 30th September 2021 (15:00 -17:00 CEST) Online Senior Segment, 07 October 2021 (14:00 -15:30 CEST) Online</p>	<p>EMGSOM.27</p> <p>Distribution: EMG Members</p>
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Proceedings of the 27th meeting of the Senior Officials of the Environment Management Group

Introduction

1. The twenty-seventh meeting of the Senior Officials (SOM) of the Environment Management Group (EMG) was held as a web conference on 7 October 2021 and was attended by 50 EMG members and 2 observing entities (see [list of participants](#)). The Technical Segment took place online on 30 September with 47 agencies and 144 participants in attendance. The Senior Officials Meeting was chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the EMG, Ms. Inger Andersen, whereas the Technical Segment was chaired by Ms. Ligia Noronha, Assistant Secretary-General and the EMG Secretary. Meeting background documents are available on the [EMG website](#).

A. Technical Segment

I. Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

2. The chair opened the Technical Segment by welcoming all participants. She noted that this meeting took place at an important time after the UN General Assembly and the launch of the Secretary General's Common Agenda, which is of great importance to the EMG's work. The chair invited representatives from youth organisations to take the floor.
3. Youth representatives delivered a statement, noting that the EMG represents a key opportunity for tackling climate change and environmental degradation through its coordination efforts. The Youth Constituency is working with the hosts of the Stockholm+50 international meeting towards meaningful youth engagement. Youth representatives expressed interest in participating in the Senior Segment. A written statement will be submitted ahead of the meeting.
4. UNEP recalled the joint commitment by Heads of UN entities to promote the right of children, youth and future generations to a healthy environment <https://www.sparkblue.org/stepup>.

II. Adoption of the agenda

5. The [agenda](#) was adopted without any alteration.

III. Ongoing work of the EMG and suggestions for the Senior Officials

6. The chair invited participants to present overviews and updates on the varied work of the EMG (Progress report is available [here](#)).

Consultative Process on Biodiversity

7. UNEP-WCMC presented the progress made in the Consultative Process on Biodiversity. It was shared that a new IMG on Biodiversity is proposed to be co-chaired initially by UNEP, UNDP and UNESCO, with two main streams of work:
 - 1) Awareness-raising and knowledge sharing, including three task teams on i) the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; ii) enhancing collaboration between the Post-2020 Agendas; iii) guidance, products and advocacy materials relating to the Common Approach on Biodiversity.
 - 2) Accountability and reporting. The IMG will collate resources and build on existing mechanisms to prevent a reporting burden and duplication of efforts e.g. coordinating with the QCPR.
8. Members supported the decision and the ToR for the IMG on Biodiversity.

Approved Action I: Consultative Process on Biodiversity

The Senior Officials:

- a) Establish an EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity to facilitate and enable a streamlined approach and support to the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the UN Common Approach to biodiversity and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
- b) Endorse the [ToRs](#) of the Issue Management Group prepared by the EMG Consultative Process on Biodiversity.

Task Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics

9. UNEP recalled that in response to [UNEA Resolution 4.6](#), the EMG was requested to contribute to the work of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics by providing a mapping of all UN agencies' programmes and initiatives on the topic. The Task Team members have continued their work leading to [a final report on UN system activities](#) to which 45 entities contributed. The results will be presented to relevant interagency and international fora, such as UNEA 5.2 and the UN Oceans Conference.
10. The EMG has collected a large quantity of information in this study. If agreed, this information could be published in UNEP's database, building on the current efforts of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and in line with findings of the AHEG process.
11. Furthermore, participants were informed that UNEP will lead UN coordination efforts on plastic pollution as requested by the UN Secretary General's Senior Management Group (on 1 September 2021). The purpose is to foster system-wide coordination and effectiveness. A proposed mandate and composition for a working group is under development by UNEP, recognizing the EMG Task Team's efforts which will not be duplicated.

12. FAO acknowledged the importance of the EMG's work on marine litter and microplastics. Furthermore, FAO expressed interest in co-organizing a side event at UNEA 5.2 to launch the marine litter report and highlight marine litter and microplastics action by the EMG membership.

Agreed Action II: Task Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics

The Senior Officials:

- a) Endorse the EMG report "An overview of UN Activities and Initiatives related to Marine Litter and Microplastics: UN system-wide contribution to support Member States in addressing marine litter and microplastics";
- b) Agree to present the report to relevant interagency and international fora, such as the UNEA 5.2 and the UN Oceans Conference;
- c) Consider the Task Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics to be a resource expert group supporting the mainstreaming of marine litter and microplastics reduction activities in relevant ongoing processes, including in follow up to the EMG report.

Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations

13. UNDP noted that in 2021, the Consultative Process oversaw two workstreams: 1) the promotion of the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming (Model Approach); and 2) the finalisation of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030 – Phase II (Sustainability Strategy Phase II).
14. The Model Approach was endorsed in 2019, and since then, the focus has been on facilitating greater exchange of learning and experiences across UN entities on the application of environmental and social standards in UN programming. This has been partly facilitated via Deep Dive calls that have gone into detail on topics such as grievance mechanisms, managing risks around gender-based violence, and learning from Green Climate Fund's safeguards. In 2021, the Model Approach Working Group was also exploring opportunities for working with the UN Development Coordination Office to identify options to support UN Country Teams in the implementation of environmental and social standards.
15. A separate Task Team consisting of 37 UN entities has focused on finalizing the [Sustainability Strategy Phase II](#). Phase I of the Strategy was endorsed by the CEB in 2019, including a commitment to have a further, more comprehensive, strategy on environmental and social sustainability in policy, programming and support functions.
16. UNDP emphasised that the Strategy aims to generate greater coherence between existing strategies and action plans, while strengthening synergies across UN entities. It does not supersede any existing strategies or action plans.
17. DOS congratulated the work that has been achieved to date and supported the Strategy. However, it is important not to overcommit in terms of reporting.

18. UNU-FLORES expressed their full support of the Strategy, which laudably aligns with, and enhances, other UN standards and reporting frameworks. UNU is interested in participating in further development of the reporting framework during Strategy implementation phase.

Agreed Action III: Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations

The Senior Officials:

- a) Endorse the “Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030 – Phase II: Towards leadership in environmental and social sustainability’ for submission to the CEB”;
- b) Endorse the establishment of a steering committee, composed of representatives of UN entities wishing to lead the implementation of the Strategy at programme and operations level;
- c) Agree to extend the Consultative Process for another year to guide the establishment of the steering committee for the implementation of the Strategy; guide knowledge sharing on the application of the Model Approach; and guide the piloting of the Model Approach in UN country-level programming.

Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management

19. SUN highlighted that the preliminary results of the Greening the Blue (GtB) exercise measuring the UN System's environmental footprint differ notably from last year, due to a new, stricter baseline being used. Only few agencies meet the ISO14001 standard on environmental governance. The results show a reduction in emissions by 25%, however, this is mainly attributable to the slowdown as a result of the pandemic rather than to efforts of UN agencies.
20. The nearly finalized [Greening the Blue tutorial](#) explains the Sustainability Strategy goals and what staff can do to help achieve them. EMG members were invited to advertise and utilise the tool as much as possible.
21. WFP stated that it supports the introduction of a more systematic approach to the EMS scorecard and reporting. It provides a standardised baseline, in line with the ISO 14001 principles, which the agencies can build on. To reach the "approaches EMS" scoring in the Greening the Blue reporting, agencies must have mandatory sustainability training in place. WFP will encourage use of the GtB tutorial for internal use.

Agreed Action IV: IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management

The Senior Officials:

- a) Commit to accelerate the implementation of the UN Sustainability Strategy in UN management and facilities;
- b) Recognize the need to integrate the UN Sustainability Strategy’s objectives into the UN Reform’s Business Operation Strategies to achieve the objectives requested by the 2020 QCPR to limit the environmental and carbon footprint of the UN;
- c) Agree to utilise the new Greening the Blue online training as a training for their personnel.



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Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure



22. UNEP noted that the Consultative Process has good participation across UN entities. A working group has been established to move forward on the key outputs, including providing inputs into a [Second Edition of the Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure](#) that will be launched at UNEA 5.2 in February 2022. Complementary tools and case studies are being integrated into the sustainable infrastructure online tool navigator, which is co-managed by UNEP.

Agreed Action V: Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure

The Senior Officials:

- a) Invite EMG Members to contribute to the outputs of the Consultative Process, including sharing of complementary sustainable infrastructure tools and case studies and adding to the live calendar of events;
- b) Endorse the second edition of the International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure;
- c) Agree to extend the Consultative Process until the 28th Senior Officials Meeting in 2022 to focus on issues surrounding implementation of the International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure.

Issue Management Group on Human Rights and the Environment

23. UNEP highlighted that the IMG was established by SOM26 in October 2020 with a mandate to integrate the human right to a healthy environment into the work of the UN.
24. UNDP is leading the development of a common narrative on the right to a healthy environment in a development context. OHCHR is leading the work on strategies to integrate human rights into multilateral environmental agreements. A [Strategy for Engagement with the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC](#) has been prepared. A third work stream aims to increase the understanding on human rights and the environment among UN staff at all levels, including through trainings. There is momentum surrounding this globally and at the national level, as a resolution recognizing the right to a healthy environment has been tabled at the Human Rights Council. Colleagues have received requests from Member States and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance in this area.
25. UNICEF supported the actions proposed for the Senior Officials and expressed keenness to further collaborate under the IMG.
26. UNECLAC noted that it serves as Secretariat of the new Escazu Agreement (Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean), which entered into force on April 22 2021. It includes the right to a healthy environment in the objective and specific provision to protect environmental defenders in dangerous regions.

Agreed Action VI: IMG on Human Rights and the Environment

The Senior Officials:

- a) Extend the mandate of the IMG on Human Rights and the Environment until SOM28 of 2022;
- b) Take note of the Strategy for Engagement with the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC.

The Consultative Process on Green Recovery

27. ILO noted that the Consultative Process was established by SOM26 to help the UN system identify opportunities for collaboration on, and define a process for, a green, inclusive, and rights-based recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while taking into account the human-environment interaction.
28. With UNEP and ILO serving as co-chairs, 32 UN entities participated in the Consultative Process. [The report](#) is built around five priority areas: green energy, natural capital, building and energy efficiency, transportation, and R&D education and connectivity. A narrative on green recovery was prepared around five interrelated and interdependent building blocks: prosperity, health, nature, justice, and transformation.
29. The World Bank shared a relevant link: <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/greening-the-recovery-to-make-it-last>.

Agreed Action VII: Consultative Process on Green Recovery

The Senior Officials:

- a) Endorse the EMG report “Inclusive green recovery, an essential post-COVID 19 paradigm shift to build back better”, so that it can contribute to the work of the UNSDG task force on socio-economic recovery from COVID-19 and enhance coherence and collaboration in the UN system for a green, inclusive, and rights-based recovery;
- b) Decide to conclude the consultative process on COVID-19 and the environment.

UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies (SWFS) for the Environment

30. The EMG Secretariat noted that the SWFS was established by the SOM in 2016. The first SWFS report (2017) includes an overview of UN responses to the environmental dimension of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda at large. The second SWFS report focused on biodiversity was released earlier in 2021.
31. The third report will build on existing work of the EMG so as to avoid a heavy reporting burden for EMG agencies.
32. The EMG has been requested to contribute to QCPR reporting through the SWFS. This will not imply additional reporting by members. SUN informed that DESA has prepared a framework for reporting back to the QCPR. It is important to streamline reporting requests and make use of existing reporting processes in order to avoid over burdening agencies.
33. ESCAP commented that requirements, in general, have to be process- and reporting-light and have to be light on centralised requirements such as mandatory trainings.



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Agreed Action VIII: SWFS for the Environment



The Senior Officials:

- a) Encourage UN agencies to contribute to the third edition of the SWFS Report;
- b) Extend the Consultative Process to prepare the third edition of the SWFS Report.

EMG Nexus Dialogues

34. [EMG Nexus Dialogues](#) have remained in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing for unprecedented engagement and partnerships with EMG members and other stakeholders. Since 2020, 125 high- and expert-level speakers from over 72 organizations were engaged, with participation from 1160 participants representing, i.a., the UN System, intergovernmental organizations and Member States through the format of panels, webinars or roundtable workshops.
35. In 2021, seven EMG Nexus Dialogues have been organised around the topics of gender and biodiversity, green recovery and building back better, food system resilience through integrated natural resource management, and sustainable fashion.

Agreed Action IX: EMG Nexus Dialogues

The Senior Officials:

- a) Welcome the continuation of the Nexus Dialogue as a mechanism for ongoing discussion and continued exchange of lessons learned and recommendations among UN entities and other stakeholders on the implementation of sustainable recovery efforts in the COVID-19 context, the 2030 Agenda, and the SDGs including their environmental dimensions;
- b) Encourage UN agencies to propose emerging nexus themes for, and contribute towards, future Dialogues by sharing their experience and exchanging ideas on innovative solutions to emerging, persistent, and systemic environmental challenges with other stakeholders.

IV. Potential new topics for future work of the EMG

36. Eight new proposals were submitted by the EMG members to the mid-term Technical Segment of the 27th Senior Officials Meeting (Concept Notes available at unemg.org). Two of the proposals have been withdrawn: Rethinking the UN Approach on Strategic Foresight for Environmental Action and Enhancing Collaboration Between the Post-2020 Biodiversity and Chemicals Frameworks. The following approach is suggested to address the remaining six new issues. This approach aims to respond positively to the demands of the EMG members while being mindful of the EMG criteria for selection of issues, the urgency of the suggested issues and the resources of the EMG Secretariat. The suggested approach will allow better exploring the UN-wide relevance, impact and added value of the new proposals while responding to the issues that warrant system-wide collaboration.
 - A. Issues to be addressed through EMG nexus dialogues in 2022: i) Understanding the consequences of a 1.5°C temperature rise on United Nations' programming (OCHA); ii) Environmental Sustainability and Digital Transformation (UNEP)

- B. Issues to be addressed through written procedure: iii) Proposal on Joint Policy Paper (JPP) on Food System Resilience (UNU-FLORES) – In line with UNU’s suggestion, the Policy Paper will be shared by email with other EMG members for comments. This paper can be used as a resource document for utilisation of the agencies as they wish.
 - C. Issues to be merged with ongoing EMG processes: iv) IMG on the UN System Response to the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (FAO) – to be merged with the Issue Management Group on Biodiversity.
 - D. Establishment of new EMG processes: v) Consultative Process on a Pollution Free Planet (UNEP); vi) Task Team on a UN system-wide contribution to the Stockholm+50 Conference (UNEP).
37. UNDP endorsed the proposed action points. Where there are separate consultative processes or IMGs, there is a critical need for coordination across these, not only within the immediate EMG members but also among relevant partners outside of the EMG.

Agreed Action X: Topics for future work of the EMG

The Senior Officials:

- a) Take note of the suggested new issues by the EMG members for consideration of the EMG in 2021-2022;
- b) Agree to work further on the following suggested issues through the EMG Nexus Dialogues:
 - Understanding the consequences of a 1.5°C temperature rise on United Nations’ programming;
 - Environmental Sustainability and Digital Transformation;
- c) Agree to merge the proposed IMG on the UN System Response to the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration with the EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity;
- d) Agree to establish a Consultative Process on Pollution-Free Planet to strengthen the coordination of UN-system support to Member States in this area of work;
- e) Agree to establish a Task Team of UN agencies to prepare a UN system-wide report as a contribution from the EMG to the Stockholm+50 International Meeting. Encourage EMG members to contribute to the EMG report by providing inputs to the report and participating in the nexus dialogues and interviews.

V. Overview of the Senior Segment of the Senior Officials Meeting

38. The EMG Secretariat presented an overview of the 27th SOM taking place on the 7th of October 2021.
39. The following comments were made in preparation for the strategic discussion by the Senior Officials:
- a. The Implementation Plan for a pollution-free planet (UNEA IV) recognizes that collaboration and coordination across the UN System are central to addressing pollution. The objective is to raise the ambitions of the UN system in helping Member States to reduce pollution, so that the well-being of human and non-human species is preserved.
 - b. The Stockholm Conference in 1972 recognized the importance of a healthy environment for all. The Stockholm+50 international meeting is the right time to question where we stand with the progress towards the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. All UN agencies were encouraged to participate in the discussion.

40. UNESCO, UNICEF and the CBD Secretariat supported working with youth in the context of the EMG and Stockholm+50. ICAO noted that it is organizing an event on youth and aviation <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/youth4aviation.aspx>. ICAO also manifested full support for the Stockholm+50 preparation process.
41. UNDP commented that the Pollution-free planet proposal is welcomed and closely aligns with the value-added of the EMG. It is crucial that smart Terms of Reference and a detailed workplan are established for this Consultative Process. Stockholm+50 is a tremendous opportunity for the UN. Many global fora have focused on different pieces of the environmental agenda, but global UN-sanctioned official meetings that can be used to connect the across all environmental and linked SD themes are rare. The proposed workplan of the EMG for Stockholm+50 is good, and if all contribute to it as planned, there is high potential for an overall impact will be considerable.

VI. Any other business

42. The chair stated the importance of the EMG improving linkages with the UNSDG processes and efforts, such as the ongoing discussions on the triple planetary crisis.
43. UNEP noted that the Common Agenda clearly outlines the triple planetary crisis of climate, biodiversity and pollution. The alignment of efforts to address these environmental issues and connecting different levels of action of the UN system is vital. The Stockholm+50 high-level meeting occurs in the context of a UNGA resolution that raises the bar.
44. EMG Secretariat addressed a procedural issue regarding the youth representatives' proposal on future participation of youth in EMG meetings, suggesting this could be considered by the Senior Officials under Any Other Business to allow for a mandate to work on this task for the next SOM.

B. Senior Segment

1./II. Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

45. Ms. Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of UNEP and chair of the EMG, opened the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). She stressed that the work of the EMG could not come at a more important time given the triple planetary crisis. The entire UN system has understood the climate change crisis and has integrated it into its programming. The biodiversity crisis has been the focus of our work in the last year. The UN still needs to fully take on board the pollution and waste crisis. Each of these crises requires our collective action.
46. Following the UNSDG Core Group meeting on 21 July, clear opportunities have emerged on how to strengthen the response of the UN to the three planetary crises in terms of its development system and its humanitarian and peacebuilding operations and, in that regard, benefit from the EMG.
47. With respect to the biodiversity crisis, the chair expressed her appreciation to UNDP and the many other agencies who have worked hard on this issue together with UNEP.
48. The chair then highlighted the progress made by the EMG in 2020-2021.
49. The [agenda](#) was adopted without any alteration.

III. Briefing on the outcome of the Technical Segment by its Chair

50. The EMG Secretary provided an update on the outcome of the Technical Segment for the Senior Officials, which convened online on 30th September 2021 with 144 participants from 47 agencies, making reference to the ten recommended action points presented in [EMGSOM.27 3a Summary of Action Points](#).
51. UNU supported the principles of the UN Sustainability Strategy Phase II which both aligns with and enhances other UN standards and reporting frameworks. It is important to accelerate the implementation of the Strategy while respecting the individual mandates of each UN entity. It is also important to keep the practical operational realities of individual UN entities in mind - including limited funding and administrative/capacity burdens. As the Strategy is further developed, the exact standards applicable to each UN entity must be scalable, so that they are still achievable for small UN entities like UNU.
52. The IAEA supported the principles of the Sustainability Strategy and appreciated the CEB's initiative on such an important topic. However, given the IAEA's mandate and nature of the work, the Agency noted that it will not be in a position to commit to some of the expected outcomes, and in particular, some expected outputs at entity level included in the Strategy. In that regard, the Agency will not endorse the Strategy at this stage. Nevertheless, it will take into account the principles contained in the Strategy when updating and implementing its policies on the matter, while strictly following its Statute and the guidance given by its Member States through its General Conference resolutions.
53. In the absence of any further requests from the Senior Officials, the Action Points were considered approved as such, noting the reservation of IAEA on Action Point III.a. The EMG Workplan 2021-2022 is available [here](#).

IV. A strategic discussion with Senior Officials on matters warranting system-wide coordination and collaboration

54. The chair introduced the two topics for discussion, a [pollution-free planet](#) and the [Stockholm+50](#) international meeting.
 - I. [A pollution-free planet including the sound management of chemicals and waste](#)
55. The chair introduced the topic, making reference to the [Ministerial Declaration](#) calling for heightened efforts to address pollution (UNEA3) and the associated [implementation plan "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet"](#).
56. ESCAP supported the interagency consultative process to provide increased coherent and integrated support, especially at the country level. Scaling up solutions will require forming new partnerships with entities outside of the UN, including with the private sector. Marine plastic pollution and air pollution are important issues within the Asia-Pacific region, and scaling-up efforts to address both should be considered.
57. DOS supported the formation of an interagency group on a pollution-free planet. DOS has progressed in areas including wastewater treatment and the removal of single-use plastics, and is currently working to address chemicals via a lifecycle approach, with a focus on the selection of non-hazardous alternatives. Technical data on non-hazardous materials is needed to ensure Member States fully account for the cost of managing toxic chemicals, including in procurement, along with reducing the total quantity of hazardous materials used, stockpile handling and recycling.

58. ITU sees opportunities for an innovative technology revolution and digital transformation, with a focus on a circular economy. ITU leads the tracking and monitoring of production and recycling of e-waste as a member of the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership and provides technical assistance to countries in the area of e-waste policies and regulatory development, promoting multi-stakeholder approaches and regional harmonisations. ITU looks forward to working with other agencies to strengthen the technology advancement to support the issue of a pollution-free planet.
59. The World Bank noted that it considers pollution a development issue and supported the establishment of an interagency process. Entities can build on their comparative advantages, leveraging their complementary expertise and resources to help countries. The World Bank and other international financial institutions can offer support.
60. UNIDO agreed that tackling pollution is a key element of building back better for a robust and sustainable recovery. Toxic chemicals have been used in industrial processes for decades and continue to be used and released in everything from fertilisers to waste incineration. UNIDO works with partners investing over \$17 million annually to tackle various forms of pollution in over 100 countries. Chemicals and waste management may be key to maximise lasting and transformational impact.
61. UNICEF highlighted how 90% of children are exposed to air pollution affecting their health and survival. There is a need for agencies to work together on providing further evidence for the planetary crisis, using operational capacities and mobilising resources to address the issue. There is a need for working faster and further together, enshrining the right to a healthy environment and leveraging UN system-wide coordination at all levels to unlock the full potential at both regional and country levels. UNICEF looks forward to being an active partner working together with all EMG members on taking this forward.
62. UNCCD supported the proposed consultative process, highlighting the need to focus on aspects of land. Chemical waste and plastic pollution have a higher concentration on land than waterways, with land degradation leading to sand and dust storms that are a factor of air pollution. There must be a focus on addressing the sources of pollution rather than addressing the costly clean-ups and remediation that currently exist.
63. The GEF agreed on the importance of an interagency group on pollution. Only 20% of the required funds and resources are being mobilised annually to address chemicals and waste issues. It is important that this interagency group looks into a financial approach to chemicals, generating information on cost benefits, investments in chemical management and information on needs and financial gaps. There is also a need for policy consistency and coherence, with these issues previously providing complexity and difficulty in the achievement of targets. The current GEF replenishment has highlighted the importance of chemicals within the context of sustainability and the SDGs, with a clear connection to biodiversity loss and climate change.
64. UNDP endorsed the actions for a pollution-free planet.
65. UN-DESA highlighted a need to raise awareness about the work done in the chemicals and waste conventions and the guidance they offer to countries, with opportunities existing to bring the work of these conventions into the ongoing policy dialogue they have with the authorities. UN-DESA also hopes the consultative process can consider other ways to drive the agenda. The consultative process could consider how the UN can push progress in a couple of areas: (a) encouraging the

disclosure of the chemicals and pollution footprint of enterprises; (b) encouraging countries to push through legislation establishing the liability of companies for the pollution they cause.

66. UNFPA endorsed the consultative process on a pollution-free planet, being mindful of possible overlap with existing efforts, e.g., on hazardous waste.
67. UNODC emphasized that organised crime poses a major threat to our environment. Activities by criminal groups include wildlife trafficking, waste trafficking and illegal mining, among other illicit activities. The illegal exploitation of natural resources has far-reaching impacts on the economy, security, environment and human health, and contributes to biodiversity loss and climate change. It is vital to incorporate the criminal justice dimension into the broader environment and pollution agendas. Investments are required in initiatives that look at how crime and corruption can act as aggravating factors that contribute to pollution, and how crime and corruption can potentially undermine international initiatives to tackle pollution and regulate the management of chemicals and waste. Member States should be supported, for example, by developing a series of legislative guides that can assist countries in enhancing the legislative framework to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment.
68. UNECE highlighted the relevance of its multilateral environmental agreements, including the Water, Industrial Accidents and Aarhus Conventions. UNECE also requested that nature-based solutions in cities be considered as a future Nexus Dialogue.
69. BRS noted that it looks forward to joining the consultative process and working on this issue together. There is a need for action on the ground, changing the lives of people. BRS has principles relating to the discharge of toxic chemicals into the environment and is happy to engage in activities around this.
70. IFAD supported the proposed consultative process. IFAD is scaling up efforts to reduce pollution and harmful emissions internally and externally in their investments, as well as incorporating environmental and climate safeguards.
71. IAEA made reference to the global initiative "NUTEC Plastics", launched in collaboration with UNEP in 2021 to address the recycling of plastics for a circular economy and the assessment and monitoring of marine microplastics.
72. UN-Habitat endorsed the pollution-free planet actions. It is increasingly receiving requests from national and local governments for support to address municipal solid waste management, formalized in the "Waste Wise Cities".
73. UNU-FLORES endorsed the vision of and the actions for a pollution-free planet. As the academic arm of the UN, UNU aims to strengthen educational practices towards understanding the interrelations in the Resource Nexus and to advance methods and concepts for the implementation and analysis of circular economies across scales and levels.
74. WTO supported the proposed action, highlighting the ongoing dialogue to better understand how trade intersects with plastics production and consumption, and what trade measures are taken to address plastics pollution.
75. CBD supported the establishment of the consultative process on a pollution-free planet. A primary driver of biodiversity loss, pollution is a cross-cutting issue that should be looked at beyond just chemicals and wastes. Alignment between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and chemicals management frameworks is inevitable moving forward.

76. WFP highlighted the need for organizations to continue to “walk the talk” on managing the impacts of their programmes and support operations on the environment, with respect to pollution prevention and responsible waste management.
77. IUCN supported UN efforts to tackle pollution in all its shapes and forms. It has done extensive work in particular on marine plastic pollution.
78. The Minamata Convention noted that the proposal on a pollution-free planet would benefit the Convention. Progress of the Convention will rely on the progress in other frameworks such as climate change and biodiversity.
79. UNDRR supported the consultative process on a pollution-free planet.

II. Contributions to the Stockholm+50 International Meeting

80. The chair introduced participants to the discussion, highlighting that the Stockholm+50 International Meeting will emphasize the importance of a healthy planet for our wellbeing today and in the future, and the responsibilities and opportunities in this context.
81. OHCHR stressed that the environmental crisis is the greatest current challenge to human rights. Efforts should be made to assist UN Country Teams in mainstreaming the right to a healthy environment. In the currently running Human Rights Council, the right to live in a safe, clean and sustainable environment has been emphasized. 2022 should be a turning point in order to move closer to the 1972 Stockholm outcomes and goals.
82. ITU is interested in contributing to the preparation for the Stockholm+50 international meeting and would like to be engaged in the proposed Task Team.
83. UNECE stated it is pleased to contribute to Stockholm+50 with the 50 years of environmental management knowledge it possesses.
84. UNDRR underlined that the environment is both a driver of disaster risk and a solution through nature-based solutions. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will take place just before Stockholm+50, with which many connections can be made.
85. UNDP stressed the importance of seizing Stockholm+50 opportunities. The way the UN approaches this conference, as well as the way it frames its inputs, is critical. It should connect the dots, building on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda to express more concretely the evolution needed for the environment. It is important that Stockholm+50 inspires Member States and encourages them to look forward, emphasizing notions of a green recovery and green economy. A systemic and just transition is crucial. The UN can contribute by connecting many different central areas such as pollution and human health. Moreover, the UN should deliver a clear report to Stockholm+50 about how it has implemented the Greening the Blue programme.
86. UNU supported the idea of making Stockholm+50 an inspiring event and of connecting it to Greening the Blue.

87. BRS noted that it would be happy to engage in activities around Stockholm+50, taking stock of what they have been able to achieve. The focus should be on issues that were present 50 years ago and are still there, such as DDT.
88. UNITAR highlighted five major aspects: (1) Education at all levels, with a transformative shift focusing on the harmony between human and nature; (2) A shift of the public narrative from GHGs emissions alone to a people-centred approach, with a personalisation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, which belong to all; (3) Customer education and product impacts classification; (4) Engagement with the business sector to better define partnerships and reach small and medium businesses; and (5) Highlighting the link between pollution and human health. Many processes feed into Stockholm+50, such as the Oceans Conference, Transport Conference, Food Summit, Biodiversity Conference, and the COPs. The UN can provide qualitative analytical work and stronger support to legislative processes. The outcomes of Stockholm+50 must reflect the ongoing emergency through awareness-raising and communication using modern platforms.
89. The chair underlined the importance of a people-centred and SDG-centric approach, as suggested by UNITAR.
90. ITC commented that it fully agrees on the importance of micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses in the green transition mentioned by UNITAR. Supporting MSMEs to gain a competitive advantage by going green and adapting to climate change is key in the GreenToCompete strategy. ITC would be pleased to build further synergies in this area, also in the context of Stockholm+50.
91. FAO emphasized that the agri-food system must be included in Stockholm+50. The way we produce and consume, and how well we can promote agriculture with less reliance on synthetic inputs (fertilizers, pesticides), influence the quality of the environment. It was underlined that the current subsidy system drives us in the wrong direction, as indicated in the report launched by FAO, UNEP and UNDP in September 2021. We should seek ways to encourage members and investors to promote and reduce the use of chemicals in agriculture as well as reduce waste externalities. A current FAO study investigates agricultural plastic products along the entire value chain, the result of which could serve as input to Stockholm+50. Also relevant to Stockholm+50 are the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Food System Summit, both having clear guidance and targets. Lastly, we need to promote multi stakeholder collaboration, innovative development and finance mechanisms, and increase awareness regarding agricultural environments because this domain is poorly understood in the global development agenda.
92. ILO noted that Stockholm+50 is a unique opportunity both to learn from the past and to shape the future. Environmental sustainability has had large implications for employment. Not only can preserving and restoring natural assets lead to more and better jobs, but the ILO mandate to ensure social justice and decent work for all can only be delivered if environmental sustainability is included in the agenda.
93. WWF underscored the possibility offered by Stockholm+50 to strengthen integration, connect dots, and materialise synergies. This should be done through the alignment and implementation of the Rio- and other UN conventions, which serve as a contribution to both the global climate goal and the emerging global goal for nature, and as the foundation and the enablers for achieving the whole 2030 agenda. Stockholm+50 is an opportunity to boost the impact of these conventions for the global environmental goals.
94. UNICEF stressed that young people are an essential part of Stockholm+50, both through meaningful participation as well as using the conference as a platform to encourage education. UNICEF also



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strongly endorses Stockholm+50 as an opportunity to highlight the compounding vulnerabilities from interlinked planetary crises. UNICEF is keen to collaborate with others concerning the preparatory process and the follow-up, translating the outcomes into actions.

95. UNU commented that it wishes to contribute to Stockholm+50 by providing a platform bringing together doctoral students from all Member States to present over 50 years of development research (looking back) and to collaborate on a vision for Stockholm+100 (looking forward).
96. CMS recalled that it was created at Stockholm 1972 and that they would be delighted to contribute to the Stockholm+50 event.
97. ECLAC pointed out the need to address the "fundamentals" of the economic system, including the aspects of inequality. There is no time for marginal changes; environmental sustainability needs to be considered as an economic solution for development. Current incentives/disincentives are far from being sufficient to change the current patterns.
98. CITES agreed that Stockholm+50 should be inspirational. Looking back is necessary if we want to look into the future. We should consider what has been successful, so that lessons from the past are learned and can help overcome future challenges.
99. UN-DESA remarked that the Statistical Commission has adopted the System of Ecosystem Accounting in March, which is the first step to changing how we measure our progress beyond GDP. This new system has a high potential and should be included in Stockholm+50 because it represents the formal integration of the environment and the economy in how we measure progress. This, in turn, will allow easier integration of the economy and the environment in policymaking.
100. IFAD agrees with the comment of UN-DESA. Not only is it important to move away from economic and financial analyses (EFAs) that ignore important costs, but EFAs should also account for benefits.
101. UN-Habitat referred to two opportunities. Firstly, advisory bodies of local and regional governments should meaningfully contribute to the preparations of Stockholm+50. Secondly, the April 2022 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the progress of the New Urban Agenda should inform Member States' deliberations on how Stockholm+50 reflects the interlinked legacy of the built and natural environments.
102. OCHA supports all proposals and comments made and is keen to be involved in the Stockholm+50, looking at the future opportunities for anticipatory action and stressing the urgency to act on the planetary crisis.
103. UNECA can contribute with 1) its work on a green and inclusive economic recovery, including on mobilising financing for the recovery; nature-based solutions; food systems; and overall work on climate change and the transition to green and blue economy; 2) ECA's engagement with the Regional Collaborative Platform including Opportunity and Issue Based Coalitions; and the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to enhance collaboration to address biodiversity-related challenges; 3) the ongoing and strengthened interaction and collaboration between ECA and DCO, UNRCs and UNCTs.

104. The Ramsar Convention stated its readiness to contribute to preparations as this is also the 50th anniversary of the Convention.
105. The chair underlined the enthusiasm and agreement to work together on Stockholm+50 and announced that an interagency Task Team will be established to provide a UN system-wide contribution to the international meeting.

V. Any Other Business

106. The EMG Secretary stated that the Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP has submitted a written statement to the SOM ([information document](#)) requesting to be present in future Senior Officials meetings. The question of whether the Senior Officials would agree to youth being represented at the Senior Officials Meeting was put forward.
107. The Chair welcomed finding ways for youth to have a voice in the EMG building on existing youth networks. She requested the EMG Secretary to liaise with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to find a suitable way forward.
108. UN-DESA made reference to the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth and Development (IANYD). As the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth represents only a narrow aspect of the work on youth in the UN system, the EMG was advised to also consult with the UN IANYD to include a broader view.

VI. Closing remarks and closure of the meeting

109. The chair thanked participants and stressed that the support of each agency is critical to the work of the EMG. She invited the participants to reach out to their respective focal points to hear from them, as they provide a heavy lift to the broader environmental agenda of the UN.