

Draft Second Workplan of the Issue Management Group on Human Rights and the Environment

2023-2025

Objective: Integrate the human right to a healthy environment into the work of the UN at the national, regional and global level to ensure a coherent and rights-based approach to environmental action throughout the UN system.

Background and Context

During the 26th EMG Senior Officials Meeting in October 2020, it was agreed that an Issue Management Group on Human Rights and the Environment (IMG) would be established. The IMG met for the first time on 17 February 2021 to adopt its TOR and discuss next steps. The TOR and work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) draw on the findings of relevant EMG processes, initiatives and Nexus Dialogues, including the dialogues organized on 24 July and 22 September 2020 on the human right to a healthy environment and the Workshop held on 23 September 2020 with EMG focal points. At its second meeting on 20 April 2021 the IMG agreed to focus on 3 areas with lead agencies as follows: 1) integrating a right to a healthy environment in UN system work at country level (UNDP lead), 2) integrating human rights into Multilateral Environmental Agreements (OHCHR lead), and 3) capacity-building (UNEP lead). A workplan for the IMG was developed and implemented by the IMG between April 2021 and December 2022. The outputs of the IMG over this period can be found [here](#).

During the period of implementation of the first workplan, there were a number of key developments in the field of human rights and the environment. These include the landmark recognition by the UN General Assembly of the universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, preceded by a UN Human Rights Council resolution on the same subject. The second workplan of the IMG intends to support implementation of these resolutions in the UN context, alongside the conclusions of Stockholm +50 and the references to human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, in the Global Biodiversity Framework. This document sets out a second workplan for the IMG, for January 2023-Dec 2025, building on the achievements of the IMG during the first workplan. The period of implementation of the second workplan will coincide with a number of other processes and events, such as the development of a UN system common approach to pollution, as well as the 2023 SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future in 2024. The IMG will look to engage with these processes in accordance with its objectives.

Connection between the IMG and other human-rights related processes within the UN

During the period of the first workplan of the IMG there were significant overlaps between the work of the IMG and Area 5 of the Secretary General's Call to Action for Human Rights. For this reason, it has been agreed at separate meetings of the IMG and the Call to Action that the membership and activities of the working group of Area 5 of the Call to Action be integrated within the work of the IMG. Relevant Call to Action activities are reflected in the IMG workplan. In addition, the IMG will continue to develop synergies with 'Our Common Agenda- Rights of Future Generations Workstream' as appropriate.

Timeline: 36 months (with possibility of extension)

Co-Chairs:

- OHCHR
- UNDP
- UNEP

Role of Co-Chairs: Set agenda and organize quarterly meetings. Coordinate work under three focus areas and of the IMG as a whole ensuring consistent progress toward achievement of the workplan and its objectives in sync with those of the EMG and its mechanisms. Facilitate enhanced coordination and information-sharing between UN entities and actors on human rights and the environment. Report on progress to EMG and Senior Officials meetings.

Role of Focus Area Leads: With respect to the focus area in question, set agenda and organize regular meetings, as required. Coordinate with other focus area leads, IMG co-chairs, the EMG Secretariat and other EMG mechanisms to ensure consistent progress toward achievement of the workplan and its objectives. Facilitate enhanced coordination and information-sharing between UN entities and actors on human rights and the environment.

Role of EMG Consultant: Support co-leads in the coordination, development and delivery of the work of the IMG, including through engagement with the EMG Secretariat and other relevant bodies. Prepare draft workplans for the IMG in consultation with co-leads and contributing members of the IMG, for approval by the IMG. Prepare draft outputs under the workplan including concept notes, key messages, guidance, strategies and side event proposals and support co-leads and contributing organisations to finalise these. Convene regular meetings of co-leads and the IMG to ensure consistent progress towards its objectives. Engage with wider EMG and other processes to develop and build on synergies with the work of the IMG. Support co-leads to report on the progress of IMG to the EMG and Senior Officials Meetings.

Role of contributing organizations: With respect to the focus area in question, contribute to efforts to define and achieve the agreed upon objectives.

The Focus Areas under the workplan will remain as follows:

- 1) **Joint and integrated policy and programming support on human rights and the environment to country level, including through roll out of IMG produced global guidance (through tools and trainings) in collaboration with DCO at global and regional levels.** (Focus Area Lead: UNDP)

Indicative Activities 2023-25

The focus of the work of Focus Area 1 in 2023 will be sharing and disseminating the existing outputs of the IMG and Call to Action in collaboration with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO). This could include incorporation of Action Item 3 under the Call To Action workplan, namely building the capacity of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Work in future years may be undertaken in collaboration with other Focus Areas in relation to the delivery of future tools and trainings.

2) Integrating human rights into multilateral environmental agreements (Focus Area Lead: OHCHR)

Indicative Activities 2023-25

The work proposed for 2023 will see integration of a more cross-cutting approach related to the Rio Conventions and development of IMG materials on pollution, increasing the visibility and convening power of the IMG through proposing side events at a number of multilateral gatherings. In 2024, work on a strategy to address common human rights themes across the Rio Conventions will be finalised, alongside the development of a cross-MEA strategy to cover human rights and pollution, with accompanying key messages. Other areas of engagement with MEAs could be explored, as well as a potential side event at the UN General Assembly or a conference on the UN system contribution to the right to a healthy environment. Based on this work, a guidance document could be developed in 2025 to highlight common considerations relating to the integration of HRs into MEAs.

3) Global deep-dive webinars and trainings on human rights and the environment (Focus Area Lead: UNEP)

Indicative Activities

In 2023 the focus of this area of work will lie in delivering three training sessions for RCs/UN entities on integrating environmental issues into human rights mechanisms relating to Treaty bodies, UPR and Special Procedures. In 2024 this could include developing trainings with other IMG members on issue areas related to human rights and environmental issues with a specific focus (eg food, emergencies, a just transition) with the support of other IMG members, potentially in collaboration with Focus Area 1. In 2025, this could extend to the development of training modules for country teams, as well as training modules on engaging with MEAs on human rights issues, based on the activities undertaken previously.

Indicative Timeline and List of Activities 2023

A key focus of IMG activities in 2023 will be:

- a) Updating guidance on NBSAPs in the light of the GBF framework.
- b) Dissemination of NBSAP guidance to support the update of NBSAPs in 2023-2024
- c) Dissemination of the existing outputs of the IMG and Call to Action at country level in collaboration with DCO
- d) Finalisation and initial implementation of a three-year workplan for the IMG
- e) Representation of the IMG at side events and convenings such as the COPs of the BRS (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm) Conventions, the SDG Summit and UNFCCC COP28
- f) Training on engaging with UN Human Rights bodies on environmental matters
- g) Development of materials related to human rights and pollution

- h) Initial discussions to identify common themes related to environmental and human rights across the Rio Conventions

In all areas of work the IMG will consider how to engage civil society organisations and other sectors outside the UN as well as promoting in particular the rights and participation of groups who are often in vulnerable situations such as youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs).

The IMG will be without consultancy support from April to late Autumn 2023 and its coordination and reporting functions will be supported by EMG Secretariat staff for that period.

Activity	Output	Lead Agencies	Date	Partners
Coordination	Drafting and finalisation of IMG workplan 2023-25 in consultation with IMG members	UNDP/OHCHR/UNEP (all Focus Areas)	Jan-March 2023	
Producing Global Guidance and strategies	Update/Revision of guidance on integrating Humans Rights into NBSAPs following the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework	UNDP & OHCHR (FA1/FA2)	Feb-March 2023	FAO Right to Food Team (RTFT)
Dissemination and Internal UN capacity building (all levels)	Circulation of Checklist on Implementing the Human Right to a Healthy Environment to IMG	UNDP (FA1)	March 2023	
Coordination	Discussions with DCO re dissemination of IMG products and resources to country teams	UNDP (FA1)	TBC	
Dissemination and Internal UN Capacity Building	Discussions on how to disseminate and present NBSAP guidance to support NBSAP updates in 2023-2024	FA1/FA2	2023-24	FAO RTFT
Advocacy and visibility	IMG engagement/side event at the COPs of the BRS Conventions 1-12 May 2023 (TBD).	OHCHR/FA2	May 2023	FAO RTFT
Producing Global Guidance and Strategies	Initial discussion with the Rio Convention Secretariats re developing a common strategy/themes	FA2	June 2023	FAO RTFT

	and potential activities on Human Rights and the Rio Conventions			
Producing Global Guidance and Strategies	Finalisation of UN system guidance on protection of environmental human rights defenders (C2A workstream)	FA1/FA2	June 2023	
Advocacy and visibility	IMG side event at HLPF (TBC) ¹	FA2	July 2023	FAO RTFT
Advocacy and visibility	IMG side event at SDG summit (TBC) ²	OHCHR (FA2)	September 2023	FAO RTFT
Dissemination and Internal UN capacity building	Developing and delivering three training sessions for RCs/UN entities on integrating environmental issues into human right mechanisms relating to Treaty bodies, UPR & Special Procedures. To include guidance on reporting to these mechanisms and translating the recommendations of these bodies into action on the ground.	UNEP/FA3	TBD	FAO RTFT
Advocacy and visibility	IMG side event on Human Rights & Environment at COP 28	OHCHR (FA2)	Nov-Dec 2023	FAO RTFT

¹ Subject to capacity

² Subject to capacity

2024 [provisional, to be discussed further in late 2023/early 2024]

Date	Output	Lead Agencies
TBD	Formulation of high-level guidance for RCs/CTs on the integration of human rights into NDCs, NAPAs and other similar documents	FA2/FA1
TBD	Producing general guidance for country level on particular issues as required [potentially pollution, emergency-related human rights and environmental issues and UN environmental and social sustainability]	FA1/FA2
TBD	KMs/Finalisation of a strategy on human rights and the Rio Conventions	FA2
TBD	MEA level strategy and KMs re Human Rights and Pollution	FA2
TBD	Focused training sessions on specific issue areas (eg. food, emergencies, just transition) in collaboration with IMG members	FA3
Sept 2024	IMG Side Event at UN Summit for the Future	FA2/all
TBD	[IMG side event on RHE at UNGA]	FA2/all
TBD	[IMG Conference on UN System Contribution to RHE]	FA2/all

2025 [provisional suggestions, to be discussed further in 2024]

Date	Output	Lead Agencies
	[Develop guidance document on common considerations relating to the integration of HRs into MEAs]	FA2
	[In partnership with RCO, develop online training modules on implementation of RHE at UNCT/RC level/application of human rights to MEAs]	FA3
	[The Development of a UN Common Approach on implementation of RHE based on IMG activities in past 5 years is potentially something that could be considered for 2026, building on the approaches developed under the second workplan]	All