

<p>29th Senior Officials Meeting of the United Nations Environment Management Group</p> <p>10 October 2023 (14:00 -15:30 CET) Online</p>	<p>EMGSOM.29</p> <p>Distribution: EMG Members</p>
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Summary Report

The 29th Meeting of the Senior Officials of the Environment Management Group (EMG)

Introduction

1. The 29th meeting of the Senior Officials (SOM29) of the Environment Management Group (EMG) was held virtually on 10 October 2023. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Inger Andersen, UN Under Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, and attended by 48 EMG members, including 2 observing members. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1. SOM29 was preceded by a Technical Segment on 26 September 2023.
2. In her opening remarks, the Chair characterised 2023 as a year of records, both good and bad, highlighting the opportunity and responsibility for the UN to draw motivation to act from the climate milestones. The EMG will play a part in making the SDGs a reality through coordinating collective action and collaboration on the environmental dimensions. 2023 has witnessed the passage of environmental agreements such as the Global Framework on Chemicals, and the High Seas Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction, and progress on the zero draft of the plastic treaty text released by the INC Secretariat for negotiations at the INC-3 in Nairobi this November. Next year is the 25th anniversary of the EMG, and it brings the opportunity for a reflection on how the EMG, as a group, can work better and more effectively to support Members States with the implementation of the environmental agenda. The EMG members may wish to reflect on what role the EMG can and should play in making the new UN 2.0. vision a success.

Approval of the EMG workplan 2023-2024

3. The chair invited the Senior Officials to consider and approve 8 recommended action points proposed by the Technical Segment for the future work of the EMG, which will form the EMG workplan 2023-2024. The action points propose system-wide collaboration in the following inter-agency areas:
 - a) Issue Management Group on Biodiversity
 - b) Consultative Process on a Pollution-Free Planet

- c) Issue Management Group on Human Rights and Environment
- d) UN Internal Sustainability Management
- e) UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies (SWFS) for the Environment
- f) EMG Dialogues
- g) Strengthening synergies among Rio Conventions
- h) Strengthening EMG effectiveness

Strategic discussion on strengthening system-wide coordination and collaboration.

4. The chair highlighted the importance of the common policies and approaches developed including under the EMG to effectively connect the UN normative system with its development and operational framework, all geared towards empowering Member States with a more potent means of response to the triple planetary crisis. The full realization of these aspirations and the bolstering of Member States requires more united, systemic collaborative action. In light of this, the Chair invited the Senior Officials to share their perspectives around three discussion points to guide the future work of the EMG:
 - a) Strengthening UN Collective Action: From Policy Coherence to joint actions on the Triple Planetary Crisis.
 - b) Enhancing societal resilience in the face of the triple planetary crisis.
 - c) Intensify efforts to successfully implement the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030.
5. The Senior Officials provided their perspectives in response to the following questions to guide the future work of the EMG:
 - a) ***How can the UN more effectively foster collective action to tackle the challenges of climate change, nature loss including desertification, and pollution?***

The Senior Officials expressed the need to develop a stronger understanding of the interdependencies between the SDGs and the planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. This is where the EMG's work holds a particular value, for example, by taking a nexus approach to exploring global issues.

Addressing the triple planetary crisis requires a transdisciplinary perspective and attention to synergies across various levels. Central to this is the creation of capacity in Resident Coordinators and Resident Coordinator Offices on integrated approaches such as the systems thinking approach, where environmental considerations are incorporated into the development of economic policies and into discussions with stakeholders and ministries on sustainable development. At local level, Country Teams may enhance synergies building on communities of practice, facilitating South-South cooperation and

promoting **engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities** as active decision makers. Senior Officials expressed their support to increase efforts to implement UN Common Strategies on the ground and to anchor the strategies in existing national programmes.

In the context of the repositioned UN Development System, Senior Officials advised that it would be beneficial to **increase investment in workshops, peer exchanges and the roll out of Common UN System Tools** for UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. This would support bringing “systems thinking” to national ministries and stakeholders, as well as integrating the triple planetary crises in country priorities.

There is a need to motivate UN Country Teams to assist countries in **improving their planning systems and building their capacity to align Common Country Analyses** with the implementation of environmental conventions. For example, **Nationally Determined Contributions could be more synergistic** and integrate nature-based solutions that support obligations associated to the Global Biodiversity Framework. WWF offered to support the EMG and the UN in improving their work on the ground in this area.

Considering how effective joint UN action can be, Senior Officials reflected on the importance of normative frameworks and international legal instruments. They stressed the need to **strengthen synergies between and amongst the Rio and other environmental conventions**, as well as relevant international frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, to which countries have signed up. Legal instruments (such as MEAs) help create policy and generate action in countries anchoring their actions within legal frameworks. They also have value as collaborative platforms and frameworks of UN system cooperation in support of Member States and the integration of environmental considerations in national priorities and the economy.

Senior Officials stressed the importance of **adding a human rights perspective when addressing environmental matters**. Economic activities impact human rights such as the rights to life, health and livelihood – rights that Member States have committed themselves to protect. Enhancing the understanding of human rights obligations and promoting a deeper comprehension of human rights violations can support the formulation of policies grounded in a stronger understanding and collective recognition of the consequences if legislative measures are not accomplished.

Senior Officials stressed the grave impact of organized crime on the environment. This underscores the urgent need for collaborative efforts between environmental conservation initiatives and law enforcement to effectively address and prevent crimes that contribute to the triple planetary crisis.

Collective and transformative action needs to be based on **shared data sets and a shared language** that facilitates the monitoring and reporting of the Common Approaches. Leveraging new and emerging technology, including using artificial intelligence, could assist in resolving present challenges. It is necessary to strengthen capacities in Member States to ensure the data is available and of a good quality.

Senior Officials also touched upon the need to consider opportunities for **stronger collaboration and synergies on financial resources**. They agreed on the need to expand funding for successful established strategies, particularly to progress beyond financing green projects to financing green economies, and to engage new partners. Additionally, Senior Officials reflected on the need to scale-up climate financing in the context of emergencies by developing mechanisms that are rapid, flexible and context-specific.

Leveraging the engagement of the private sector can be accomplished through policies and incentives. This necessitates a reflection on the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the private sector as well as on how the UN and the private sector best can capitalise on each other's strengths to achieve effective results. The convening power of the EMG could be a powerful instrument to mobilise such public-private collective action.

b) *How can the UN system effectively enhance societal resilience in the face of the triple planetary crisis?*

Senior Officials highlighted the importance of implementing existing frameworks, agendas, and guidance through an environmental and social lens. In this context, **the Sendai Framework** and the UN Secretary-General Action Agenda on internal displacement were mentioned, as well as **E-Management Certificate (EMC)** guidance developed by partners such as the platform for disaster displacements, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. Furthermore, implementing a comprehensive and **collective risk management approach** will enable the system to prevent, anticipate, identify, and mitigate the impact of crises.

The Senior Officials suggested to build on UNEA and the UNEA platform to strengthen the science-policy interface, and take it to the country level, giving specific **attention to spatial planning and analysis**.

The UN System can enhance societal resilience by scaling up and creating innovative financial tools. The UN system should provide examples to countries to help them build their environmental leadership.

The Senior Officials emphasized the importance of addressing the crucial matter of **gender equality**. Actions must include women as active participants.

Senior Officials underscored the pivotal role of identifying the synergies between emergency response and sustainable development. System-wide collaborative efforts should prioritize:

- Resilience-building: Strengthening the capacities of affected populations and systems to prevent, **anticipate, adapt to, and recover from climate-induced emergencies**.
- Inclusion: **Ensuring that UN interventions are sensitive to the different needs** and capacities of all affected populations, mitigating social inequalities exacerbated by the climate crisis.
- Innovation and Technology: **Employing innovative approaches and technologies** for efficient resource use, data management, and solution engineering in humanitarian actions.
- Localization: **Amplifying local capabilities**, ensuring that resources are channeled to empower local communities and structures, which are the first to respond and last to leave during crises.

c) ***In the context of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030, the UN Common Agenda and UN 2.0, how can UN entities build up their efforts in implementing the UN Sustainability Strategy?***

Senior Officials highlighted that entities should take action to **embed the corporate sustainability strategy into the core of the entity's organizational strategy** and program of work, so that it becomes an integral part of implementation of all programs.

The Senior Officials agreed to appoint a designated focal point in their respective institutions to strengthen their commitment and actions to implement the UN Sustainability Strategy. They emphasized the importance of data sharing and improved reporting and accountability. Strengthened knowledge sharing will enhance efficiency, and ultimately, optimise the utilisation of limited funding. Additionally, entities can contribute to the creation of an integrated framework which supports implementation of the Strategy at the national level.

The UN System must remain conscious of its footprint and adjust its approaches accordingly. This includes ensuring that local communities and the environment are not harmed through UN peace keeping missions. Additionally, the UN system should take

action to operationalize resilience guidelines and recommendations which integrate the exponential rise of vulnerability.

The UN can demonstrate that it is 'walking the talk' and increasing internal action to address climate change, by **implementing a variety of short-term, mid-term and long-term changes**. This includes, for example, switching from in-person meetings to hybrid meetings whenever possible. Operations can be made more sustainable, for example, by shifting from using **recyclable materials to reusing materials**.

Other matters

6. The Chair highlighted the two new action points proposed for inclusion in the EMG agenda by the technical segment for approval of the Senior Officials. These included:
 - i. Strengthening action to address the drivers of environmental change underlying the three Rio Conventions as well as other relevant international conventions and frameworks Increasing the effectiveness of the EMG and strengthening ownership of the EMG amongst its members.

Closure of the Meeting

7. The Chair thanked participants and stressed that the support of each agency is critical to the work and success of the EMG.

Annex: List of participants

#	Name	Entity
<i>Heads/Deputies of UN entities and MEAs</i>		
1.	Ms. Inger Andersen, Chair of the Environment Management Group and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
2.	Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions	BRS
3.	Dr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity	CBD
4.	Ms. Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	CITES
5.	Ms. Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	CMS
6.	Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	DESA
7.	Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support	DOS
8.	Ms. Najat Mokhtar, Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear	IAEA
9.	Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union	ITU
10.	Mr. Todd Howland, Director of the Development, Economic and Social Issues, OCHCR	OHCHR
11.	Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands	RAMSAR
12.	Ms. Andrea Meza Murillo, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification	UNCCD
13.	Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
14.	Mr. Antonio Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa	UNECA
15.	Ms. Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe	UNECE
16.	Ms. Ligia Noronha, Secretary of the Environment Management Group and UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of UNEP, New York Office	UNEP
17.	Ms. Lidia Brito, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences and Applications, UNESCO	UNESCO



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18.	Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme	UN-HABITAT
19.	Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive Director	UNWTO
20.	Mr. Andrew Harper, Special Advisor on Climate Action, UNHCR	UNHCR
21.	Mr. Ciyong Zou, Deputy to the Director General and the Managing Director of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development	UNIDO
22.	Ms. Yana Brugier, Cabinet Directorate and External Relations & Partnerships Coordinator	UPU
23.	Dr. Ailan Li, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations	WHO
24.	Mr. Edward Kwakwa, Assistant Director General, Global Challenges and Partnerships Sector	WIPO
Heads , Observer Members		
25.	Ms. Kirsten Schuijt, Director General of WWF International	WWF <i>Observer</i>
Senior Representatives		
26.	Ms. Maaike Jansen – Director of the CEB Secretariat	CEB
27.	Ms. Helena Fraser, Director	DCO
28.	Mr. Sangmin Nam, Director, Environment and Development Division	ESCAP
29.	Ms. Reem Nejdawi, Chief of Food and Environment Policy Section	ESCWA
30.	Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Director Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment	FAO
31.	Ms. Florence Descroix-Comanducci, Director of the IAEA Environment Laboratories	IAEA
32.	Mr. Juan Carlos Mendoza Casadiegos, Director of Environment, Climate, Gender and Social inclusion	IFAD
33.	Mr. Moustapha Kamal Gueye, Global Coordinator, Green Jobs Programme	ILO
34.	Mr. Fredrik Haag, Head of the Office for the London Convention/Protocol and Ocean Affairs	IMO
35.	Ms. Eva Mach, Head of Environmental Sustainability	IOM
36.	Ms. Karen Suassuna, Senior Programme Officer - Green and Inclusive Value Chains	ITC
37.	Ms. Karine Siegwart, Senior Policy Advisor	IUCN <i>Observer</i>
38.	Ms. Sheilagh Louise Henry, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer	OCHA
39.	Ms. Aparna Mehrotra - Director, UN System Coordination Division	UN WOMEN

40.	Ms. Paola Albrito, Director	UNDRR
41.	Mr. Tim Kasten, Director of Policy and Programme Division	UNEP
42.	Mr. Daniele Violetti, Senior Director	UNFCCC
43.	Mr. Ib Petersen – Deputy Executive Director	UNFPA
44.	Mr. George Laryea-Adjei, Director of Programme Group	UNICEF
45.	Ms. Hanny Cueva-Beteta, Head of UNODC Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment	UNODC
46.	Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive Director	UNWTO
47.	Mr. Dirk Glaesser, Director, Sustainable Development of Tourism at World Tourism Organization	UNWTO
48.	Mr. David Kaatrud, Director of the Humanitarian & Development Division	WFP
49.	Ms. Valerie Hickey, Global Director for Environment and the Ocean	World Bank
50.	Mr. Aik Hoe Lim, Director of the Trade and Environment	WTO
51.	Ms. Lin Li, Senior Director, Global Policy and Advocacy	WWF <i>Observer</i>
52.	Ms. Delphine Bost, Senior Officer	Youth Envoy
Accompanying Staff		
53.	Ms. Maria Cardenas Fischer	BRS
54.	Ms. Federica Pietracci	CEB
55.	Mr. Neil Pratt	CBD
56.	Ms. Chantal Robichaud	CBD
57.	Ms. Rouba Abou-Atieh	CMS
58.	Ms. Poorti Sapatnekar	DCO
59.	Ms. Elaine Angeles	DOS
60.	Mr. Lev Neretin	FAO
61.	Ms. Nora Berrahmouni	FAO
62.	Ms. Marie-Aude Even	IFAD
63.	Mr. Theofanis Karayannis	IMO
64.	Ms. Ana Patricia Batalhone	ITC
65.	Mr. Benjamin Schachter	OHCHR
66.	Ms. Maria Rivera	RAMSAR
67.	Ms. Carla Kay Kraft	UN WOMEN
68.	Ms. Xenya Scanlon	UNCCD
69.	Mr. Tim Scott	UNDP



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70.	Ms. Kristin Meyer	UNDRR
71.	Mr. Charles Akol	UNECA
72.	Ms. Judith Beatrice Auma Oduol	UNECA
73.	Mr. Nassim Oulmane	UNECA
74.	Mr. Marco Keiner	UNECE
75.	Mr. Yannis Derbali	UNEP
76.	Mr. Andrea Rizzo	UNEP
77.	Ms. Elena Santer	UNEP
78.	Ms. Isabella Marras	UNEP
79.	Ms. Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida	UNEP
80.	Mr. Rafael Peralta	UNEP
81.	Mr. Thais Narciso	UNEP
82.	Ms. Yunae Yi	UNEP
83.	Mr. Antonio De Sousa Abreu	UNESCO
84.	Ms. Meriem Bouamrane	UNESCO
85.	Mr. Oliver Buehler	UNFPA
86.	Mr. Andrew Rudd	UN-HABITAT
87.	Ms. Lydia Kamau	UN-HABITAT
88.	Mr. Runze Wang	UN-HABITAT
89.	Mr. Philippe Wealer	UNHCR
90.	Mr. Gautam Narasimhan	UNICEF
91.	Ms. Keira Ives-Keeler	UNIDO
92.	Mr. Smail Alhilali	UNIDO
93.	Ms. Sinead Brophy	UNODC
94.	Mr. Markus Woltran	UNOOSA
95.	Ms. Sofía Gutiérrez	UNWTO
96.	Mr. Jan Cherlet	WFP
97.	Mr. Josselyn Mothe	WHO
98.	Ms. Maria Purificacion Neira	WHO
99.	Ms. Laura Paterson	WMO
100.	Ms. Marija Vasileva-Blazev	Youth Envoy
EMG Secretariat		
101.	Mr. Hossein Fadaei, Head of Secretariat	UNEP



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102.	Ms. Jannica Pitkanen, Programme Management Officer	UNEP
103.	Ms. Fatema Johara, Staff Assistant	UNEP
104.	Ms. Bridget Leigh Murphy, Intern	UNEP
105.	Ms. Olivia Kenchington, Intern	UNEP
106.	Ms. Solange Aloa Zongo, Intern	UNEP