

31st Senior Officials Meeting of the United Nations Environment Management Group

Senior Segment, 15 September 2025
15.30 – 17.00 CEST
Online

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members

Summary Report

31st Meeting of the Senior Officials of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG)

Introduction

1. The 31st meeting of the Senior Officials (SOM31) of the United Nations (UN) Environment Management Group (EMG) was held virtually on 15 September 2025. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Inger Andersen, UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). 48 EMG member organisations attended the meeting. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1. The Senior Segment of SOM31 was preceded by a Technical Segment on 3 September 2025.
2. In her opening remarks, the Chair recalled that the EMG, established by a 1999 UN General Assembly resolution, convenes its 31st Senior Officials Meeting amid geopolitical tensions, financial constraints, and ongoing UN reforms challenging the multilateral system. She emphasized that environmental stewardship is essential for peace, prosperity, and human rights, noting that multilateralism remains the only solution to global issues such as climate change, desertification, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Approval of action points for 2025-2026

3. Ms. Ligia Noronha, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of UNEP, in her capacity as Secretary for the EMG, presented the outcome of the Technical Segment, attended by 46 entities. Ms. Noronha provided an overview of the EMG's work in the past year. Eight actions points were proposed for endorsement (Annex 2).
4. The Senior Officials endorsed the continuation of the established workstreams:
 - I. Issue Management Group (IMG) on Biodiversity
 - II. IMG on Pollution
 - III. IMG on Human Rights and the Environment

- IV. UN System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS)
 - V. EMG Nexus Dialogues
5. The Senior Officials endorsed three new workstreams for the EMG to address in 2025 - 2026:
- VI. IMG on Urbanization and the Environment
 - VII. IMG on Gender and the Environment
 - VIII. Explore opportunities for a synergistic implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
6. These endorsements were made with caveats around focus, prioritisation, resource implications and avoidance of duplication with existing mechanisms/initiatives.

Strategic discussion on strengthening system-wide coordination and collaboration on the environment

7. The Chair invited the Senior Officials to provide their perspectives in response to the following questions to guide the future work of the EMG:
- A. How can the UN system strengthen the implementation of global environmental agreements by leveraging the complementary mandates of different UN entities?***
8. UNDP stressed the need to strengthen the visibility and strategic positioning of the EMG, for example by increasing the engagement of the EMG with the HLCP and HLCM. The importance of linking environmental work to other cross-cutting areas such as technology and gender was underlined.
9. ITC proposed developing a "One UN MEA package" that would offer an integrated country-level roadmap blending finance, capacity and technical support, similar to the Climate Promise. A practical operational playbook with templates and reporting guidance, could enable UN entities to integrate their expertise and provide an entry point for financing. ITC also offered to contribute by helping countries transform MEA obligations into opportunities for green trade, sustainable value chains, new markets and SME inclusion.
10. UNICEF encouraged the EMG to complement large-group discussions with small-group coalitions, noting that many interagency collaborations on critical environmental issues are not reported back to the EMG, such as the upcoming UNICEF-WHO flagship report on air pollution, the joint report with FAO on pesticides and the joint report with the Minamata Convention Secretariat on the topic of mercury.
11. ITU drew attention to the Secretary General's cross-cutting priorities of UN80, which include data availability to measure progress, development of green digital standards,

toolkits for regional offices and integration of green digital into climate action rather than treating it as a separate pillar

12. UNRWA stressed the importance of knowledge management and knowledge-sharing in the UN system and referred to Jordan as a good practice case, where 29 UN entities support the government on climate action including MEA implementation.
13. DESA highlighted the potential for the EMG to act as a hub promoting interoperability and joint support at the country level in the context of UN80.
14. UN-Habitat advocated for integrating environment and climate considerations into strategic plans and mobilizing a broader data coalition with external UN partners.
15. UNODC emphasized integrating criminal justice and enforcement perspectives into environmental governance, noting a possible new Protocol on environmental crime under UNTOC. Linking these processes with MEA implementation and including environmental crime data in broader environmental, development, and human rights analyses would improve coherence.

B. *How could the Common Approaches on Biodiversity and Pollution offer pathways to the UN System for a stronger integration of the environment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at global, regional, and national levels?*

16. CBD acknowledged the Common Approach to Biodiversity as a valuable tool for collaboration but proposed updating the approach to reflect the GBF's 23 targets, supported by national plans and a global review. CBD called for greater visibility, less duplication, stronger national delivery, and better integration of biodiversity, land, and climate agendas through coordinated planning, finance, business engagement, and enhanced UN country team support.
17. BRS urged moving beyond siloed reporting and advocated system-wide thinking by linking actions, co-benefits, and root causes, such as connecting resource efficiency with consumption and production to address waste and emissions. BRS outlined priorities including hazardous pesticides, electronic and textile waste, and joint project implementation, while working to strengthen the science-policy interface and engage stakeholders across sectors. Effective communication and metrics to demonstrate UN-wide collaboration are needed.
18. UNFCCC highlighted the UN system-wide approach to NDC 3.0 as a model for overcoming fragmented support and suggested replicating it across other Conventions and related frameworks. It saw UN80 as a key opportunity to enhance coherence and transform UN climate work, with the proposed climate thematic hub as major progress. UNFCCC recommended focusing on policy integration, aligning mandates with national action, and pursuing ambitious implementation to "shift the needle" on system-wide climate action.

19. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands highlighted the opportunities that data innovation holds in overcoming fragmentation and providing integrated country focused solutions.
20. ISA highlighted the importance of long-term data collection, and partnerships with the private sector.
21. UNDRR emphasized the need to integrate biodiversity into national disaster risk reduction strategies, noting that only a few countries currently do so. It stressed the importance of a comprehensive risk management approach linking disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and noted that scaling up such integration will be a critical focus for future efforts.
22. UNHCR stressed the need for ambitious regional and long-term visions, better vulnerability assessment, and stronger financing through international institutions and climate funds. It urged the EMG to serve as a facilitator and coordinator, uniting initiatives and coalitions to maximize impact and prevent fragmentation.
23. UNU stressed the need to “walk the talk” in sustainability efforts. It offered support through training UN focal points on the UN Sustainability Strategy, and assisting with progress reporting, while emphasizing knowledge sharing and active engagement for effective implementation.

C. What can we learn from existing inter-agency platforms, especially those focused on data and analytics, to enhance the UN system's ability to address complex, cross-cutting environment–development – human rights challenges?

24. OHCHR emphasized the cross-cutting role of human rights in environmental action and SDG implementation, supporting a common UN narrative on the right to a healthy environment. It highlighted the Human Rights Indicator framework for policy, assessment, and data collection, and stressed collaboration to track progress and ensure marginalized groups are represented in data.
25. UNESCO urged EMG collaboration with mechanisms like UN-Water, the Biodiversity Liaison Group, and the Indigenous Issues Support Group, citing SDG 6 monitoring through a shared database and country-level capacity-building as good practice. It highlighted the value of a unified voice through the UN Special Envoy on Water and saw the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration as a chance to strengthen integrated delivery.
26. IOM stressed integrating human mobility data with hazard and socio-economic indicators to understand environmental impacts on displacement and migration, using tools like the Climate Mobility Innovation Labs and Displacement Tracking Matrix to support anticipatory action and cross-sector collaboration.

27. UNCCD emphasized integrating data, finance, and system-wide efforts to link environmental and gender priorities through coordinated land-use planning, citing Rwanda and Panama as examples, and urged engaging finance and planning ministries to connect conservation with development and blended finance.
28. ECA urged linking the EMG and its IMGs with regional UN mechanisms to enhance impact, co-create interventions, and empower regional platforms, and proposed creating an IMG on environmental finance to tackle implementation challenges.
29. UNDESA encouraged the EMG to contribute to the on-going work on Beyond GDP, and referred to the the development of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) - an international statistical framework that integrates environmental and economic information to measure a nation's natural capital.
30. IAEA promoted the exploration of data and information sharing through joint databases. For example, the IAEA is developing a database on marine plastics monitoring data with UNEP-GPML to inform policies.
31. UNODC highlighted that platforms which promote data-sharing and joint analysis show the value of evidence-based, cross-sector approaches.
32. WWF called for realistic yet ambitious integration under UN80 and the 2030 Agenda, addressing visibility gaps in the green pillar, strengthening MEA synergies and accountability, and promoting inclusive, community-based conservation.

Other Matters

33. No other matters were raised.

Closure of the Meeting

34. The Chair emphasized the EMG's role as a facilitator and coordinator enabling UN agencies to address complex environmental challenges collectively. She highlighted the need to adopt cross-cutting approaches to biodiversity, pollution, chemicals, and land use beyond single-agency mandates. She concluded by underscoring the opportunity of UN80 and other initiatives to advance coherent, integrated, and impactful strategies, calling for the UN to act with "one voice" and collective strength.
35. The Chair thanked the participants for attending and for their continued support to the EMG.

Annex I: List of participants 2025

#	Name	Entity
Heads/Deputies of UN entities and MEAs (Listed by the organization name in alphabetic order)		
1.	Ms. Inger ANDERSEN, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP/EMG Chair
2.	Ms. Ligia NORONHA, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP/EMG Secretary
3.	Mr. Rolph PAYET, Executive Secretary of the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions	BRS
4.	Ms. Astrid SCHOMAKER, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity	CBD
5.	Ms. Ivonne HIGUERO, Secretary-General for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	CITES
6.	Mr. Navid HANIF, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs	DESA
7.	Mr. Atul KHARE, Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Department of Operational Support	DOS
8.	Ms. Pamela Rosemarie COKE-HAMILTON, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre	ITC
9.	Mr. Tomas LAMANAUSKAS, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union	ITU
10.	Ms. Ilze Brands KEHRIS, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	OHCHR
11.	Dr. Musonda MUMBA, Secretary-General for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	RAMSAR
12.	Ms. Yasmine FOUAD, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	UNCCD
13.	Ms. Rosemary KALAPURAKAL, Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Coordination Office	UNDCO
14.	Mr. Marcos Athias NETO, Assistant Administrator and Director for Bureau for Policy and Programme Services of the United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
15.	Mr. Kamal KISHORE, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN office for Disaster Risk Reduction	UNDRR
16.	Mr. Simon STIELL, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	UNFCCC
17.	Ms. Anacláudia ROSSBACH, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme	UN-Habitat
18.	Ms. Michelle GYLES-MCDONNOUGH, Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research	UNITAR

19.	Ms. Sonja LEIGHTON-KONE, Assistant Secretary-General for and Deputy Executive Director of Management and Policy at the United Nations Office for Project Services	UNOPS
20.	Ms. Natalie BOUCLY, Deputy Commissioner-General (Programmes and Partnerships) of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	UNRWA
21.	Ms. Zoritsa UROSEVIC, Executive Director of the World Tourism Organization	UNWTO
22.	Mr. Bruno Pozzi, Deputy to the Secretary-General	ISA
Senior Representatives (Listed by the organization name in alphabetic order)		
23.	Mr. Asad NAQVI, Director for Implementation Support Division of the Convention of Biological Diversity	CBD
24.	Ms. Sofie Hermann FLENSBORG, Chief of the Legal Unit at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	CITES
25.	Mr. Sangmin NAM, Director of the Environment and Development Division at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	ESCAP
26.	Mr. Kaveh ZAHEDI, Director-Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
27.	Ms. Florence DESCROIX-COMANDUCCI, Director of the Marine Environment Laboratories at the International Atomic Energy Agency	IAEA
28.	Ms. Jane HUPE, Deputy Director of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Environment Branch	ICAO
29.	Mr. Moustapha Kamal GUEYE, Director-Priority action on justification transitions of the International Labour Organization	ILO
30.	Ms. Rania SHARSHR, Director of the Climate Action for the International Organization for Migration	IOM
31.	Mr. Jose Dallo MOROS, Director for the Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources of the International Seabed Authority	ISA
32.	Ms. Chantal-Line CARPENTIER, Head of Trade, Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development for UN Trade and Development	UNCTAD
33.	Mr. Martin KRAUSE, Director of Climate Change Division of the United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
34.	Ms. Jyotsna PURI, Director of Policy and Programme Division of the United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
35.	Mr. Nigel Thomas CRAWHALL, Chief of the section-small islands and indigenous knowledge in the natural sciences sector, science policy capacity building division of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
36.	Mr. Rafael TUTS, Director of Global Solutions Division at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme	UN-Habitat

37.	Ms. Edlam Abera YEMERU, Chief of Knowledge and Innovation Branch at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme	UN-Habitat
38.	Mr. Gernot LAGANDA, Head of Climate and Sustainability at the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF
39.	Ms. Siri BJUNE, Head of the Global Maritime Crime Programme at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC
40.	Ms. Edeltraud GUENTHER, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources	UNU-FLORES
41.	Ms. Sudha BALAKRISHNAN, Chief of UN system coordination and accountability at the UN Youth Office	UN Youth Office
42.	Mr. Richard CHOULARTON, Director of the climate and resilience service of the World Food Programme	WFP
43.	Ms. Amelia STEWART, Climate policy and DRR lead of the World Food Programme	WFP
44.	Ms. Hamou DALILA, Director of External Relations Division at the World Intellectual Property Organization	WIPO
45.	Ms. Valerie HICKEY, Global Director of the Climate Change Group at the World Bank	World Bank
46.	Mr. Aik Hoe LIM, Director of Trade and Environment Division at the World Trade Organization	WTO
47.	Ms. Maaïke JANSEN, Secretary	CEB (<i>Observer</i>)
48.	Mr. Efraim GOMEZ, Global Policy Director of the World Wildlife Fund International	WWF (<i>Observer</i>)
Accompanying Staff (Listed by the organization name in alphabetic order)		
49.	Ms. Maria Cardenas FISCHER	BRS
50.	Ms. Xin Feng	DESA
51.	Ms. Joanna HARVEY	DOS
52.	Ms. Melanie ZIMMER	DOS
53.	Ms. Elena SANTER	ECE
54.	Mr. Carlos Jose DE MIGUEL ALONSO	ECLAC
55.	Ms. Marie-Aude EVEN	IFAD
56.	Ms. Ana Patricia BATALHONE	ITC
57.	Ms. Robin Michelle ZUERCHER	ITU
58.	Ms. Rina KUUSIPALO	OHCHR
59.	Mr. Benjamin SCHACHTER	OHCHR
60.	Mr. Beom-Sik YOO	RAMSAR
61.	Ms. Poorti SAPATNEKAR	UNDCO
62.	Mr. Tim SCOTT	UNDP

63.	Mr. Norwin SCHAFFERER	UNDRR
64.	Mr. Charles Michael AKOL	UNECA
65.	Mr. Nassim OULMANE	UNECA
66.	Ms. Maria Jose BAPTISTA	UNEP
67.	Ms. Isabella MARRAS	UNEP
68.	Ms. Thais NARCISO	UNEP
69.	Ms. Mari NISHIMURA	UNEP
70.	Ms. Kanako OKANO	UNEP
71.	Ms. Abou AMANI	UNESCO
72.	Ms. Joanna MACGREGOR	UNFCCC
73.	Mr. Gustavo Manes GOMIS	UNFCCC
74.	Mr. Bernhard BARTH	UN-Habitat
75.	Mr. Andrew RUDD	UN-Habitat
76.	Mr. Andrew HARPER	UNHCR
77.	Mr. Philippe WEALER	UNHCR
78.	Ms. Sara LAFONTAINE	UNICEF
79.	Mr. Giovanni BROUSSARD	UNODC
80.	Mr. Niels PETERS WILLIAMS	UNODC
81.	Ms. Nives COSTA	UNOPS
82.	Ms. Juliane DZIUMLA	UNU-FLORES
83.	Ms. Carla Kay KRAFT	UN-Women
84.	Mr. Venge NYIRONGO	UN-Women
85.	Mr. Seemin QAYUM	UN-Women
86.	Mr. Jan CHERLET	WFP
87.	Mr. Jeremy FARRAR	WHO
88.	Mr. Ryszard FRELEK	WIPO
89.	Ms. Laura PATERSON	WMO
90.	Ms. Sandra AVÉROUS-MONNERY	WTO
91.	Ms. Federica PIETRACCI	CEB (<i>Observer</i>)
92.	Ms. Sofie Sandstrom JAFFE	IUCN (<i>Observer</i>)
93.	Mr. Luca CHINOTTI	WWF (<i>Observer</i>)
EMG Secretariat		

94.	Mr. Hossein FADAEI, Head of Secretariat	EMG
95.	Ms. Jannica PITKANEN, Programme Management Officer	EMG
96.	Ms. Fatema JOHARA, Programme Management Assistant	EMG

Annex II: Action Points

Summary of Action Points

I. Issue Management Group on Biodiversity

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Agree to extend the Issue Management Group on Biodiversity to continue its work to promote coordinated implementation of the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity, including by raising awareness and creating tailored guidance for regional and country-level application in partnership with relevant UN entities and groups.

II. Issue Management Group on Pollution

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Agree to extend the Issue Management Group on Pollution to support the operationalization, raise awareness, and monitor progress on the UN Common Approach to Pollution and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, good practice and successes achieved in the UN system, including at the regional level, within and outside of the UN system.

III. Issue Management Group on Human Rights and the Environment

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

Agree to extend the Issue Management Group on Human Rights and Environment to:

- a. Launch consultations across the UN system to gauge interest in and potential pathways toward a common approach for the implementation of the Human Right to a Healthy Environment;

- b. Subject to support among UN entities, proceed with the development of a common approach;
- c. Complete ongoing tasks identified in the workplan 2023-2025;
- d. Conduct a review of the IMG's mandate and role after the completion of the current workstreams to evaluate the possible continuation of its functions inside or outside of the EMG.

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

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Request the EMG Secretariat to further enhance and refine the SWFS dashboard visualizing information environmental efforts in the UN system

V. Issue Management Group on Urbanization and the Environment

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Agree to establish an Issue Management Group on Urbanization and the Environment to facilitate a coordinated approach to the implementation of the UN System-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development.

VI. Issue Management Group on Gender and the Environment

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Agree to establish an Issue Management Group on Gender and the Environment to strengthen a coherent, gender-responsive and women's rights-based approach to environmental action throughout the UN system.

VII. EMG Dialogues

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Agree to continue the EMG dialogue series to explore cross-cutting and nexus issues, foster collaboration, and support the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, with outcomes that could also inform relevant intergovernmental and multilateral processes.

VIII. Opportunities for synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements

Suggested Action

The Senior Officials:

- a) Invite EMG members to consider creating an Issue Management Group to identify opportunities for UN system support to the synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements around climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, chemicals, waste and pollution, with a particular focus on analytics and the generation, sharing, and dissemination of knowledge to enhance resource efficiency and optimize allocation.