

## Options for a possible UN System wide approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards

### A first consultation on opportunities, challenges, and the way forward

#### Final Workshop Report

On 24 June, the [Environment Management Group](#) (EMG) of the United Nations held a first consultative workshop to consider a system-wide approach to environmental and social safeguards. The workshop was hosted by the World Bank in Washington D.C., and co-chaired by UNDP and UNEP. The workshop responded, in part, to the request made by the Senior Officials of the EMG to hold a wide-ranging consultative process and prepare a report that outlines options for a common UN system approach<sup>1</sup> to safeguards.

The **objective** of the workshop was to consider the main opportunities and challenges related to environmental and social safeguards in the UN system, and agree on a process and next steps to prepare an approach to safeguards in the UN system for consideration by the EMG senior officials meeting in November 2010. There were 18 participants, representing 11 UN organisations, plus the World Bank Group.

Please see the workshop objective, agenda, and list of participants in **Annex A**, and the overview of workshop proceedings in **Annex B**. The terms of reference for the consultation process, the workshop agenda, the briefing note and all presentations and materials from the workshop are available at [www.unemg.org/safeguards](http://www.unemg.org/safeguards)

#### **Summary of discussion:**

By the close of the workshop, participants welcomed the consultative process and agreed that there was a rationale for a common set of safeguards. Common UN system safeguards would:

- Provide a coherent, focused set of principles and minimum expectations for UN-supported initiatives, with enough flexibility to fit respective operational challenges.
- Strengthen organisational incentives to develop skills and expertise for supporting safeguard implementation and thereby improving sustainability performance.
- Provide a common reference point and language for UN staff and for country partners and thereby reduce the number and complexity of different agency procedures including at country level.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes, and enable the system to share knowledge, learn together, and improve in a more systematic manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft Terms of Reference for the Consultative Process on Options for a Common Approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards in the UN system, EMG Secretariat, March, 2010.

- Finally common safeguards would demonstrate to donors and other stakeholders that the UN has a credible, coherent approach, built on global best practices, and improve the ability of the UN to access funding, including through Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs).

A number of key points were identified by participants for the ongoing consultation process:

- Making the case for common safeguards needs careful thought and preparation, and the linkage of environmental and social safeguards needs to be carefully framed. This may involve a different label for “common safeguards” which could be understood as imposing excessive conditionality on agencies.
- Resources and staff capacity are seen as being essential if common safeguards are to move beyond well-meaning statements of principles towards implementation.
- Flexibility and adaptability in the approach are essential. Organisations may have difficulty adopting and implementing safeguards that are too rigid or prescriptive, because safeguards would apply to a number of different UN mandated initiatives.
- Common safeguards should build-upon or use existing tools or approaches that have been accepted by member states. The MDG Carbon Facility’s environmental and social principles are in-line with the UN Global Compact principles, and other safeguard approaches, that are widely recognized within the UN system. The MDG Carbon Facility safeguards therefore offer a very useful model for common safeguard principles for the UN system.
- Terminology differences across agencies must be addressed with a common glossary. There is a real risk of confusion if different agencies start to use different terms.

In addition to the questions identified in section 5 of the briefing note, participants identified additional questions related to the scope and ambition of the initiative. Further consultations must attempt to answer:

1. How far should safeguards apply to interventions and how far to internal management systems? Does the EMG exercise cover mainly the former or both?
2. Can various common entry points for safeguards across the UN-system be identified and categorized? Can they be prioritized by first identifying those decision-making processes that clearly need to apply safeguards?
3. How should safeguards be applied in emergency (e.g. peacekeeping and humanitarian) settings? How will flexibility and sequencing be considered?
4. Should the UN seek a common or harmonized approach to safeguards? Should the safeguards be mainly normative or prescriptive?
5. Should there be one integrated environmental and social safeguards policy or two separate environmental and social safeguards policies?

To take the initiative forward, participants identified other groups or individuals that should be engaged, mainly: Humanitarian organisations, particularly those involved with Sphere, and Convention and Treaty participants (e.g. CBD), as well as the IMG on Sustainability management. Longer term, consultations will be needed with Governing bodies, and External stakeholders, including donors, NGOs and foundations. The events and public attention centre on Rio +20 in 2012 may offer an opportunity to launch a set of common safeguards. This milestone could act as a key incentive to accelerate progress.

## **Next Steps**

Participants gave broad support to a proposed road map for the consultative process (see Table), although at the same time expressing concerns that the timeline is likely to be too ambitious, given the proximity of summer and the need to engage many more organizations in the process, to complete the inventory, and for organisations to “sell” common safeguards internally. A 2-3 page “flyer” offering a plain language description of safeguards and the rationale for a common approach was seen as a priority to support agency discussions. The inventory (already under way) was seen as being critical to the next steps, because it will help to clarify the different types of decisions and initiatives that may be subject to safeguards, and enable agencies to see their place in the initiative. Given the broad TOR and the need for additional consultations, it could be appropriate to provide a progress report to the next Senior Officials meeting in September 2010. The progress report could: provide a definition of safeguards and the rationale for a common approach, describe the key findings from the inventory and major challenges, and identify options for continuing the consultation process.

Table: The roadmap for the consultative process:

### **Phase I - Development of consultative process**

- Hold a 1<sup>st</sup> workshop in June to clarify any outstanding concerns about the rationale for a common approach to environmental and social safeguards and to agree on information needs and roadmap for the consultative process.
- Establish a drafting group that will prepare the background note on safeguards and recommendations.

### **Phase II – Identify options**

Prepare a background report that identifies scope and conceptual options for a common approach to environmental and social safeguards in the UN. The background report is based on:

- Key informant interviews with focal points to the consultative process on safeguards
- An inventory of current safeguard policies and practices in the UN system
- A gap analysis which defines common elements, cross-cutting environmental and social risks and a cost-benefit analysis of ad-hoc versus common environmental and social safeguards in the UN.

### **Phase III – Formulate recommendations**

- Present a progress report to the 16th senior officials meeting of the EMG in 2010.
- Hold a 2<sup>nd</sup> consultative workshop to agree on gap-analysis and options, and to formulate a recommended conceptual framework for a common approach to safeguards.
- Prepare a background document and recommendations for the 17<sup>th</sup> senior officials meeting of the EMG in spring 2011
- Hold a 3<sup>rd</sup> consultative workshop to discuss and refine the recommended framework on safeguards as necessary
- Prepare a statement for the CEB spring session 2011.

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To take the work forward, a preliminary drafting group was identified including:

- Ingunn Lindeman, EMG
- Holly Mergler, UNDP
- WFP (SM to be announced)
- UNEP (SM to be announced)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop was proposed tentatively for the period 27 Sept-8 October. Geneva was recommended as the venue due to the location of a large number of UN headquarters and conventions, and due to Geneva being the “humanitarian” capital of the UN. For these reasons there would be greater likeliness to have more agencies participate. The workshop could: Consider the results of the inventory, develop a final definition and rationale for common safeguards, and consider options for presentation to the EMG Senior Officials and the CEB.

## Annex A: Workshop objective, agenda, and list of participants

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### EMG first consultative workshop on safeguards

24 June 2010  
World Bank Group, Washington DC<sup>2</sup>

### EMG

17 June  
Distribution:  
representatives to the  
EMG consultation  
process

## Options for a possible UN System wide approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards

### A first consultation on opportunities, challenges, and the way forward

#### Overall objective

By the end of the workshop, participants will have considered the main opportunities and challenges related to environmental and social safeguards in the UN system, and agreed on a process and next steps to prepare an approach to safeguards in the UN system for consideration by the EMG senior officials meeting in November 2010.

#### Provisional Annotated Agenda

24 June 2010
<p><i>Registration, coffee and light breakfast (8:30 – 9:00)</i></p> <p><b>1. Introduction 9:00-9:30</b> <i>To introduce participants and the rationale for the EMG consultative process on safeguards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Welcome (Mr. Stephen Lintner, World Bank)</li><li>- Opening remarks and objectives (Ms. Maryam Niamir-Fuller, UNEP &amp; Ms. Anne-Marie Sloth Carlsen, UNDP)</li><li>- Introduction of the participants</li><li>- Adoption of agenda</li></ul> <p><b>2. Terms of Reference for the EMG consultative process and preliminary background information (9:30:00-10:30)</b> <i>The workshop will explore why the UN should consider a common approach to safeguards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduction to the EMG consultative process on safeguards (Mr. Hossein Fadaei, EMG)</li><li>- Presentation of the draft terms of reference (10 min) (Ms. Ingunn Lindeman, EMG)</li><li>- Presentation on rationale for a common approach to safeguards and preliminary background information (20 min) (Mr. Alexander MacKenzie)</li><li>- Clarifying questions</li></ul>

The workshop is hosted by the World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW Washington, DC 20433. To enter the World Bank buildings, you will need a building pass. Please make sure that you have filled in the registration form and returned it to Diane Flex ([dflex@worldbank.org](mailto:dflex@worldbank.org)) before 22 June. When you arrive, please go to the visitor entrance at the east side of the Main Complex building to collect your building pass. You will need a photo ID to get the pass. We will make sure that someone meets you at the visitor entrance to escort you across to the J building and conference room JB1-075.

>>Break, 10:30-10:45

### **3. Agency perspectives 10:45-1:00**

*The workshop will be presented with examples of experiences with safeguards: benefits, challenges, and lessons-learned. Participants will also be invited to share their experiences and key safeguards measures. At the end of the session, participants will be invited to revisit the rationale and objectives for a common approach to safeguards*

- The World Bank (15 min)
- The IFC (15 min)
- UNDP (15 min)
- UNEP (15 min)
- Tour de Table – participants are invited to describe their safeguard measures and to share key documents with the consultative group.
- Plenary discussion: Should there be any changes to the rationale for a UN wide common approach to safeguards in the briefing note?

## **BUFFET LUNCH (1:00-2:00)**

### **4. Exploring the information requirements for the consultation process (2:00-4:00)**

*The workshop will discuss the information needed to 1) clarify the scope for safeguards and 2) identify options for a conceptual framework. The information requirements identified will help towards the development of the background note on safeguards.*

- Group exercise: Working in 3 groups, participants reflect on the discussions from the morning and identify some of the key questions and issues that will need to be addressed in the background paper, as well as the key informants that will need to be involved (Mr. Alexander MacKenzie)

Groups are: (1) processes, (2) standards, and (3) internal compliance and accountability matters

- Plenary session

>>Break, 4:00-4:15

### **5. Planning the roadmap for the EMG consultative process and next steps (4:15-5:15)**

*The workshop will reflect on its discussions and revisit the scope, objectives and timetable of the EMG consultative process and revise the TOR as needed*

- Presentation of the revised timetable, role of drafting group and proposed next steps (10 min) (Ms. Ingunn Lindeman, EMG)
- Plenary discussion, agreement/reservations
- Invitation to join the drafting group

### **6. Closing & Evaluation ( 5:15-5:30)**

## List of Participants

1. DFS/DPKO  
Sophie Ravier
2. FAO  
Sharon-Brennen Haylock
3. IFAD  
Tom Pesek
4. UNDP  
Anne Marie Sloth Carlsen  
Holly Mergler
5. UNEP  
Maryam Niamir-Fuller
6. UNESCO  
Christine Alfsen
7. UNIDO  
Georgios Anestis
8. UN Office at Vienna  
Dennis Thatchaichawalit
9. Ramsar Secretariat  
Anada Tiega
10. WFP  
Brenda Behan  
Catherine Feeney
11. World Bank  
Stephen Lintner  
Afshan H. Khawaja
12. EMG  
Ingunn Lindeman
13. MacKenzie Development Consulting  
Alexander MacKenzie

By video-conference

14. IAEA  
Maria Betti
15. EMG  
Hossein Fadaei

## **Annex B: Overview of workshop proceedings**

The workshop comprised 5 sessions. The following sections of the report describe each session and provide a summary of the major discussion points. The terms of reference for the consultation process, the workshop agenda, the briefing note and all presentations and materials from the workshop are available at [www.unemg.org/safeguards](http://www.unemg.org/safeguards).

### **1. Introduction**

The host, Mr. Stephen Lintner of the World Bank (Senior Technical Advisor responsible for safeguards) welcomed participants, followed closely by opening remarks from the co-chairs and the EMG. The co-chairs were: Ms. Maryam Niamir-Fuller (UNEP) and Ms. Anne Marie Sloth Carlsen (UNDP). The EMG was represented by Mr. Hossein Fadaei, who offered a brief introduction to the EMG consultative process on safeguards. Afterwards, the objective and agenda of the workshop were reviewed and adopted, and participants introduced themselves.

During the introduction session, the following key points were made:

- Mr. Lintner (World Bank) reviewed the agreement between with the UN for the World Bank to help facilitate the dialogue, share its experiences and lessons, and enhance WB-UN cooperation. He also emphasised that the World Bank is not urging the UN to adopt its safeguard policies and measures, but rather use them as a point of reference.
- Ms. Sloth Carlson (UNDP) emphasised the necessity of safeguards and the importance of getting the UN system in “better shape” to act more coherently. She argued that the ongoing relevance of the UN system and its ability to maintain access to bilateral donors and MDTFs demands a more coherent approach to safeguards in the UN system. And that a more coherent approach will help member states to better recognise the linkages between social and environmental aspects.
- Ms. Niamir-Fuller (UNEP) spoke of the need for greater mainstreaming of environment into UN policies and procedures and of the need for an overarching international environmental governance system.
- Mr. Fadaei (EMG) explained how the EMG could act as a service provider and mechanism for the UN system to meet and find shared solutions to cross cutting issues. He emphasised the exploratory nature of the first consultation, and reiterated the value of a common approach – mainly the ability of the UN system to demonstrate a current and coherent approach to safeguards for UN supported initiatives.

### **2. Terms of Reference for the EMG consultative process and preliminary background information**

In session 2, Ms. Ingunn Lindeman of the EMG reviewed the draft terms of reference for the consultative process. She reminded the group that the EMG requirement is to identify options for the development of a common approach to safeguards. This involves exploring the need for safeguards and potential approaches to safeguards. The group is not expected to start developing the actual safeguards policy at this stage. Mr. Alexander MacKenzie (consultant to the EMG) presented a preliminary analysis of safeguards in the UN system and a rationale for common safeguards. Clarifying questions followed.

The linked presentations generated useful clarifying questions and points on the situation of safeguards in the UN system, and the overall rationale for a common approach:

- DPKO/DFS pointed out that the briefing note and presentation under-played the importance of large-scale infrastructure development (e.g. camps, airports, roads) in humanitarian and peace and security operations.
- WFP raised the issue of how far safeguards would affect both external and internal operations. The note and presentation position safeguards as mainly relating to cooperation interventions (like programmes and projects). But for some organisations, like WFP, DPKO/DFS, operations such as food distribution are closely linked with internal processes like transport and procurement. Going forward a common safeguards approach would have to delineate how far safeguards will touch upon internal agency processes, as well as the links to ongoing efforts such as the IMG on [Sustainability Management](#) .
- UNIDO encouraged the EMG to examine the experiences of the Delivering as One pilots to glean lessons for how to approach a common safeguards initiative.
- UNDP emphasised the importance of reaching out to the entire system by using inclusive concepts and language, and be careful not to exclude work on e.g. conventions. Future EMG reports should use a generic term such as “UN-supported initiative” instead of policies, programmes and projects.
- UNEP raised the issue of scope. The TOR and briefing note strongly suggest that success in this work will depend on defining a clear scope for safeguards. In addition, UNEP questioned the argument that there was emerging consensus on environmental safeguards, but less for social safeguards. The inventory should be used as a basis for making this determination. Also UNEP observed that while there is consensus on safeguards for short term impacts, there less consensus on how to predict and manage long term impacts.
- IFAD reminded the group that a top line integrated approach would be an important success factor for a common approach to safeguards.
- The World Bank addressed concerns over integrated safeguards. Integration is less about developing complex frameworks and tools to integrate the screening and analysis of potential impacts, and much more about using different kinds of analysis together to inform and strengthen decision-making. And that this should be done from day 1 and not just at one or several points in time.
- UNESCO raised the concern over how far the UN would “go public” with a common safeguard approach. For example, would it become part of the UN “brand” with a broad public information campaign? The extent to which a common approach to safeguards would be announced beyond implementing partners, and linked to public information and disclosure is an issue that will be need to be addressed to the senior officials of the EMG.

### **3. Agency Perspectives**

Session 3 served to showcase different agency perspectives on safeguards. Three (3) organisations (World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP) presented their experiences with safeguards, including benefits, challenges, and lessons-learned. Participants shared a wide range of useful points and lessons. This section offers a summary only. Please refer to the presentations and background materials at [www.unemg.org/safeguards](http://www.unemg.org/safeguards).

#### *World Bank*

- The World Bank presentation emphasised the iterative nature of developing organisational safeguards. The Bank’s safeguard policies have evolved over 30 years, and continue to evolve. It remains a work in progress, defined by a high level of ongoing staff engagement across the Bank’s divisions. The policies have been subject to broad public consultations. The Bank has used an intensive engagement process with stakeholders, including the Board

of Governors, resulting in very broad ownership. As a result, the Bank's safeguard policies are used as guidance by many organisations and governments world-wide.

- The World Bank's safeguard policies focus on how to deal with the potential impacts and risks from its investments. It is accepted internally that the costs of applying safeguard measures are more than offset by the reduced project costs over time, due to early and consistent engagement to anticipate negative impacts and modify project design and implementation.
- A key result of the Bank's safeguard policies is greatly increased transparency in decision-making, linked to effective implementation by borrowers.
- The Bank cautioned the UN to not act prematurely to set out rules and procedures. Based on their experience it is better to work iteratively by first laying-out a set of clear expectations and seek the widest possible buy-in and ownership.

#### *UNDP*

- UNDP does not have an institution-wide framework for environmental or social safeguards. However, different elements of safeguards are included in UNDP's programming procedures.
- UNDP is in the process of developing an environmental safeguard approach for programming which would include an overarching environmental sustainability and climate change resiliency policy and an environmental screening procedure (including climate change) for all projects.
- Several key challenges were highlighted including staff capacity to support implementation and a debate over when environmental assessment was needed as a pre-condition to UNDP engagement or rather when UNDP should support countries mainstreaming environment into their own processes and policies. In this regard, UNDP has distinguished between policy advisory support and more tangible programmes and projects.
- A key motivating factor was to prevent the proliferation of programme and project-specific safeguard measures.
- The MDG Carbon Facility safeguard approach was presented in detail as a case.
- Overall, UNDP is experiencing increasing demand from stakeholders to demonstrate safeguards are in place. Internally, an integrated approach to safeguards is needed, but this has not moved forward. A set of common safeguards would provide added impetus and would bring UN up to par with international best practice.

#### *UNEP*

- The UNEP presentation began with a summary of some of the un-intended risks and impacts from UN support in emerging areas: renewable energy, waste management, biosafety and nanotechnology.
- UNEP has upwards of 20 policies/agreements/ decisions which require UNEP as a UN agency to address social issues.
- UNEP/GEF is piloting E&S safeguards (2009-10) involving screening checklists for initial project development (pre-PIF) and appraisal stages.
- Safeguards offer the UN an opportunity to innovate and make normative frameworks more operational.
- Key challenges identified for safeguards: Defining the system boundary (temporal, spatial and thematic); Minimizing the burden of reporting; Application of UN-internal management safeguards; and Monitoring compliance.
- Issues for UN-wide harmonization include: Defining the "minimum" standard, Independent validation; monitoring, training and "help desk" functions.

All participants were invited to share brief verbal points on their organisations' safeguard policies and experiences, and any comments on the rationale and process, so far. The following are very brief summaries of participants' contributions:

*RAMSAR* applies many guidelines (wetlands, participation, urban development near rivers, lakes, coastal areas) but no overarching principles or framework.

*UNIDO* safeguard measures involve a multi-stage screening process with integrated socio-economic dimensions. The 3 stages are:

- Review and screening of the overall programme/ project concept, conducted by a committee chaired by the Managing Director of PTC and comprising the PTC Directors, the Senior GEF Coordinator and key managers of the Regional Strategies and Field Operations Division (RSF), while the Evaluation Group is occupying an advisory function;
- Intra-divisional group appraisal of the detailed technical design and indicators, using a mix of economic, social and environmental criteria;
- Final appraisal by the Programme Approval and Monitoring Committee; and
- Specific issues of importance are dealt with by internal committees, e.g. gender issues.

*WFP* has no corporate safeguards policy, but different safeguard measures are embedded with different divisions and units (e.g. a comprehensive gender strategy in food aid, greening of logistics, environmental review of operations such as roads, energy requirements associated with food basket composition, reduction of GHG emissions under the Climate-neutral strategy). While *WFP* welcomes an overall framework of common safeguards, *WFP* urges the consultative group to think early on about the need to implement any policies with increasingly constrained resources. Attention must be paid to shared capacity and resources to support implementation and monitoring. A common, not harmonized, approach may be preferable.

*UNESCO* has no corporate policy, but does have specific "cultural safeguard" measures to protect heritage sites. The measures would normally comprise normative standards, guidelines and auditing. It was pointed out that there is a wide variety of approaches and terminology. Accountability for common safeguards will be a major issue that must be addressed at the outset.

*UNODC* commented on the usefulness of the different agency mandates and presentations as a way to share experiences. It assists with safeguards in the context of local crop-replacement and disclosure of chemicals used to manufacture drugs. Resources for implementation and accountability are two key challenges it foresees.

*DPKO/DFS* have potential environmental safeguard processes with a dedicated Environmental Policy for UN Field missions adopted in 2009, which is yet to be implemented in the field. The policy includes:

- Baseline Study and Environmental Action Plan
- An Environmental Log to record daily situations and actions related to the environment.
- Personnel Awareness about environmental protection

*DPKO/DFS* are also integrating gender, HIV/Aids issues in their work and a risk management policy is currently being developed. Civil Affairs are also monitoring the unintended consequences of the deployment of the missions.

More comprehensive environmental safeguards – through an environmental impact assessment template - are under development, with the UN mission in Sudan (UNMIS) as a pilot, but it is not yet known to which extent it would be applicable/feasible for all missions' operations. The key challenge for DPKO/DFS is the lack of official mandate to work on environmental issues (gender and HIV/Aids have specific Security Council resolutions), therefore linking to a lack of resources and capacity. Only 5 of 16 peacekeeping missions have one environmental officer, and there is only one person in HQ dealing with environment. With 6 months rotation periods for military staff and no mandate for environment, there will be significant institutional challenges to implement safeguards in a consistent manner. The IMG work on climate inventory and sustainable procurement clearly showed as well the very high political sensitivity of Member States on any related matters, for the UN Secretariat and for UN peacekeeping in particular. The question of organisations' respective mandates should be taken into account throughout the process. The promotion of common safeguards may have to be positioned differently in each organisation, for example, "improving the health, safety and security of mission staff, troops, and local community". Institutionally, DPKO/DFS question the value of linking environmental and social assessment. An overarching framework and principles and voluntary templates for reference are useful, but mandatory measures and tools may be too ambitious.

FAO does not have a corporate safeguards policy, but like other agencies, programme and project specific measures (e.g. EIA/SIA for avian influenza initiatives).

*IFAD finds a common approach to safeguards timely, because it is implementing environmental and social procedures. IFAD has corporate environmental and social assessment (ESA) procedures, based on 10 institutional principles. At the policy and programme levels, Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) are used to: Identify key environmental and social issues in the earliest stages of decision-making. Project impact assessments address specific environmental and social issues, informed by the considerations raised in the SEA. All prior to loan negotiation and board approval of the country programme, ESA stages involve:*

- Environmental Screening and Scoping (ESS);
- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) as needed; and
- ESIA Review and Recommendations.

IAEA has no corporate policy on safeguards, but many guidelines that serve as safeguards (e.g. guidelines on climate change, gender).

#### **4. Exploring the information requirements for the consultation process**

Immediately following lunch and before the group work in session 4, the co-chairs "*checked-back*" with participants to gauge the "*appetite*" for common safeguards. Participants welcomed the initiative and agreed there was a rationale for a common set of safeguards. Key concerns include:

- The ambition level of common safeguards, with some participants urging a light, principles focus, and others wondering about accountability and resources;
- The feasibility of doing environmental and social together; and
- The need to think and plan carefully about presenting the rationale and approach, including a different label for "common safeguards" which may be seen as imposing conditionality on agencies.

In session 4, participants were formed into 2 groups. Reflecting on the presentations and discussions from the earlier sessions, and following consideration of different examples of safeguard systems, the groups were requested to:

- Identify elements or approaches that should be considered going forward;
- Frame the key questions or issues that will need to be addressed in the next steps; and
- Identify who else (groups or individuals) that should be engaged to take the initiative forward.

The following is a summary of the major discussion points:

A number of key points were identified by participants for the ongoing consultation process:

- Making the case for common safeguards needs careful thought and preparation, and the linkage of environmental and social safeguards needs to be carefully framed. This may involve a different label for “common safeguards” which could be understood as imposing excessive conditionality on agencies.
- Resources and staff capacity are seen as being essential if common safeguards are to move beyond well-meaning statements of principles towards implementation.
- Flexibility and adaptability in the approach are essential. Organisations may have difficulty adopting and implementing safeguards that are too rigid or prescriptive, because safeguards would apply to a number of different UN mandated initiatives.
- Safeguards could be more effective if there is a UN-wide Environment Policy in place.
- Common safeguards should build-upon or use existing tools or approaches that have been accepted by member states. The MDG Carbon Facility’s environmental and social principles are in-line with the UN Global Compact principles, and other safeguard approaches, that are widely recognized within the UN system. The MDG Carbon Facility safeguards therefore offer a very useful model for common safeguard principles for the UN system.
- In a further elaboration, the inventory could also help to identify the kinds of decision-making processes that should be subject to safeguards (e.g. project approval – yes). There is also a need to differentiate between safeguards at the strategic/programmatic level and at project level.
- Options for common safeguards should be informed by the inventory which should categorize different types of UN-supported initiatives and help to identify which kinds of decision-making processes would benefit from a safeguard approach. It is possible to envisage a high, medium and low intensity safeguard approach to decisions with various degree of risk.
- The inventory should identify clusters of organizations with similar needs for safeguards.
- A safeguard approach needs to be both preventive and mitigative, not only focussing on good planning but also carrying through to implementation. However, depending on the decision-making process, emphasis on safeguards at the planning stage or implementation stage may vary.
- Terminology differences across agencies must be addressed with a common glossary. There is a real risk of confusion if different agencies start to use different terms.
- Good examples of safeguards in the public and private sectors would be useful for the consultative process and its analysis of options.

In addition to the questions identified in section 5 of the briefing note, participants identified additional questions related to the scope and ambition of the initiative. Further consultations must attempt to answer:

1. How far should safeguards apply to interventions and how far to internal management systems? Does the EMG exercise cover mainly the former or both?
2. Can various common entry points for safeguards across the UN-system be identified and categorized? Can they be prioritized by first identifying those decision-making processes that clearly need to apply safeguards?
3. How should safeguards be applied in emergency (e.g. peacekeeping and humanitarian) settings? How will flexibility and sequencing be considered?
4. Should the UN seek a common or harmonized approach to safeguards? Should the safeguards be mainly normative or prescriptive?
5. Should there be one integrated environmental and social safeguards policy or two separate environmental and social safeguards policies?
6. Should the safeguards be mainly preventive and/or mitigative?

Other groups or individuals that should be engaged to take the initiative forward include:

- Humanitarian organisations, particularly those involved with Sphere;
- Convention and Treaty participants (e.g. CBD).

Longer term:

- Governing bodies.
- External stakeholders, including donors, NGOs and foundations.
- The Rio +20 events planned for 2012 offer an opportunity to launch a set of common safeguards. This could act as a key incentive to move the initiative along.

## **5. Planning the roadmap for the EMG consultative process and next steps**

Building on the previous sessions, session 5 focused on the next steps. Ms. Ingunn Lindeman presented the proposed road map for the consultative process. This was followed by a plenary discussion to further refine the scope and timeline for the process, and to form a drafting group that will be responsible for preparing further documents and reports.

Key points:

- There was some concern that the timeline may be too ambitious, given the need for organisations to “sell” common safeguards internally.
- A 2-3 page “flyer” offering a plain language description of safeguards and the rationale for a common approach is needed to support agency discussions.
- The inventory (already under way) is seen as being critical to the next steps, because it will help to clarify the different types of decisions and initiatives that may be subject to safeguards, and enable agencies to see their place in the initiative.
- Bilateral interviews and cluster meetings were seen as important steps to raise awareness and common understanding of safeguards.
- Given the broad TOR given by the EMG senior officials, it may be important to take additional time for consultations and provide a progress report to the Senior Officials meeting in November. The progress report could: provide a definition of safeguards and the rationale for a common approach, describe the key findings from the inventory and major challenges, and identify options for continuing the consultation process.

A preliminary drafting group was identified including:

- Ingunn Lindeman, EMG
- Holly Mergler, UNDP

- WFP (SM to be announced)
- UNEP (SM to be announced)

A 2<sup>nd</sup> more technical workshop was proposed, tentatively, for the period 27 Sept-8 October. The 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop could: consider the results of the inventory, develop a final definition and rationale for common safeguards, and consider options for how a common approach to safeguards could be further developed.

The workshop closed at 5:30p with thanks to the World Bank, the co-chairs, the EMG and participants, and a brief evaluation.