



# UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement      Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente  
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде      برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



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## 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group

19 September 2011

Preparatory technical segment: 9 a.m. – 13:00 p.m.

Senior officials segment: 14:30–17:30 p.m.

Hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Hank Shannon Room, 21st floor, DC 1 building,

1 UN plaza, UN Headquarters, New York

EMG/SOM.17/03

29 August 2011

Distribution: EMG members

## Progress report on ongoing work and suggested directions for further work

### Note by the Chair

### Executive summary

The present note is developed with the aim of supporting the relevant provisional agenda items of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting Environment Management Group (EMG). It provides a progress report on ongoing work, including by the Issue Management Groups (IMGs), and proposes actions and directions for further work. It is suggested that the senior officials:

I) Note the high expectations raised with respect to the ability of the EMG to deliver results in the area of interagency *cooperation on biodiversity* and request the IMG to accelerate its efforts to develop a practical and pragmatic approach to the implementation of the tasks entrusted to the EMG, and report on progress. Decide to extend the work of the IMG until 2015 and expand its terms of reference to include a wider and longer term coordination role so as to advance synergies and interagency cooperation on biodiversity in close coordination with existing mechanisms such as the Biodiversity Liaison Group. Invite the CBD secretariat to serve as a permanent Co-Chair of the IMG other members serving as Co-Chairs on a rotational basis.

II) Approve the EMG report “*Global Drylands, A UN system wide Contribution*”, prepared by the IMG on land, including the statement by the Executive Heads of EMG contained in the report and decide to continue the work of the IMG on land for another two years with a view to implementing the findings of the report and responding to any requests made to the IMG.

III) Welcome the recommendations of the draft report “*Investing in a Green and Inclusive Economy*”, and agree to forward any comments to the EMG secretariat on the draft of the full report, so that it may be finalized in time for distribution to the second inter-sessional meeting of the UNCSD in December 2011; and decide to extend the work of the IMG for another year for it to finalize and submit the report to the Rio+20 preparatory process, follow up on the recommendations of the report and respond to any follow up work that may be requested by the Conference to the UN system on Green Economy.

IV) Welcome the information received on the *international environmental governance* reform efforts and request to be kept informed, especially on issues which are of relevance to the role of EMG in contributing to the *institutional framework for sustainable development*. Senior officials also request the Chair to submit the views expressed during its meeting on the Institutional Framework on Sustainable Development (IFSD) and the future role of the EMG in advancing the interagency dimension of the IFSD as part of the submission set out in action VII.

V) Endorse the report “*Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System*”, including the joint heads of agencies’ statement and the sustainability framework contained in the report, and request the Chair of the EMG to inform the Secretary-General and the UNCSD in 2012 about the initiative. Senior officials also agree to continue the ongoing consultative process under the EMG on environmental and social sustainability in order to support the implementation of the statement.

VI) Approve the recommended approach for voluntary offsetting of GHG emissions by EMG members titled “Carbon Credits - Recommendations for selection and procurement”. Also approve the *Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System* and request the EMG Secretariat to identify possible options for a common structure to support implementation of the strategic plan. Request the Chair to inform the Secretary General and the Chief Executives Board on the Strategic Plan to support establishment of Sustainability Management Systems in all UN organizations. Senior officials commit to implement organization-specific sustainability management systems (SMS) as outlined in the strategic plan. To this end, members are encouraged to design their respective SMS. Senior officials request as well the IMG to continue its work, including by preparing the third edition of the report “Moving towards Climate Neutrality in the UN System”.

VII) Request the Chair of EMG to *submit a summary of its strategic discussions to the secretariat for the UNCSD preparatory process* in response to the invitation from the Second Preparatory Committee of the UNCSD, highlighting: the work of EMG on the green economy, drylands and biodiversity; the development of a framework for environmental and social sustainability in the UN system and views of EMG members on the institutional framework for sustainable development..

VIII) Approve *the work plan for EMG for the period 2012 – 2013*, based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.17/04 to ensure that it fully reflects the actions agreed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources.

IX) Welcome the opportunity to inform the UNEP Governing Council, and through the Council the UN General Assembly, of its work. Senior officials appreciate the guidance received from the Council and request the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of *the report by EMG on its work to the 12<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council* and to members of the Group for their comments.

X) Request the EMG secretariat to circulate to members of the EMG the *date and venue for the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of senior officials* and to consult with members on its agenda.

## Introduction

1. The present note provides a progress report on ongoing work of the Environment Management Group (EMG), including by the Issue Management Groups (IMGs), as well as suggested actions for further work. The note is developed to support the provisional agenda items of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Group.

### 1. The IMG on biodiversity

2. The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of senior officials of the EMG held in September 2010 decided to continue the work of the IMG on biodiversity for another two years to:

a) Implement the findings of the report “*Advancing the biodiversity agenda, A UN system wide Contribution*” and the statement by Executive Heads of EMG members; and

b) Respond to any requests made to the IMG from the UNGA high-level event on biodiversity, the 10th COP of the CBD and the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

3. The meeting also requested the IMG to prepare a submission on the follow up to the UNGA high-level event on biodiversity, the 10th COP of the CBD and any biodiversity aspects of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. CBD COP 10 welcomed the report and called on the EMG to contribute to the international decade on biodiversity 2011-2021. It also invited the EMG “in building on its report to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to identify measures for effective and efficient implementation of the Strategic Plan across the United Nations system and provide a report on its work to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting to be held in May 2012<sup>1</sup> through the Working Group on Review of Implementation and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice”. The bureau of the COP has conveyed to the EMG secretariat a request to be briefed on the progress of EMG at its next meeting.

5. At its meeting held on 14 September 2010, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee sets out the vision of the Secretary-General of ONE UN FOR BIODIVERSITY. Here, the Secretary-General amongst others requested EMG to undertake several steps in order to link the decisions adopted by the governing bodies of the biodiversity related conventions with the implementation activities undertaken by the UN agencies:

(a) Identify specific responsibilities that entities can undertake to make biodiversity conservation integral to their portfolios of activities e.g. in health, agriculture, energy, industry development, trade, water, environment etc based on its Special Report on “*Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-Wide Contribution*”;

(c) Take immediate action to follow-up the work initiated with its Special Report on “*Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-Wide Contribution*”;

(d) Report back on a yearly basis to the SG on the development and implementation of these follow up actions; and

(e) Promote consultation and cooperation between UN agencies and the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions on implementation activities related to those conventions.

6. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 in its decision 26/11 welcomed in particular EMG’s contribution to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its follow-up decision to continue its support for the implementation of the biodiversity agenda across the United Nations system. The Council also encouraged the Group to continue to promote coherence in programming environmental activities in the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as the contribution to the international agenda on biodiversity, including implementation of the relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting.

7. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Issue Management Group on biodiversity (IMG4) was held on 16 February Co-Chaired by the Executive Secretary of the CBD and the Secretary-General of the CITES. At the meeting members agreed to map out their current activities and initiatives in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. The EMG secretariat was tasked with circulating

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<sup>1</sup> Decisions X/2, on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; X/20, on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives; and X/8, on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011–2020.

a matrix for this purpose. The profile of UN system-wide activities arising out of this process was meant to serve as the basis for an agreed approach to an effective and efficient UN system-wide contribution to the Strategic Plan, possibly in the form of an implementation plan.

8. IMG4 also recommended that the EMG Chair take the following actions in order to bring certain matters to the attention of the CEB for consideration during its spring session:

(a) Submit the recommendation of the IMG on the implementation of the report “*Advancing the biodiversity agenda – A UN system wide contribution*” prepared by the Environment Management Group in the light of the discussions of the High Level Event on Biodiversity of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly held in New York on 22 September 2010 and the outcomes of the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya in October 2010;

(b) Recommend that the CEB adopt the attached draft statement (see Annex I), which is an updated version of the statement contained in the EMG biodiversity report. This version reflects the decision of the CBD COP-10 on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Resolutions of the UNGA relating to IPBES<sup>2</sup> and the UN Decade on Biodiversity<sup>3</sup>;

(c) Recommend that the CEB devote its spring meeting in 2015 to review the mid-term implementation of the new strategic plan on biodiversity and request the EMG to ensure effective and efficient UN system-wide implementation of the commitments in the statement and findings of the EMG report, including by supporting coherent implementation at national level *inter alia* through National Actions Plans for the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant action plans, strategies and frameworks.

9. The note “Outcome of the meeting and proposed biodiversity recommendations for consideration by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)” (document EMG/BiodivIMG.7664/04 23 February 2011) was brought to the attention of HLCP, at its 21<sup>st</sup> session, 3-4-March in New York. HLCP decided to bring the recommendations of the IMG to the attention of the CEB and revert to this issue at its next meeting in 2011 to ascertain whether it should play a further role. The report of the HLCP including the work of the IMG was presented to the CEB on 1 April 2011 by the Executive Director of UNEP as Chair of HLCP and EMG emphasizing that the HLCP supported a UN system response to the implementation of the Nagoya Outcomes on biodiversity. The CEB meeting did not have a separate agenda item on biodiversity and did not take any further action on the matter.

10. In follow up to the decision by the IMG4, the EMG Secretariat circulated to the IMG members a matrix to map out their current activities and initiatives, based on the sectoral and cross-cutting chapters of the EMG biodiversity report, which also support the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. The mapping was to serve as the basis for an agreed approach to an effective and efficient UN system-wide contribution to the Strategic Plan, possibly in the form of an implementation plan. Each IMG member was invited to express an interest in taking a lead in a cluster or contribute to the work within a cluster. Members were also invited to suggest focus within the cluster and indicate current activities and initiatives which they believe can contribute to the work within the cluster.

11. So far inputs to the mapping of areas of interest and current activities and initiatives, based on the sectoral and cross-cutting chapters of the EMG biodiversity report, have been provided by CMS, FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNU, UNWTO and IUCN. Concerns have been raised by the CBD Secretariat that the above approach in the matrix does not allow agencies to clearly demonstrate their support to the Aichi Targets or to pay sufficient attention to the need for assisting parties in translating the Aichi targets into national strategies and action plans before COP11. In awaiting further inputs from EMG members, the EMG secretariat has been consulting informally to explore how the approach laid out in the EMG report can best support the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 agreed at the CBD COP10. At the invitation of the EMG Secretariat, the CBD Secretariat has suggested an approach along the lines of that provided in the annex to this report (Annex I).

12. UNESCO has offered to host a meeting of the IMG in early 2012. It has also suggested that senior officials considers the expansion of the terms of reference (TOR) of the IMG to include a wider and longer term coordination role to advance synergies and interagency cooperation on biodiversity in close coordination with existing mechanisms such as the Biodiversity Liaison Group. In light of CBDs role in coordinating the strategic plan and the UN decade on Biodiversity it is proposed that

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution 65/162 of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 65/61 of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly

the CBD secretariat serves as a permanent Co-Chair of the IMG together with another member of the group as a rotating Co-Chair. Finally it is suggested that the TOR of the IMG would expire in 2015. UNESCO has suggested that senior officials consider this proposal for endorsement.

13. The EMG secretariat is consulting with the Co-Chairs and members on a possible date and venue for the next meeting of the IMG. Suggested items for consideration are a) a review of inputs received, b) a revisit of the approach to the preparation of an implementation report on support by the UN system to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and c) modalities for reports to the CBD Bureau, the Secretary General (as requested by his Policy Committee), to UNEP Governing Council (as is the practice) and to the CBD COP 11 through the Working Group on Review of Implementation and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (as requested by CBD COP 10).

***Suggested action I: Directions for the Issue Management Group (IMG) on biodiversity and its support to the implementation of the biodiversity strategic plan and Aichi targets***

1) The senior officials welcome the positive response to the EMG report, “*Advancing the biodiversity agenda –A UN system-wide contribution*”, from the CBD COP10, the UNEP Governing Council and the UN Secretary General’s Policy Committee, and note the high expectations raised with respect to the ability of the EMG to deliver results in the area of interagency cooperation on biodiversity;

2) The senior officials note the attempts made by the Issue Management Group on biodiversity to align implementation of the EMG report with support to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 agreed at the CBD COP10, and request the IMG to accelerate its efforts to develop a practical and pragmatic approach to the implementation of the tasks entrusted to the EMG, and to report on progress to the Secretary General, to the UNEP Governing Council and to the CBD bureau and the COP 11 through the Working Group on Review of Implementation and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

3. The senior officials decide to extend the work of the IMG until 2015 and expand its terms of reference to include a wider and longer term coordination role so as to advance synergies and interagency cooperation on biodiversity in close coordination with existing mechanisms such as the Biodiversity Liaison Group. Senior officials also invited the CBD secretariat to serve as a permanent Co-Chair of the IMG other members serving as Co-Chairs on a rotational basis.

## **2. The IMG on land**

14. The IMG was established to propose modalities for a United Nations system-wide contribution to the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD). This included preparation of a United Nations system-wide rapid response report on drylands and options for a coherent United Nations system-wide contribution to land challenges, including the implementation of the UNCCD 10-year strategic plan.

15. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 in its decision 26/11 encouraged EMG to continue to promote coherence in programming environmental activities in the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as the preparation of a United Nations system-wide contribution to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

16. The second meeting of the Issue Management Group on Land was held via teleconference on 20 December 2010. Participants from 17 agencies contributed detailed information on their activities and priorities on drylands. These inputs were gathered to support preparation of the report “*Global Drylands: A UN System Wide Response*”.

17. An informal meeting of the IMG was held in form of a teleconference on 20 May 2010, hosted by UN Habitat in Nairobi, and considered the zero draft of the report for comments and further guidance.

18. A side event was organized in the margins of the Second Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-2) of the UNCCD and Ninth Session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 9) on 17 February 2011 in Bonn, Germany. The event was attended by Parties, including Austria, Brazil, India, Israel, Switzerland, Uganda and the United States, as well as UN agencies, including FAO, GM, UNCCD, UNFCC, UNFF, UNU and WOCAT. The side event was devoted to a joint presentation by the EMG and the UNCCD of a working draft of the UN system-wide Drylands Report presented in form of a Conference Room Paper<sup>4</sup>.

19. The event's principal aim was to solicit views and guidance from Parties and agencies on the report, as well as next steps. An array of key issues was raised in response to the working draft, in particular surrounding implementation. Parties and UN agencies stressed the need to *promote* synergies, collaboration and partnerships; efficient and targeted investments; support for livelihood improvements initiatives; policy-oriented/relevant research on drylands and their development, and information dissemination and scaling-up of success stories. "*Global Drylands: A UN system wide-response*" has gone through extensive consultation including with Parties at CST and CRIC in and after Bonn.

20. Parties to the Convention noted the draft report with appreciation. The EMG was recognised as a key and concrete vehicle for increasing complementarity and synergies among the Rio Conventions.<sup>5</sup> Parties proposed that the UNCCD Secretariat takes steps to ensure that the views expressed by the Parties on the issue are compiled and included in the annex to the report for consideration by COP 10. The EMG report will become a part of COP10 documentation (as an Information Document) for further consideration and guidance by Parties to the tenth COP in October 2011 in Changwon, Republic of Korea.

21. The report is not intended to be prescriptive, but builds on the existing knowledge, science and experience of the member agencies (including actions already being taken), focused on the positive aspects (economic, social, institutional and environmental) of drylands. The report highlights the importance of global drylands to key emerging issues on the international agenda, including climate change, food security and human settlements, together with options for follow-up action.<sup>6</sup> The premise of the report is that in modern times, drylands in poor countries have tended to become de facto 'investment deserts'; that is, the environmental challenges (aridity, variability) have had their socio-economic counterparts in chronic under-investment. Where this constraint has not applied, in some drylands in rich countries, sustained higher levels of investment have supported enhanced productivity and higher incomes. Such ongoing economic development provides the surest foundation for managing risk (the economic consequence of environmental variability), taking advantage of new or emerging opportunities, and adapting to possible negative climate change. The technologies for such a transition are available, and so the question arises of identifying and overcoming the constraints or barriers to the *re-capitalization* of drylands in poor countries. The UN system has, through the report, positioned itself to be a catalyst in bringing about transformative change. The report sets out a common vision and agenda for UN-wide action on drylands managements and its role in addressing climate change and food security, through a *positive* drylands development and investment approach.<sup>7</sup>

22. The draft report, available on the EMG website, was commented on and finalized by the IMG in August 2011 for consideration and approval of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting. The report may also incorporate guidance from the UN General Assembly's *High-level meeting on desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication* (A/RES/65/160) to be held at UNHQs on 20 September 2011. Plans are to launch the report at COP10 in Korea.

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric9/pdf/crp1eng.pdf](http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric9/pdf/crp1eng.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See ICCD/CRIC(9)/INF.9, and ICCD/CRIC(9)/16 paragraph 38, which invites support to the establishment of partnership agreements with, and synergistic initiatives in the three Rio Conventions.

<sup>6</sup> A feature was included on the current crisis in the Horn of Africa, highlighting UN efforts to build resilience, reduce vulnerability and enhance capacity for disaster management. This situation also emphasises that a long-term, pro-investment approach offer the opportunity to support the population of the Horn of Africa to respond to drought: not only this time, but for the many droughts to come.

<sup>7</sup> Criticism of and challenges to the former 'desertification' paradigm are widely documented including in a UNDP-supported report: Mortimore, M. with contributions from S. Anderson, L. Cotula, J. Davies, K. Facer, C. Hesse, J. Morton, W. Nyangena, J. Skinner, and C. Wolfangel (2009). *Dryland Opportunities: A new paradigm for people, ecosystems and development*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland; IIED, London, UK and UNDP/DDC, Nairobi, Kenya.

***Suggested action II: Continuation of the work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on land***

1. The senior officials welcome with appreciation the preparation by the IMG of the report “Global Drylands, A UN system-wide Contribution” and decide to approve the Global Drylands report including the statement by the Executive Heads of EMG members.
2. The senior officials decide to continue the work of the IMG on land for another two years with a view to:
  - a) implementing the findings of the report “*Global Drylands, A UN system-wide Contribution*” and the statement by Executive Heads of EMG members; and
  - b) responding to any requests made to it from the UNGA high-level event on desertification, land degradation and drought, the 10th COP of the UNCCD and the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012 including the possible consideration of other land-related issues which warrant action by the IMG.

### **3. The IMG on green economy**

The 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group in September 2010 welcomed the progress made by the time-bound Issue Management Group on green economy, including its decision to submit a progress report for the information of the 1st Intersessional meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as the decision to circulate the final draft of the IMG report to the full EMG membership for consideration before the 2nd Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The IMG was established by the 15th Senior Officials Meeting to assess how the United Nations system could more coherently support countries in making the transition to a “green economy” and to work on joint and consistent messaging on measures needed to support the transition.

23. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 in its decision 26/11 encouraged EMG to continue to promote coherence in programming environmental activities in the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as the preparation of a contribution by the United Nations system, identifying existing studies on the green economy, to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
24. Member organizations contributed to the preparation of the report as lead authors or contributors. The membership of the IMG is open-ended, and new additions to the IMG, as well as contributing author agencies, have been welcomed throughout the process.
25. A progress report on the work of the IMG was made available to participants at the First Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD in January 2011. Further information and progress on the report preparation were provided to participants at a side-event at the second Preparatory Committee Meeting of the UNCSD in March 2011.
26. The intensive work of some 35 organizations of the UN system, who are contributing to the work of the IMG on a Green Economy, has resulted in this joint report reaching an advanced state of preparation. Draft text of the full report is available on the password protected part of the website that agencies have been using to share working drafts. In addition, Annex II of the present note contains the main findings from the draft report “Investing in a Green and Inclusive Economy”, including the Introduction, Executive Summary, Conclusions, and Outline indicating lead and contributing agencies.

***Suggested action III: Continuation of the work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on green economy***

1. The senior officials welcome the progress made by the Issue Management Group on a green economy, including its submission of a preliminary report to the second preparatory meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

2. The senior officials welcome the recommendations of the draft report “**Investing in a Green and Inclusive Economy**”, and agree to forward any comments on the draft of the full report by 15 October, so that the report may be finalized in time for distribution to the second intersessional meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in December 2011.
3. The senior officials decide to extend the work of the IMG for another year for it to finalize and submit the report to the Rio+20 preparatory process, follow up on the recommendations of the report and respond to any follow up work that may be requested by the Conference to the UN system on Green Economy.

#### **4. Consultations on international environmental governance**

27. At its eleventh special session, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 24 to 26 February 2010, the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum established a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives to consider the broader reform of the international environmental governance system. The Council decided that the group would also comprise high-level representatives of relevant United Nations agencies, designated through the Environment Management Group. The Chair of the Environment Management Group sought the cooperation of Group’s members in designating a high-level representative from their organization. In all, 14 agencies submitted nominations.

28. At their sixteenth meeting, the Environment Management Group senior officials welcomed the opportunity provided to the Group’s member agencies to contribute to the UNEP report on environment in the United Nations system and the work of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance. The idea of preparing a shorter report on environment in the United Nations was also discussed, but no conclusion was reached, as there were differing views as to the content and purpose of such a paper.

29. The senior officials noted that the current discussions on the reform of international environmental governance could have implications for all Group members and that it was therefore important to facilitate the involvement of United Nations entities and their governing bodies at relevant stages of the reform process. While the senior officials welcomed the invitation by the UNEP Governing Council to contribute to the reform process, it was generally felt that the Group should await specific requests for information from the intergovernmental reform process, before engaging in collective action.

The consultative group of Ministers identified an incremental and a broader reform approach. Under the broader reform approach, a Consultative Group of ministers or their high-level representatives identified a number of potential system-wide responses to the current IEG challenges as identified in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome<sup>8</sup>.

30. The consultations also identified five options for institutional reforms: - a) enhancing UNEP; - b) a new umbrella organisation for sustainable development; - c) a specialised agency such as a World Environment Organisation; - d) possible reforms to ECOSOC and the Commission on Sustainable Development; and – e) enhanced institutional reforms and streamlining of present structures. These options were considered as not mutually exclusive.

31. The UNEP report “Environment in the United Nations System” underwent four rounds of review by the entities of the United Nations system, coordinated through the Environment Management Group, and the content of the report greatly benefited from the numerous substantive comments and inputs received. The report was made available to the consultative group and to the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the UNEP Governing Council as information document UNEP/GC.26/INF/23.

32. While the potential role of the EMG in advancing system-wide options such as for instance a system-wide strategy for environment in the United Nations system and a financial tracking system was discussed, no conclusion was reached. The 26<sup>th</sup> session of the UNEP Governing Council in its decision 26/1 invited the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSD, in its consideration of the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), to consider the options for broader institutional reform identified in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome. The Council also requested the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), to submit a draft decision for consideration by the Council at its twelfth special session on incremental improvements requiring a Governing Council decision. Among improvements being considered is the formal inclusion of EMG

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/Portals/8/documents/Events/NairobiHelsinkioutcomeedited.pdf>

in the Chief Executives Board (CEB). The CPR has requested to be informed in writing about the role of EMG in the wider interagency system and the implications of a possible inclusion.

33. Senior officials may want to be kept informed on the international governance reform efforts, especially on issues which are of relevance to the role of EMG in contributing to a balanced integration of the economic, environmental and social pillars in the institutional framework for sustainable development.

34. Senior officials may also want to consider, under the discussion on the strategic directions of the EMG, how to further strengthen IFSD in a manner which ensures a balanced integration of the economic, environmental and social pillars. Secondly, senior officials may want to consider how IFSD can help accelerate the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

35. Senior officials may also consider the future role of the EMG in advancing the interagency dimension of the IFSD. Members may wish to explore how EMG's work can be better linked, on one hand, with other environmental sustainability issues, such as those on climate change, forests, oceans, water and energy and, on the other hand, with the economic and social pillars of the interagency structure.

***Suggested action IV: Consultations on the environmental pillar of the institutional framework on sustainable development (IFSD)***

1. The senior officials welcome the information received on the international environmental governance reform efforts and request to be kept informed especially on issues which are of relevance to the role of EMG in contributing to the institutional framework for sustainable development.

2. The senior officials request the ED to submit the views expressed during this meeting on the Institutional Framework on Sustainable Development (IFSD) and the future role of the EMG in advancing the interagency dimension of the IFSD as part of the submission set out in action VII.

## **5. Consultations on environmental and social safeguards in the United Nations system**

36. The 16th Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG welcomed the progress made in the consultative process on environmental and social safeguards, and supported the continued development of options for a possible system-wide approach to environmental and social safeguards based on a review of existing policies and guidelines.

37. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 in its decision 26/11 encouraged the EMG to continue advancing the sustainability of policies, management practices and operations in the United Nations system, and the establishment of an agreement to put in place a process for environmental impact assessment and the use of environmental and social safeguards in respect to projects taken up directly by the organizations of the United Nations system.

38. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting, the drafting group of the consultative process, with the help of a consultant, completed a mapping exercise and inter-agency review of existing practices and policies pertaining to social and environmental performance in the UN system. Given the very wide variety of practices, a formal gap-analysis was not possible, but rather emphasis was placed on first-person interviews and experiences shared by early adopters of environmental and social assessment practices, such as IFAD, UNDP and WHO.

39. In March 2011 in Geneva the EMG Secretariat hosted the second consultative meeting on furthering system-wide environmental and social safeguards in the UN. The drafting group presented: 1) findings of the inter-agency review; 2) a revision of the conceptual framework for environmental and social safeguards; and 3) explored options for a common UN approach. WHO joined the drafting group at this time due to that organization's experience with developing its own environmental and social assessment procedures. Key issues identified at the March meeting for consideration included:

(a) Where possible, environmental and social safeguard efforts should identify and use policies and procedures that already exist in the UN system.

(b) A common framework should help UN organizations move towards strengthening environmental and social sustainability in their activities; and resources will need to be made available to realize the increased efficiency and safety gains of such a common approach.

(c) How elements of an environmental and social safeguard strategy are defined and framed is important. For example, how “environment” is defined will effect how people and organizations see their work as relevant to the environmental and social safeguard process.

(d) Safeguards should be seen as supporting the UN’s ability to fulfil its work on poverty reduction and sustainable development, and to support the Paris Declaration.

(e) Elements of the work on safeguards may be able to be combined with the work of the IMG on Sustainability Management, such as developing a support mechanism that services both initiatives.

(f) The need for equivalent social expertise to complement the EMG’s environmental expertise was noted.

(g) Financing for environmental and social safeguard should be built into an organization’s operational budget, and not be seen as an add-on cost.

(h) Senior-level commitment to the framework for environmental and social safeguard should be sought, while also building support from the bottom up.

40. A key outcome of this meeting was to change the terminology from “environmental and social safeguards” to “environmental and social sustainability framework” (which includes safeguards as one of several possible instruments that can be used) to more accurately reflect an approach that is inclusive, flexible and goes beyond “do no harm.”

41. The drafting group met again in June 2011 in Rome to discuss further findings and developments, with the addition of representatives from: 1) organizations developing or revising their institutional safeguards: FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank; and 2) the IMG on Sustainability Management, to further coordinate the work of the two EMG initiatives. Key outcomes of this meeting included:

(a) The further development of a broad framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability in the UN system which includes safeguards, now called a “Framework for Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System”.

(b) Greater support for and mutual understanding of the synergies between the work of the IMG on Sustainable Management (which has focussed on climate neutrality and environmental sustainability of operations) as part of the broader Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework and the work of a consultative group on environmental and social sustainability (the current safeguards group), including presenting the work of the two groups under a single Sustainability Framework.

(c) Enhanced awareness of the need for political commitment to move the initiative forward and for opportunities in the next year to garner that support.

42. The work of the group is contained in the report “Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System” available on the EMG website. The report includes, amongst other elements, a joint heads of agencies statement and a framework for advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System. The statement, framework and executive summary are presented in Annex III to the current note.

43. The report lays out the rationale for a common sustainability framework. Such a framework provides a basis for UN entities to internalize sustainability measures into their work at the level of policy/strategy, programmes/projects, and facilities/operations. The purpose and benefits of this approach are to:

(a) enhance institutional capabilities and credibility through strengthening the internalization of the environmental and social principles it advocates for, thereby contributing more effectively to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets related to sustainability;

(b) reduce risks and maximize benefits through an integrated approach to informed decision-making;

(c) better address emerging issues and stakeholder needs in a timely manner, and by being an attractive and trusted implementing partner;

(d) improved information sharing and working in a more efficient, coherent, accountable and transparent manner.

44. The Sustainability Framework responds to calls by member states for a more efficient and sustainable UN, and would make the implementation of sustainability measures more coherent, more efficient and easier in the UN system.

45. It is proposed that senior officials approve the report, including its statement and framework. It is also recommended that the consultation is continued and that the UNCSO is informed about the current initiative.

***Suggested actions V: Consultations on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the UN system.***

1. senior officials endorse the report Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System including the joint heads of agencies statement and the sustainability framework contained in the report.

2. senior officials request the Chair of the EMG to inform the Secretary-General of the initiative and invite the Secretary-General to provide the foreword to the report and to inform the UNCSO in 2012 about the initiative.

3. senior officials agree to continue the ongoing consultative process under the EMG on environmental and social sustainability in order to support the implementation of the statement, including to:

(a) Further develop a Community of Good Practice or Resource Centre to share knowledge and lessons learned;

(b) Further coordinate with the IMG on Sustainability Management to ensure synergies;

(c) Explore options for issues under consideration, such as a common support and knowledge sharing function; accountability; and identification of ways to go beyond managing risks and benefits and also “do good”;

(d) Seek a source of comparable social expertise to complement the environmental competence held by EMG members.

## **6. IMG on Sustainable Management in the United Nations system**

46. At its meeting in September 2010, senior officials of the EMG congratulated the IMG for its work on supporting emission reductions in the UN and in particular for the Greening the Blue website where those efforts are grouped and communicated on a common platform. They also welcomed the attention given to environmental sustainability in the UN system by the Joint Inspection Unit through its report, “Environmental Profile of the United Nations System Organisations”. Senior officials also stressed that emissions reductions should be encouraged as a priority over offsetting greenhouse gas emissions. With regards to political sensitivities over issues such as offsets and sustainable procurement, members called for solutions that allow for flexible ambition levels and timelines.

47. Recalling that the IMG on climate neutrality and the one on sustainable procurement are now merged into the time-bound IMG on sustainability management with a mandate until end 2012, the senior officials requested the IMG to prepare by September 2011 a strategic plan for sustainability management in the UN system in view of the need to anchor sustainability in the internal management and operational structures of the UN system.

48. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 in its decision 26/11 encouraged the EMG to continue supporting the implementation of the United Nations climate-neutral strategy and advancing the sustainability of policies, management practices and operations in the United Nations system, including sustainable procurement.

### ***Climate neutrality***

49. The second *common greenhouse gas inventory* for the UN system - “*Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN 2010*”- was released at the CEB meeting in Nairobi in April 2011. The report included the emissions inventories from 52 UN organizations, described their emission reduction efforts to date, and provided a summary snapshot of draft emissions reduction strategies that UN organizations are preparing to reduce their environmental footprints. The latest data illustrate that the footprint of the UN system in 2009 was 1.7 million tons CO<sub>2</sub> eq.

50. An improved system for *reporting of greenhouse gas emission inventories*, has been tested with valuable support from UN DFS and ICAO. The UNEP Sustainable UN team (SUN) and IMG members have also agreed to prepare a UN-wide as well as organisation-specific Inventory Management Plans to record in detail how the system-wide GHG inventories were prepared and to ensure full transparency. In addition, under request from the Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) that inventories should be verified, the IMG will discuss options for external verification in early 2012.

51. In line with the recommendations of the EMG Strategy for a Climate Neutral UN, and the specific request in this sense formulated by the CEB (CEB/2007/2), the IMG has developed a recommended approach for voluntary offsetting of GHG emissions for UN organisations by EMG members titled “Carbon Credits - Recommendations for selection and procurement” set out in Annex IV. The approach is put forward for the approval of senior officials.

52. All UN organizations represented on the IMG have been preparing *specific emission reduction strategies* (ERS) with defined targets and timelines for specific activities. 21 UN organizations have submitted their draft ERS to SUN for review. All organizations are encouraged to deliver their ERS to SUN by November 2011. The approval of the organization-specific strategies and their linking to the UN-wide sustainability management strategy will be at the core of IMG activities in the course of 2012.

53. The Help Desk service has been maintained to provide IMG members with training and tailored advice on inventories, emissions reduction strategies, and other issues relevant to the implementation of the UN climate Neutral strategy.

***Emission reductions: travel, buildings, sustainable procurement, field operations, communications***

54. Official travel of staff, meeting participants, experts and others contribute to approximately 50% of the total climate footprint of the UN system. In 2011, SUN and the IMG finalised two studies aimed at identifying options for rationalising UN travel policies and practices so as to reduce related emissions and budgets. The first study relates to UN travel policies and is to be submitted to the UN travel network in October 2011 and, if appropriate, further reported to the HLCM. The second study, drafted in collaboration with the UN ICT network, focused on the opportunities of e-communications as a tool to reduce the need for travel and to make more efficient use of existing technologies and staff time.

55. Greenhouse gas emissions from buildings also constitute a large share of the UN’s climate footprint because of the UN’s presence in more than 500 locations around the world. A Sustainable Facilities Management Working Group, supported by SUN, was established within the Interagency Network for Facilities Management (INFM) in March 2010 to address some of these issues.

56. The support package to assist UN agencies on *sustainable procurement* (SP) is now concluded with 10 product-specific guidelines on sustainable procurement, a “Buying for a Better World” guide, and an on-line training module that was produced as a collaborative effort of UNEP, UNOPS and ILO with the HLCM procurement network. A number of training sessions have taken place. In response to a specific request made by the SOM 16, a communications strategy on sustainable procurement has been developed in collaboration with the HLCM procurement network working group on Sustainable Procurement. The strategy is available at [www.unemg.org](http://www.unemg.org). Furthermore, the HLCM Procurement Network has included Sustainable Procurement among its 5 strategic priorities and has thus included the issue in the standing elements of its work plan.

57. The issue of sustainable procurement in the UN was further discussed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee of the General Assembly at its 65<sup>th</sup> session in September 2010 which decided that the issue needs further attention by the Committee before its consideration by the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the GA.

58. To improve the sustainability of *field operations* SUN launched a project in the summer of 2011 in collaboration with the Swedish Environmental Management Council (SEMCo). Areas relevant to the project include: supply chain management; standardization of environmental management and systems; product-related environmental and climate information; as well as energy-efficiency and cost-benefit analysis. The project will be concluded in the course of 2012 and result in guidance material on the environmental challenges and best practices found in selected field sites.

59. Launched in June 2010, *Greening the Blue* has become a widely respected communications and knowledge-sharing tool within the UN system and beyond. In its first year the website received 70,000 visits, and the campaign materials (posters, flyers, logos and computer wallpapers) are now a common sight in UN offices around the world. Initiatives such as the Greening the Blue Photo competition received over 350 entries from over 70 countries and revealed a strong interest and sensitivity to the need to “walk the talk” among the staff.

60. In response to a request from the IMG membership to assist in bringing the issue of sustainability to the attention of higher level managers, SUN (with support from the Chairs of the HLCM and HLCP) has undertaken a series of interviews with over 20 Heads of UN organizations and a number of external experts, to canvass opinions on the future of UN internal sustainability. The interviews have highlighted what challenges and opportunities UN leaders see for UN sustainability management. A report on the interviews will be available in early 2012.

61. Links with *networks of the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and other common UN networks* for Facilities Management (INFM), Travel (IATN), Procurement, Communications and Information and Communication Technologies have been nurtured by their involvement in relevant IMG publications, methodologies, and activities. As a result of these contacts, some networks are now reaching out to one another to maximize synergies, focused on efficiencies and emission reductions in UN buildings.

62. The IMG on sustainability management has worked closely with the EMG consultative process on environmental and social safeguards on several occasions throughout the year to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to internal sustainability of the UN system.

63. While progress in the implementation of the UN climate neutral strategy and interagency co-ordination on internal sustainability is encouraging, sustainability in the UN system is still considered a project and not a core operational principle. The long-term viability of any effort to improve the organisations' footprint is therefore at risk.

64. Consequently, the IMG invites senior officials to consider carefully the attached proposal for a "*Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management for the United Nations System*" - a document that has been developed in response to the specific request made by the 16<sup>th</sup> SOM (Annex V). This document requires serious reflection, not only with regard to the most appropriate systems for sustainability management in the UN, but also to ensure that clear decisions are made that set in motion, in a flexible and progressive manner, the allocation of adequate resources, especially staff time, to enable the implementation of sustainability measures in individual organisations. Without such resources, the mainstreaming of sustainability within UN processes is likely to stall.

65. In addition, the IMG wishes to highlight the continued need for a common support structure, such as SUN (or its equivalent), so that the progress in individual agencies can be further encouraged and monitored, inter-agency cooperation promoted, and technical advice and common functions such as tools development, reporting and training, provided.. A common support entity can also help maintain staff interest at a high level, ensure that emission reductions will be registered and communicated across the UN system ,, record and communicate progress and achievements to donors and member countries.

#### ***Suggested action VI: Ongoing work of the Issue Management Group (IMG) on sustainability management***

1. The senior officials welcome the progress made by the time-bound Issue Management Group on sustainable management (IMG) and the efforts made in UN organizations for emissions reduction within the limited resources available.
2. The senior officials welcome and approve the recommended approach for voluntary offsetting of GHG emissions by EMG members titled "*Carbon Credits - Recommendations for selection and procurement*".
3. The senior officials also approve the Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System, to move the UN system towards a consistent, systematic and cost-effective approach to sustainability management, and acknowledge the importance of a common UN-wide support to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Senior officials request the EMG Secretariat to identify possible options for a common structure to support implementation of the strategic plan and for resourcing the structure's operation.
4. The senior officials request the Chair to inform the Secretary General and the Chief Executives Board on the Strategic Plan to support establishment of Sustainability Management Systems in all UN organizations,
5. The senior officials commit to implement organization-specific sustainability management systems (SMS) as outlined in the Strategic Plan and to designate appropriate funds for

implementation. To this end, they agree to design their respective SMS, drawing on existing work (e.g. emission reduction strategies) and identifying required resources.

6. The senior officials request the IMG to undertake the following:

(a) Prepare the third edition of the report “Moving towards Climate Neutrality in the UN System”, to be released at the spring meeting of the CEB in April 2012;

(b) Provide inputs to EMG contributions to the UNCSD as part of advancing environmental and social sustainability in the UN system;

(c) Continue knowledge sharing, communication, training and awareness-raising activities, in particular based on the Greening the Blue platform, on issues such as sustainable buildings, procurement, sustainable events, travel, e-communications; and to maintain the links created with related interagency networks;

(d) Seek resources and create partnerships to develop a tutorial for the UN system aimed at enhancing a culture of sustainability and enabling staff in their respective categories to contribute to the success of emissions reduction strategies and sustainability management;

(e) Undertake other activities, as may be needed and possible within existing resources, to maintain the momentum of the UN climate neutral and overall sustainability effort.

## **7. Support to the preparatory process for the UNCSD**

34. The senior officials considered the issues raised by UNDESA on the need for support by the EMG to the preparation of Rio+20 Conference. They agreed that their respective agencies will take timely actions to support the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development including by providing technical contributions to the Secretary General’s reports, sharing lessons from experience, and supporting national and regional stakeholder processes.

35. Several of the outputs prepared by the EMG are of relevance to the preparatory process for the UNCSD. Senior officials may wish to request the Chair to submit a summary of the strategic discussions to the secretariat for the UNCSD preparatory process in response to the invitation from the Second Preparatory Committee of the UNCSD, highlighting: the work of EMG on the green economy, drylands and biodiversity; the development of a framework for environmental and social sustainability in the UN system and views of EMG members on the institutional framework for sustainable development.

### ***Suggested action VII: Support the preparatory process for the UNCSD***

1. The senior officials request the Chair to submit a summary of its strategic discussions to the secretariat for the UNCSD preparatory process in response to the invitation from the Second Preparatory Committee of the UNCSD, highlighting: the work of EMG on the green economy, drylands and biodiversity; the development of a framework for environmental and social sustainability in the UN system and views of EMG members on the institutional framework for sustainable development.

## **8. EMG work plan for 2012–2013**

36. The 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of EMG adopted the 2011-2012 EMG work plan. The plan has been updated to a 2012-2013 EMG work plan which reflect the suggested action put forward in the current note as presented in document EMG/SOM.17/04.

37. It is proposed that the work plan as was decided last year be given a two year horizon, i.e. be a plan for 2012 to 2013, which is subject to annual approval by the senior officials. The reason for this approach is to capture activities which have a longer time span than one year. The plan gives an overview of forthcoming activities and milestones for the next 24 months. The plan is organized according four main expected accomplishments as they pertain to programmatic, management and operational issues as well as overall cooperation.

38. The work plan remains un-costed as long as there is no common budget for EMG activities. It is recommended that the work plan is implemented through in-kind contribution subject to the availability of resources. The in-kind contribution will be budgeted, programmed and reported on by each member and the UNEP secretariat within their own administrative processes.

***Suggested action VIII: Approval of the work plan for EMG for the period 2012 – 2013***

1. The senior officials approve the work plan for EMG for the period 2012 – 2013 based on the understanding that the EMG secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.17/04 to ensure that the plan fully reflects the actions agreed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG. The work plan will be implemented on the basis of in-kind contributions from members and is subject to availability of resources.

## **9. Process for reporting to the UNEP Governing Council**

39. The 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG requested the Chair to circulate a draft report on the EMG to the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to members of the Group for their comments. The draft report was circulated to members for comments and then presented as document UNEP/GC26/15 to the 26<sup>th</sup> session of UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya 21-24 February 2011.

40. The Council in its decision GC26/11 on “Enhanced Coordination Across the United Nations System including the Environment Management Group” expressed its appreciation for the progress report prepared under the guidance of the senior officials of the EMG at their sixteenth meeting and as presented by the Executive Director of UNEP. It commended the EMG on its progress in facilitating cooperation across the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the environmental agenda.

41. The Council welcomed in particular the contribution of the Group to the tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) and its follow-up decision to continue its support for the implementation of the biodiversity agenda across the United Nations system.

42. The Council also supported the continued efforts by the Group to mainstream environmental considerations in activities at the programme, management and operational levels in close cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies. It encouraged the Group to continue to promote coherence in programming environmental activities in the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as the following:

- (a) Contribution to the international agenda on biodiversity, including implementation of the relevant decisions of the CBD COP 10;
- (b) Preparation of a United Nations system-wide contribution to the tenth session of the conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;
- (c) Contribution by the United Nations system to the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, including all five themes for the session;
- (d) Preparation of a contribution by the United Nations system, identifying existing studies on the green economy, to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable development.

43. The Council furthermore encouraged the Group to continue supporting the implementation of the United Nations climate-neutral strategy and advancing the sustainability of policies, management practices and operations in the United Nations system, including sustainable procurement, and the establishment of and agreement to put in place a process for environmental impact assessment and the use of environmental and social safeguards in respect of projects taken up directly by the organizations of the United Nations system.

44. Finally, it requested the Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the Group to provide a progress report on the Group's work to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session.

45. The UNGA is informed of the work of the EMG through the submissions of the proceeding of the UNEP Governing Council. The UNGA requested to be informed about the work of the EMG in its resolution A/RES/58/209.

***Suggested action IX: Reporting to the Governing Council of UNEP***

1. The senior officials welcome the opportunity to inform the UNEP Governing Council, and through the Council the UN General Assembly, of its work. The meeting appreciates the guidance received from the Council and request the Chair to continue the practice of circulating a draft of the report by EMG on its work to members of the Group for their comments, and submit the final report to the 12<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UNEP Governing.

**10. Date and venue of the next Senior Officials Meeting**

46. In preparing for the Senior Officials Meeting the Chair has continued the practice of seeking the views of members on the agenda and to informally consult on dates and venues. This practice will be continued for the 18<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting scheduled to take place in September 2012.

***Suggested action X: Date and venue of the next Senior Officials Meetings***

1. Senior officials request the EMG secretariat to circulate to the members of the EMG date and venues for the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the senior officials and consult with members on its agenda.

## **Annex I**

### **Approach suggested by the CBD Secretariat for the preparation of an implementation report on support by the UN system to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020**

Noting that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 was adopted by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as the overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions, but for the entire United Nations system, Agencies are invited to:

Prepare a general statement on their strategic-level contribution to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

Prepare (for example in a matrix format) a note on how the agency contributes to each of the relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets using the following categories of information:

1. A brief synopsis of the relevance of the Aichi Biodiversity Target for the work of the agency;
2. A note of existing targets, goals or objectives, established by the agency and/or endorsed by the agency's governing body, that contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target;
3. A note of existing or planned policy-relevant, strategic or programmatic activities that contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target and the related agency-level targets, goals or objectives (Note that while selected project-level activities or case-studies of good practice may be included by way of example, a comprehensive list of project-level activities is NOT required) ;
4. A note of any additional activities that may be initiated in support of the Aichi Biodiversity Target.

Further notes in preparing the matrix:

- a. Agencies may wish to refer to the EMG report: "Achieving the biodiversity agenda". The EMG and CBD Secretariats are preparing a note on how the "clusters" of this report relate to the Aichi Targets
- b. Some agency-level targets/activities may relate to more than one Aichi target. In this case the target/activity should be listed under the most relevant Aichi Target with cross references as appropriate

## **Annex II**

**Main findings from the draft report “Investing in a Green and Inclusive Economy”  
including the Introduction, Executive Summary, Conclusions, and Outline indicating lead  
and contributing agencies**

*<to be included and sent to senior officials by 5 September 2011 as the Issue Management Group is currently finalizing the main findings of the report >*

## **Annex III**

### **Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System**

Joint Heads of Agencies Statement, Framework and Executive Summary

#### **DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT BY EXECUTIVE HEADS OF EMG MEMBERS**

**on**

#### **Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System**

We, the Executive Heads of Agencies, Funds, Programmes and Departments, of the United Nations,

Are convinced that the promotion of human well-being and global sustainability hinges on environmental protection and social and economic development,

Bear in mind the responsibility of the United Nations system to embody the internationally accepted environmental and social principles in its internal management as well as to support their application by partners and stakeholders; and the need to reduce risks and unintended negative impacts, and maximize benefits to people and their environment in a coherent and integrated way within the UN system,

Are conscious of the efforts by those United Nations system entities that have already developed environmental and social safeguards to mitigate the environmental and social impacts and risks of their activities before the adoption of a common approach to advancing environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system,

Are mindful of the need for the UN system to internalize the internationally agreed norms of the sustainability agenda at the level of policy/strategy, programme/project, and facilities/operations management through a common framework for environmental and social sustainability, including through safeguards, risk management, institutional learning, capacity-building, simplification, coherence, and transparency,

Are recognizing the wealth of experience across the UN system to ensure the environmental and social impacts and risks of activities are well managed, which has informed the development and adoption of this common approach,

We hereby commit ourselves to use the Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System annexed to this statement as a means of furthering the organization's sustainability performance, including by:

(a) Moving our respective organizations towards strengthening environmental and social sustainability in our activities, and to ensure resources are available to realize the increased efficiency and operational safety gains of such a common approach; and

(b) Supporting the further development and implementation of a UN system-wide framework for environmental and social sustainability including environmental and social safeguards; for monitoring collective efforts; and for reporting back to the Governing Bodies of our respective organizations on progress made, good practice, and lessons learned.

We make this commitment with a view to show leadership by increasing institutional accountability for the environmental and social sustainability of our activities. We do this to further enable the UN system to work smarter and safer, respond more effectively to emerging issues and stakeholder needs, and better harness lessons from shared experience.

<p><i>Annex to joint statement by Executive Heads of EMG Members</i></p> <p><b>A Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System</b></p>	
<b>Vision</b>	
<p>The environmental and social sustainability of the UN is enhanced, thereby contributing to its mission to promote and protect human well-being in line with internationally agreed declarations, conventions, standards and covenants.</p>	
<b>Rationale</b>	
<p>The UN system has a long history of promoting positive environmental and social outcomes. While many parts of the organization have individually internalized sustainability goals, the UN acting as One can do even more.</p> <p>By developing of a common environmental and social sustainability framework, the UN will strengthen its leadership role and better support Member States to further the global sustainability agenda at all levels. Specifically, the framework allows the organization to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Lead by example:</b> by enhancing institutional capabilities and credibility through strengthening the internalization of the environmental and social principles it advocates, thereby contributing more effectively to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets related to sustainability;</li> <li>- <b>Work safer and smarter:</b> by reducing risks and maximizing benefits through an integrated approach to informed decision-making;</li> <li>- <b>Respond more effectively:</b> by better addressing emerging issues and stakeholder needs in a timely manner, and by being an attractive and trusted implementing partner;</li> <li>- <b>Leverage knowledge and experience:</b> by improved information sharing and working in a more efficient, coherent, accountable and transparent manner.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective</b>	
<p>The UN system enhances its sustainability by internalizing internationally accepted environmental and social principles at the three entry points of policy/ strategy, programmes/ projects and facilities/ operations through individual and collective approaches that address associated risks and maximize opportunities.</p>	

Expected outcomes	Outputs for individual entities
<p><b>1. Enabling Conditions</b> Enabling conditions are strengthened and established for the internalization of internationally accepted environmental and social principles within UN entities.</p>	a) A clear, coherent vision and policy is established that relates environment and social issues to the mission and work of the organization.
	b) Internal capacities to implement the vision and policy, and raise awareness among staff to ensure environmental and social sustainability is embraced.
	c) Adequate resources are available to achieve the institutional goals of the vision and policy.
	d) A continuous cycle of improvement by reviewing the effectiveness of outcomes and activities in order to enhance the organization’s environmental and social performance.
<p><b>2. Implementation entry-points</b></p>	

<p>Environmental and social considerations are systematically integrated into service delivery mechanisms to achieve desired results, using the following three management entry-points to encompass the work of the UN system:</p>	
<p><b>Policy / Strategy</b></p> <p>UN system supports the development of policies and strategies that embed a broad view of sustainability and avoid unnecessary trade-offs or harm to people and the environment.</p>	<p>a) A process for integrating environmental and social sustainability considerations into relevant policies and strategies is implemented, for example through conducting or supporting strategic level assessment.</p>
<p><b>Programmes / Projects</b></p> <p>Environmental and social considerations are systematically integrated in all programme and project cycles including, for example, through the use of environmental and social assessment.</p>	<p>a) An environmental and social assessment framework (including safeguards) is developed and implemented that includes screening, review, management plans, monitoring, accountability and transparency.</p> <p>b) The consideration of environmental and social performance objectives is integrated into existing management approaches, such as partnerships and networks.</p>
<p><b>Facilities / Operations</b></p> <p>Procedures and practices for integrating environmental and social considerations into management practices and support systems for operations, premises, travel, procurement, and use of information technology which contributes to sustainable development.</p>	<p>a) A sustainability management system is established , which encompasses measures for moving the UN entity towards climate neutrality.</p> <p>b) Sustainable practices in building management, procurement and information and communication technologies are developed.</p> <p>c) Sustainable practices to address areas not covered by the Sustainability Management strategy, such as social aspects of facilities and operations management are developed.</p>

<b>Collective Actions</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate <i>system-wide commitment</i> for the advancement of environmental and social sustainability of the UN system through support for a common approach to the use of environmental and social sustainability measures as outlined in the proposed framework.</li> <li>2. Adopt <i>minimum requirements</i> for the internalization of environmental and social sustainability measures across the three entry-points.</li> <li>3. Keep the advancement of the use of environmental and social sustainability measures under review and continue <i>the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned</i> among UN entities to strengthen coherence and leverage efficiencies.</li> <li>4. Consider the need for a <i>shared support function</i> to assist UN organizations to: 1) internalize enhancement of their environmental and social sustainability measures, 2) build capacity and share learning; 3) centralize accountability, reporting and evaluation.</li> </ol>

**Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System**  
**EMG report**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework strives to carry the institution beyond the typical safeguard measures of “do no harm” to also identify ways to “do good.”** In the spirit of One UN, the Framework takes a holistic view of the organization’s work from policy conception through programme implementation and internal operations management, providing a broader base of knowledge for effective decision-making. The initiative looks to build on the internationally agreed sustainability norms and principles of the last 30 years by adapting the best practices of environmental and social assessment procedures and management systems to UN system activities.

**This effort started when the senior officials of the [Environment Management Group \(EMG\)](#) decided at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in September 2009, to undertake a consultative process and prepare a report that outlines options for a common United Nations (UN) system approach for “environmental and social safeguards.”** The opportunity to explore options for advancing UN sustainability was welcomed in response to several requests raised by EMG members in the lead up to the meeting. The EMG initiative is in the spirit of the 2005 World Summit outcomes on system-wide coherence and actions to strengthen linkages between the normative and operational work of the UN.

**The Safeguards Working Group focal points subsequently decided to change the terminology from “environmental and social safeguards” to “environmental and social sustainability framework” as the latter encompasses safeguards plus additional measures used in internal management practices and normative activities.** In this way “sustainability framework” is more inclusive of UN system activities.

The rationale for this work stems from the understanding that the **systematic use of an environmental and social sustainability framework across UN entities would provide the UN system with an important opportunity to demonstrate leadership**, and enhance accountability for the environmental and social sustainability of the UN system’s policies and practices.

**The framework would therefore improve the quality and results of UN supported activities and will help to identify opportunities to harness greater efficiencies and cost savings.** Operational and technical performance will be measurably enhanced, and upstream (high-level) opportunities to harness efficiencies, for instance at the level of policy and programme design, will be more informed. Unforeseen environmental and social impacts and risks (and associated reputational liabilities and costs) can be avoided, and opportunities to leverage/maximize the positive impacts of policies, programmes/projects and operational activities can be more consistently harnessed.

**An inter-agency review, conducted as part of this consultation, found that the application of environmental and social sustainability measures by UN organizations is uneven.** Several entities within the UN system are already utilizing environmental and social sustainability measures, such as safeguards. However, these practices are not consistent or readily comparable.

**In the absence of a common framework, UN organizations have adopted myriad ways of considering social and environmental impacts.** A few organizations have developed comprehensive environmental and social impact assessment procedures. Many use a mix of review committees and staff expertise to examine environmental and social implications. Overall understanding within individual organizations about the relevance (and utility) of environmental and social sustainability measures is highly varied. On one end of the spectrum, some staff members consulted felt that the UN is behind the curve and needs to “catch-up” with its sister organizations like the World Bank, while at the same time setting a precedent for social issues like human rights that are not well covered by others. On the other end, some staff members felt that environmental and social safeguards were not relevant to their work and that the adoption of a common approach could be a burden to them. The confusion over the term “safeguards” was one of the reasons the approach was re-framed as an environmental and social sustainability framework that is more flexible and inclusive of UN activities.

**The importance of environmental and social safeguards measures was recognized by the senior officials of the EMG**, who initially requested the consultative process on safeguards,<sup>9</sup> and has continued to support the effort. The UNEP Governing Council at its 26<sup>th</sup> session in February 2011 also encouraged the EMG to continue advancing the sustainability of policies, management practices and operations in the United Nations system.

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<sup>9</sup> [EMG 15 Meeting Report](#)

<sup>10</sup> [EMG 16 Meeting Report](#)

**A framework for environmental and social sustainability across the UN system has been developed by the Safeguards consultative process for consideration.** The framework proposes: 1) a common vision, rationale and objective; 2) individual actions to be taken by each UN entity to internalize environmental and social sustainability measures; and 3) collective actions for the system to undertake, such as a common support function, minimum requirements, and a centralized reporting structure.

**Key benefits of a common sustainability framework fall into the following five categories:** capacity-building for all UN organizations; increased credibility; minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities; greater simplification and coherence to policies and procedures; enhanced transparency.

**There is still a need to 1) raise awareness and support across UN entities for the use of a common environmental and social sustainability framework; and 2) continue the consultative process to further explore implementation considerations.** To be effective, the adoption of a common framework requires high-level institutional commitment and support as set out in the statement (subject to approval) by Executive Heads of Agencies, Funds, Programmes, and Departments of the United Nations on advancing environmental and social sustainability in the UN system.

**Further work is needed to evolve the policy-level framework into an implementation plan and operational model** that can be adapted and used by individual UN entities, including through the EMG work stream currently handled by the Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management. Some of the elements that require more consideration and consultation include: weighing options of flexibility and accountability, common and individual policies and procedures, legal and managerial requirements, and the use of national systems.

## Annex IV

### Carbon Credits - Recommendations for selection and procurement

#### BACKGROUND

The Working Group on Offsetting was established at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the **Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management (IMG)** on 9-10 February 2010. Offsetting means the purchase of carbon credits to compensate for greenhouse gas emissions generated by UN operations, in particular facility operations and official travel. Carbon credits are tradable certificates representing one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, which an organization purchases to offset its own emissions.

The IMG Working Group on Offsetting included the following members: Georgina Stickels (WFP), Judith Moore (World Bank), Anne Fernqvist (UNDP), Steven Giwa (IAEA), Victor Ogbunike (SCBD), Lorenzo Gavilli (ICAO), Lova Andre Nilsson (UNEP), Mirjam Steglich (UNEP) and John Miller (UNESCO). Oliver Buhler (UNFPA) and Dragoslav Jovanovic (UNFCCC) joined in May, David Sturt (UNFCCC) and Niels Ramm (UNOPS) in June.

The Working Group on Offsetting was tasked with:

- a) reviewing modalities for common offsetting
- b) preparing a guide on offsetting for UN organizations
- c) providing guidance on funding aspects for offsetting
- d) developing recommendations for EMG with regards to offsetting

The following text was approved at the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of IMG on 10 March 2011.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CARBON OFFSETTING

As stated by the EMG Senior officials meeting in September 2009 and reiterated in September 2010<sup>11</sup>, the work of moving towards a climate neutral UN should be carried out as an integral part of the sustainability management efforts within each UN organization.

In light of this, and with a view to implementing the Statement of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, “Moving towards a climate-neutral United Nations” (CEB/2007/2), the IMG recalls that UN organizations should undertake an ambitious programme aimed at *first reducing* GHG emissions and only consider purchasing carbon credits as a last resort. They should avoid attempting to achieve climate neutrality simply by going straight for the purchase of carbon credits.

In support of the specific request of the CEB/2007/2, to “*analyse the cost implications and explore budgetary modalities – including consulting with governing bodies as needed – of purchasing carbon offsets to eventually reach climate neutrality*”, the IMG recommends the following :

1. Each UN organization should prepare a draft plan on how offsets could be financed, procured and accounted for, and submit it for the consideration of its Senior Management by July 2012. Subject to the decision of Senior Management, and with reference to the Strategy for a climate-neutral UN, the plan might be adopted internally, be submitted to the governing body for consideration, or be rejected. Whatever the outcome, each EMG member should clearly document and communicate to the EMG its final position on climate neutrality;
2. In organizations where offsetting is approved, the objective should be to become climate neutral in all their operations. The boundary definitions agreed for UN greenhouse gas inventories<sup>12</sup> should apply also for the climate neutral objective. Some flexibility will be permitted for organization-specific opportunities and constraints, e.g. an organization might choose to offset only the emissions related to Headquarters as a first step;
3. Organisations may consider a time-bound target for when to start offsetting so as to support emission reduction efforts and provide focus for the work towards a climate neutral UN;

#### *Quality of offsets*

<sup>11</sup> [www.unemg.org/MeetingsDocuments/EMGSeniorOfficialsMeetings/2009/tabid/1330/Default.aspx](http://www.unemg.org/MeetingsDocuments/EMGSeniorOfficialsMeetings/2009/tabid/1330/Default.aspx)

<sup>12</sup> UN GHG inventory boundaries are specified in the *Strategy for a climate-neutral UN* (2007). UN Environment Management Group. EMG/AM.07/06/Rev.1. or in *United Nations GreenHouse Gas Calculator. User Manual 1.0.* (2009). UNEP Environment Management Group, UN Department of Field Support and the World Resource Institute.

4. The IMG follows the “Strategy for a climate-neutral UN” (EMG/AM.07/06/Rev.1) which states that: “the UN’s choice of offsets [...] should meet the levels defined under the Kyoto mechanisms at the very least”. In addition it recommends that offsets procured by UN organisations should:
  - a. at a minimum be generated by a project registered as a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project at the time of signing a procurement contract;
  - b. be cancelled within no more than 12 months from date of contract signature;
  - c. provide insurance for delivery if credits are not issued at time of contract signature;
5. UN organizations may, acting individually or collaboratively, specify additional requirements that reflect their specific mandates, aspirations or objectives. These could include specifying the CDM Gold Standard, or specifying projects located in nominated countries, such as in Least Developed Countries or requiring the use or exclusion of specific technologies such as energy efficiency, solar power, or re-forestation;

#### *Procurement of carbon credits*

6. There should be no requirement for central procurement of carbon credits: each UN organization should be individually responsible for the procurement of carbon credits related to that organization;
7. At the same time, UN organizations should be free to work together and jointly invite tenders/requests for quotations/requests for proposals for the supply of carbon credits as and when their interests coincide (as happens at present for procurement of other goods and services) ;
8. UN organizations are encouraged to include in the contract document a clause allowing for the contract to be extended to other UN organizations, should the contractor wish to do this;

#### *Finance*

Agencies may encounter resistance from donors/member states to the prospect of their funds being used for the purposes of procuring carbon credits rather than for delivering core business aims. The IMG recommends that the EMG review the following options for providing central support to raising funds for the purpose of offsetting:

9. The EMG secretariat to support and coordinate UN fund raising efforts for the purpose of offsetting through the provision of a fundraising facility; and/or
10. The EMG to consider the possibility of creating a multi-donor UN Trust Fund to assist in UN system efforts to finance the purchase of carbon credits. The management of the Trust Fund could be supported by a UN-wide offsetting facility (service) that UN organizations could choose, but would not be obliged, to use;
11. The EMG to explore the creation of system-wide Long Term Agreements;

#### *Support functions*

It is essential that UN offset procurement be carried out correctly and that UN staff be made aware of and understand the UN climate neutral commitment. System-wide technical assistance for the procurement of offsets should be provided, for which purpose the IMG submits for EMG consideration the following possibilities:

12. Establishment of a UN Helpdesk to provide support and information on suitable CDM projects and advice on procurement/contractual issues. Organizationally, such a helpdesk could be housed within SUN;
13. Provision of training on offsetting for all UN Climate Neutral/Sustainability Focal Points. This training could be tasked to SUN;
14. Exchange of ideas, experience and advice relating to various aspects of offsetting (types of offsets, contractual/procurement issues, financial implications and fundraising, training, communication) could be facilitated and supported via Greening the Blue and/or the UN Global Marketplace. These sites could host examples/case studies, provide a secure area for sharing information, facilitate meetings and workshops;
15. Organization of a UN-wide campaign to raise awareness and create understanding and commitment “towards a climate neutral UN”, including offsetting;

The EMG may also want to consider any alternative hosts for the above functions and which funding mechanism would best secure their sustainability.

#### *Legal and related issues*

16. Legal advice is required to clarify the issue of possible diversion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds and any other legal or financial issues (e.g. contractual restrictions on use of funding) before UN organizations can proceed to implement offsetting on a wider scale. This clarification should be undertaken on an organization by organization basis to account for differing constitutional and operational rules (e.g. some organizations are entirely ODA funded, others are not);

#### *Other*

17. It is essential that adequate financial and staff resources be committed to ensure that the emissions of each UN organization are accurately measured and can be reduced as far as possible before resorting to the purchase of carbon credits;
18. The strategy for a climate-neutral UN will need to evolve in accordance with significant developments in the offsetting sector or other relevant contextual changes. Areas to be closely monitored include:

- a. The development of the offset market post 2012. It should be noted that all recommendations above are based on the assumption that there will still be carbon trading within CDM or other similar schemes.
- b. The possible introduction of national carbon taxes directed at consumers and carbon taxes at airports directed at travellers. Introduction of such taxes might require revised methodologies for UN GHG inventories to avoid “double payment”.

## **Annex V**

# **Proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System**

## Executive Summary

This proposal provides the rationale for, and a step-by-step approach to, the implementation of a *Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System*. It constitutes an essential part of the Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability of the UN System<sup>13</sup>. A Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System was requested by the Senior Officials Meeting of the UN Environment Management Group at their 16<sup>th</sup> meeting in September 2010. The Plan has been developed by the Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management in the UN (IMG), supported by the Sustainable United Nations facility (SUN).

### **Vision**

The vision to which this Strategic Plan contributes is to enhance the environmental and social sustainability of the UN, thereby contributing to our mission to promote and protect human well-being in line with internationally agreed declarations, conventions and covenants.

### **Overall objective**

The objective of the Strategic Plan is to provide a model for how the UN system can move towards realizing the above vision with regard to its in-house operations and practices, and with a primary focus on environmental sustainability. By suggesting a consistent and practical way to integrate sustainability management into individual UN organizations and into common functions of the UN system, the plan identifies key success factors for responding to the sustainability challenge in a cost efficient way that allows flexible implementation tailored to each specific organization.

### **Outcomes**

The expected outcomes from the implementation of this proposed Strategic Plan include:

1. A UN system that applies in its own operations the principles and conventions that it promotes, including Agenda 21.
2. A UN system where costs are responsibly contained by consistently minimizing waste of resources and optimizing efficiency in use of assets.
3. A UN system that embraces reform by applying a common and systematic approach to improved control, efficiency and reporting on resource use and other sustainability aspects.
4. A UN system that applies good business practices and makes use of modern solutions, including e-communication, to reduce negative sustainability impact, reduce costs, and improve efficiency in delivery of UN's mandates.
5. A UN system that leads by example and can support organizations outside the UN to follow suit.

### **Outputs**

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to **A Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability of the UN System**.

United Nations Environment Management Group 2011.

Implementation of this Strategic Plan would generate the following specific outputs:

1. Each UN organization will have a Sustainability Management System (SMS) to manage its sustainability impact. The SMS will allow the organization to identify, address, and report on the key environmental sustainability impacts from in-house operations (facilities, travel, communication, procurement, meetings.etc.). It will be based on a common model, so as to allow cooperation and sharing of resources across the UN system, but will also be flexible enough to allow adaptation to particular priorities and needs. Capacity building resources such as training, communications and documentation, will be an integral part of the SMS. The SMS will produce an Sustainability Action Plan, defining specific goals (e.g. reduction of energy use), supporting activities, responsibilities, implementation schedules, and associated costs/savings. The Sustainability Action Plan will be renewed every 48 months, and will be reviewed and approved by the relevant body in each organization before implementation.
2. A common function (“Sustainability Office”) for the UN system will be established, to support interagency cooperation, carry out common functions such as tools development, advocacy and communication, reporting and training, and provide technical advice related to the implementation of the SMS in each organization. The Office would also participate in the development of and contribute to the collective actions in the Framework for Advancing the Environmental and Social Sustainability of the UN System.

## **Actions**

The Strategic Plan defines action steps that need to be taken

1. by individual UN organizations, to establish their SMS:
  - a. Take a formal decision to establish an SMS in their own organization at a senior enough level to ensure that staff and funding can be allocated to this purpose.
  - b. Develop and adopt a sustainability policy, defining the overarching priorities and objectives of the organization’s sustainability work.
  - c. Assign senior level responsibility to ensure continuous attention to implementation of the sustainability policy.
  - d. Undertake an initial review of the organization’s current sustainability impact, so as to allow comparison of existing facts with policy goals, and to provide a baseline against which to measure progress.
  - e. Develop a Sustainability Action Plan to define how to move from the current status to the goals of the sustainability policy. The Action Plan should specify, inter alia, who should do what, when, with what resources, to achieve what specific objectives. The plan should also define to whom and when progress should be reported.
  - f. Identify indicators to monitor progress of implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan. The Strategic Plan pre-defines three indicators (greenhouse gas emissions, water use, waste generation) that all UN organizations have to monitor and report on. Additional indicators can be adopted by each organization as fits their priorities.
  - g. Calculate expected costs and savings associated with implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan, and submit the Plan together with its budget for approval by relevant body.
  - h. Implement the Action Plan and renew after 48 months.
2. by the UN system jointly, tasked to the common Sustainability Office:
  - a. Maintain a shared web platform where all UN organizations can exchange tools, resources and information, both with each other and with internal and external stakeholders.

- b. Prepare an annual sustainability report for the UN system, providing UN agencies and external stakeholders the opportunity to take stock of plans, progress and challenges for the UN system's sustainability work.
- c. Coordinate a network of designated focal points representing each organization in the UN system, to act as a forum for discussion, facilitate joint action and problem-solving regarding the UN system's sustainability efforts.
- d. Operate a technical helpdesk to provide direct advisory and support services to the sustainability focal points in each UN organization.
- e. Prepare awareness and training materials for sharing and use by all UN organizations.
- f. Function as the contact point for interaction on sustainability issues with other interagency bodies and networks.
- g. Operate an advisory service for sharing the UN's sustainability management experiences.

## **Mandate**

Experiences from the implementation of the Climate Neutral Strategy for the UN system show that while much can be accomplished with good will and within existing resources, it is exceedingly difficult to promote an ongoing sustainability effort without a clear mandate. Such a mandate would allow sufficient resources to be allocated to make the initial investments required (in dedicated staff time and other) to generate the long-term savings generally associated with sustainability management. Although the rationale for adopting a sustainability management approach is clear, very often the lack of an explicit mandate to support related action is a barrier to moving from talk to implementation. For this reason, the Strategic Plan proposes as a first step that each UN organization seek such a mandate from a sufficiently senior level, including their governing body if needed.

## **Costs savings and funding**

A key rationale for adopting an integrated approach to sustainability management in the UN system, as proposed by this Strategic Plan, is to minimize costs by avoiding overlap of effort and optimizing efficiency in use of assets. The implementation of SMSs will require investments in terms of staff time, training and upgrading of facilities and equipment, but in most cases with an explicit expectation of reduced operational costs, which in the end should generate net savings for the organization.

In general terms the following costs can be anticipated for each adhering organization:

1. Setting up the organization-focused Sustainability Management Systems (SMS): Dedicated staff time to develop and propose to senior management various elements of the SMS, such as the initial review, the first organization-focused Sustainability Action Plan, monitoring indicators, and the reporting plan.
2. Implementation of such SMS: The costs and savings to be calculated for each action plan (covering 48 months) will depend on the priorities and level of ambition of the individual organization. The Sustainability Action Plan will be accompanied by its budget (costs and savings) to be approved by the relevant body.
3. Contribution to the common Sustainability Office: A rough estimate of costs for the Sustainability Office is US\$ 1 million/year (staff and operations). These costs could be shared among all participating UN organizations, which will be the main beneficiaries of the services provided. Alternatively, the costs could be covered by the UN Secretariat because of the catalytic role the

Office will play and the commitment of the Secretary General toward system-wide sustainability. Thirdly, external funding could be sought from donors. The EMG Secretariat will explore these options in the course of 2012 and present them for decision at the next Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

## **Conclusions**

In order to realize the above proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations system, the IMG recommends to EMG SOM the following decisions:

1. The senior officials also approve the Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System, to move the UN system towards a consistent, systematic and cost-effective approach to sustainability management, and acknowledge the importance of a common UN-wide support to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Senior officials request the EMG Secretariat to identify possible options for a common structure to support implementation of the strategic plan and for resourcing the structure's operation
2. The senior officials request the Chair to inform the Secretary General and the Chief Executive Board on the Strategic Plan to support establishment of Sustainability Management Systems in all UN organizations
3. The EMG members commit to implement organization-specific sustainability management systems (SMS) as outlined in the Strategic Plan and to designate appropriate funds for implementation. To this end, they agree to design their respective SMS, drawing on existing work (e.g. emission reduction strategies) and identifying required resources