



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



16 August 2007

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to follow up on the environmental component of the first meeting of the High-Level Advisory Group on System-wide Coherence, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) in New York on 25 May 2007. At that meeting, which many of you were able to attend, I was requested to facilitate a process to consider the environment-related recommendations. It was also suggested at the meeting that this could be done through the revitalized Environment Management Group (EMG).

Two important developments have taken place since the May meeting. Firstly, Ambassadors Peter Maurer and Claude Heller, of Switzerland and Mexico respectively, have presented to the General Assembly their "Co-chairs' Option Paper" on the institutional framework for the UN's Environmental Activities. This paper, as well as the outcome of the various consultations, provides us with useful ideas on where Governments' interests are, and allows us to move forward at this time. Secondly, the EMG in the last five months has begun to demonstrate its ability to deliver concrete results, together with, and on behalf of, our organizations. Consequently, I would like to propose to take forward our deliberations on the "environment cluster" with the support of the EMG.

Member States have different views on how to improve the ways we deal with environmental issues in the UN system. It is important for us to consider these views and to do so together, in a coherent manner, to be able to report back to the DSG with a preliminary set of views and recommendations.

We have been given little time. Most immediately, the General Assembly (GA) will consider the issues related to environment, and in particular, the report of the Co-chairs, Ambassadors Maurer and Heller, on 10 September 2007. If we are going to have any input into this debate, we will need to deliver some of our thinking on these issues by the date.

I would like to outline a process that could get us to that point. I recognize that time is tight and that many people are away on leave at the moment. However, the date of the Assembly's debate is set and we are bound to work within these time frames. Annexed to this letter, you will find references to the key documents that together hold all the options that are, or could be, on the table for consideration.

.../2...

Members of CEB
Executive Heads of MEAs

cc: Deputy Secretary-General
EMG Focal Points

Executive Office

P. O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya • Tel: (254 20) 762 3386/3416/ 3652 • Fax: (254 20) 762 4275 / 4608 • E-mail: executiveoffice@unep.org

www.unep.org



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



- 2

You will also find a **set of five questions** that address some of the fundamental issues, the first two of which we should be able to address immediately. I would be grateful if you could reflect on these questions, and kindly request **your initial responses by 30 August 2007**. Based on your inputs, the EMG secretariat will compile all inputs, which will form the basis of a short, strategic note for discussion at a special "Issue Management Group" meeting of the EMG to be held just a few days before the GA event, early in September.

Clearly, the events in September can only be a beginning of our collective endeavors. At the meeting we will hopefully identify a few core ideas where our views converge, and others which will still need further work. I am confident that we will enable the SG/DSG to report to the Member States on 10 September 2007 that we have a participatory and transparent process in place to consider these issues, and that we have already identified several areas where we have an emerging consensus of views.

After the GA event, I propose that we undertake a series of **bilateral consultations** with as many of you as possible, with the support of the Director of the EMG Secretariat, with a view to preparing a new draft of our views for consideration at the annual meeting of the EMG in Geneva on 8 October 2007, which could then prepare a set of recommendations available at the October session of the Chief Executives' Board (CEB) for review.

I look forward to your feedback, and working with you on these issues!

Yours sincerely,

Achim Steiner
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director, UNEP
Chair, EMG

Enclosure: Annex

Executive Office

P. O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya • Tel: (254 20) 762 3386/3416/ 3652 • Fax: (254 20) 762 4275 / 4608 • E-mail: executiveoffice@unep.org

www.unep.org