UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP EMG

Update on the United Nations System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment

A summary of UN collaborative efforts on the environment



UN Secretariat

Executive Summary

This report is submitted to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) at its seventh session pursuant to resolution 1/11 on strengthening coordination across the United Nations (UN) system in the field of the environment, including through the Environment Management Group (EMG). Resolution 1/11 reaffirmed UNEA's role in providing overarching policy guidance and political direction to ensure system-wide coherence in addressing global environmental challenges. It also underscored the mandate of the EMG to foster collaborative, coordinated and analytically informed approaches across UN entities in support of Member States and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

In line with this mandate, this report highlights key progress made by the UN system in advancing common approaches, shared policy agendas, and joint operational initiatives on the environment. It outlines actions undertaken to strengthen interagency collaboration, enhance environmental integration across UN programmes, and support delivery of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. It also reflects on emerging issues requiring system-wide cooperation and solicits UNEA's guidance in shaping a unified, effective and forward-looking UN response to environmental commitments and Member State needs.

Over the past two years, the UN system has strengthened collective action through the implementation of the UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS) under the auspices of the EMG. Cooperation has deepened across priority themes including biodiversity, pollution, and human rights and the environment, with expanding engagement in emerging areas such as urbanization and gender. The Common Approaches on Biodiversity and Pollution have provided platforms for awareness raising, advocacy and joint policy engagement, knowledge exchange, and support to UN Country Teams (UNCTs). These efforts have facilitated the alignment of global environmental priorities with country-level programming, including through enhanced integration in Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).

Work to strengthen synergies among multilateral environmental agreements has advanced, particularly across the Rio Conventions and the chemicals and waste cluster. Joint messaging at recent Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and coordinated interagency engagement are helping promote integrated responses to the triple planetary crisis. The EMG has continued to serve as a strategic convener through its Nexus Dialogues, supporting system-wide reflection on cross-cutting themes such as harmful subsidies, bioeconomy, disaster risk reduction, and internal displacement. At the same time, the UN system has continued to advance its internal environmental sustainability agenda through the UN Sustainability Strategy and Greening the Blue initiative, with improvements in reporting, emissions reductions in key areas, and wider application of environmental management systems.

Despite this progress, challenges remain in achieving full system-wide coherence and accelerating joint delivery. Sustaining and scaling up results will require strengthened incentives for collaboration, enhanced operational capacity for joint implementation, and sustainable financing for inter-agency coordination, alongside leveraging comparative advantages, avoiding duplication, and maximising collective impact.

Against this backdrop, the UN80 reform process presents an opportunity to consolidate progress and embed environmental coordination more firmly across UN governance, planning, financing and accountability mechanisms. In this context, the EMG can continue to evolve as a key enabler of system-wide coordination and coherence in environmental science, policy and action, integrated programming and shared learning across entities at global, regional, and country levels working with and through the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and UNCTs to take the science and policy to support regional and country level actions.

UNEA's continued engagement and guidance remain vital to sustaining ambition, reinforcing accountability, and enabling the UN system to support Member States more effectively. With strengthened coordination, shared ownership, and strategic alignment of resources, the UN system stands ready to deepen its collective efforts and better support countries in delivering transformative outcomes for people and planet.



EMG Membership

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Introduction

Environmental issues are central to global governance, given their critical links to ecosystem service provision, human rights protection, and sustainable economic prosperity. Despite many UN entities universally acknowledging the urgency of addressing environmental and related socio-economic challenges, their mandate-specific focuses have constrained effective and coherent system-wide coordination toward shared objectives.

To address this, the SWFS was developed following the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and at the request of the first session of the UNEA, resolution 1/11.The Framework seeks to enhance synergy, collaboration, and coherence across UN agencies by eliminating redundancy and duplication in environmental initiatives, promoting knowledge exchange, facilitating the establishment of partnerships, as well as supporting Member States in delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Framework was endorsed by the Senior Officials of the EMG and officially launched at the second session of UNEA in 2016.

Under the SWFS, the first synthesis report was published in 2017, which gauged the strategic alignment of more than 50 UN member agencies to 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The second report was prepared in 2020 as a thematic report on the UN system's contribution to the biodiversity agenda. In addition, an update of SWFS on the key UN collaborative environmental initiatives coordinated by the EMG was provided to the sixth session of UNEA in 2024.

This update is prepared by the EMG Secretariat for the information of the seventh session of UNEA, providing an updated summary of recent UN system collaborative efforts on the environment. It aims to provide an overview of efforts to date on cross-cutting actions of biodiversity, pollution and human rights, and progress on environmental sustainability in the UN's internal management. The note concludes by looking ahead to the future of system-wide collaboration on environmental issues.

The UN Environment Management Group

The UN system's collaboration and coordination on the environment is facilitated by a number of interagency mechanisms, with the EMG serving as the principal UN coordination body dedicated to the environment. Established in 2001 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/242, the EMG is mandated to identify, address and promote the application of cross-sectoral solutions to issues on the environmental and human settlements agenda that require enhanced interagency cooperation. The Group, through its membership of 53 specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the UN, including the MEA secretariats, facilitates effective and collaborative involvement of relevant UN system actors and other potential partners, as appropriate. The EMG operates through various thematic workstreams, and interagency working groups called Issue Management Groups. By mapping the UN environmental landscape and identifying opportunities for synergy, the EMG enhances transparency, efficiency, and mutual reinforcement among agencies, and contributes to avoiding duplication, and filling gaps in support to Member States.

High-level Policy and Strategic Alignment

In October 2024[1] and September 2025[2], the Senior Officials of the EMG[3] convened for high-level strategic discussions on strengthening system-wide coordination and collaboration on the environment. Chaired by the Executive Director of UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the discussions explored leveraging complementary mandates of different UN entities; pathways for the stronger integration and implementation of global agendas and frameworks through coordinated approaches; and enhancing the UN system's ability to address complex and cross cutting challenges.

The EMG was recognised by the Senior Officials as a well-positioned platform to strengthen coordination, coherence, and strategic positioning across the UN system on the environment, from headquarters to regional offices and country-level teams, to deliver coherent, impactful, and inclusive solutions to issues on the environmental agenda. Recommendations were made for the EMG to engage more systematically with the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB), UNSDG and High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and other relevant coordination mechanisms.

Other key reflections arose on integrating environmental considerations into cross-cutting areas such as finance, technology, gender, disaster risk reduction, and human rights, and enhancing operational tools, data platforms, and knowledge-sharing to facilitate country-level action. The Senior Officials acknowledged the value of tools like the Common Approaches and emphasised other innovative approaches such as thematic hubs, and interagency coalitions, and a possible "One UN MEA Package for UN Country level Action", while stressing the importance of long-term planning, financing, and stakeholder engagement. They also highlighted the need to avoid duplication and siloed activities, ensuring that UN efforts are coherent, efficient, and mutually reinforcing. The reflections also underscored the value of evidence-based approaches, including integrated data, monitoring, and reporting systems, to improve coherence, track progress, and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other environmental frameworks at global, regional, and national levels.

Building on these strategic discussions, the Senior Officials agreed on a set of action points to continue the existing technical collaborations and forge new ones forming the plan of work for the EMG over the past two years and beyond as outlined below.

[1] 30th Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG (SOM30)
[2] 31st Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG (SOM31)
[3] Comprising Heads of Agencies and Senior Officials of the EMG's 53 member organisations



Progress of Key Collaborative Environmental Efforts

The following sections provide a summary of the key thematic collaborative efforts, at global and national levels, and their outcomes under the auspices of the EMG since March 2024.

Advancing on the Biodiversity Agenda

The UN Common Approach to Biodiversity[4] , endorsed by the CEB in 2021, provides a results oriented normative framework to ensure a cohesive, systematic, and collaborative effort across the UN system that addresses the critical challenges posed by biodiversity loss. It aims to effectively integrate biodiversity and nature-based solutions into the policies, programs, and operations of UN entities across global, regional, and national levels while aligning with the strengths and mandates of each involved entity. It aims to aid in medium- to long-term planning, benchmarking, and reporting, ensuring comprehensive system-wide coordination to support, and accelerate the implementation of global frameworks, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), in collaboration with the UN development system, thereby enhancing their impact across geographical landscapes. In this regard the EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity undertook the following activities to progress the implementation of the Common Approach to Biodiversity.

Global-Level Advocacy

Over the past year, the EMG has worked to raise awareness of the Common Approach to Biodiversity and the GBF and to highlight their implementation and practical utility. Through the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity Webinar Series, the EMG has brought together UN entities, representatives of MEAs, regional and national stakeholders to foster knowledge exchange, share best practices, and disseminate lessons learned on integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions into socio-economic development processes. Alongside other discussion points, the sessions sought to demonstrate how the topics contribute to the implementation of the GBF. Four webinars were held during this period, focusing on these key themes:



Held in collaboration with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), this webinar underscored the urgent need to integrate biodiversity conservation into urban spatial planning processes. The session featured case studies from Chile, Costa Rica, and Kenya[5], alongside presentations from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UN-Habitat. Speakers discussed the interdependence between humans and the environment, the ecological, economic, and intrinsic value of biodiversity and the need to ensure equity and gender inclusion in planning processes. They noted that success depends on engaging multi-sectoral stakeholders, aligning urban development priorities, strengthening green infrastructure investment, assessing urbanization and development impacts, and enhancing institutional and sectoral coordination.

The session prompted discussions on the formation of an interagency working group on urbanization and the environment, endorsed by the Senior Officials in September 2025.

[4] Common Approach to Integrating Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions for Sustainable Development into the United Nations Policy and Programme Planning and Delivery (Common Approach)
[5] University of Chile, Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements of Costa Rica, University of Costa Rica, and Nairobi Rivers Commission



This cross-cutting webinar, co-hosted by the EMG, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and with contributions from UNEP and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) Accelerator Partnership, aimed to identify opportunities to encourage the full participation of all actors across agrifood sectors. Presenters emphasised the dependence of local livelihoods on natural resources, the need for accessible financing for rural communities, and stronger coordination across MEAs. UNCT Indonesia provided an overview of their efforts aimed at building an Integrated UN System Strategy for Biodiversity in the context of the Common Approach.



Held in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the session focused on the importance of human rights–based approaches to biodiversity management. It identified existing gaps and future opportunities, and advocated for incorporating a unified UN message on human rights and biodiversity at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP16[6]. During the session, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment advocated for human rights mainstreaming, urging for a more holistic approach rooted in communities that respects Indigenous Peoples. The panel, consisting of representatives from OHCHR, the Chepkitale Indigenous People Development Project, and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, discussed the connections between human rights, natural resource provision, and biodiversity conservation.



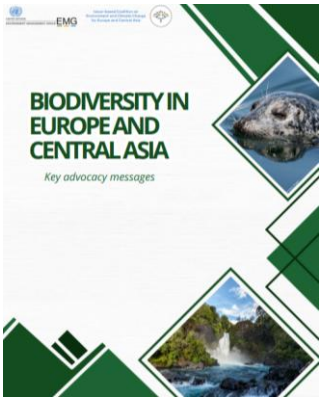
Organised in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the EMG convened representatives from the CBD, UNDRR, along with UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and governmental experts from Trinidad and Tobago and Uganda, to discuss the critical linkages between disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and biodiversity management. Speakers emphasised the importance of coherent implementation of global frameworks, including the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement, highlighting their shared principles in advancing ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and resilience to climate hazards. The national representatives reflected on their experiences in developing NBSAPs and implementing DRR strategies, the discussion emphasized the critical importance of broad and inclusive stakeholder engagement to the success of these actions. The session also outlined common challenges, including the lack of tailored actions and insufficient data to support informed decision-making.

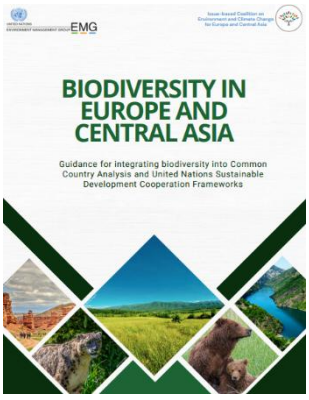
[6] The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Operationalization of the Common Approach to Biodiversity at Regional and National Levels

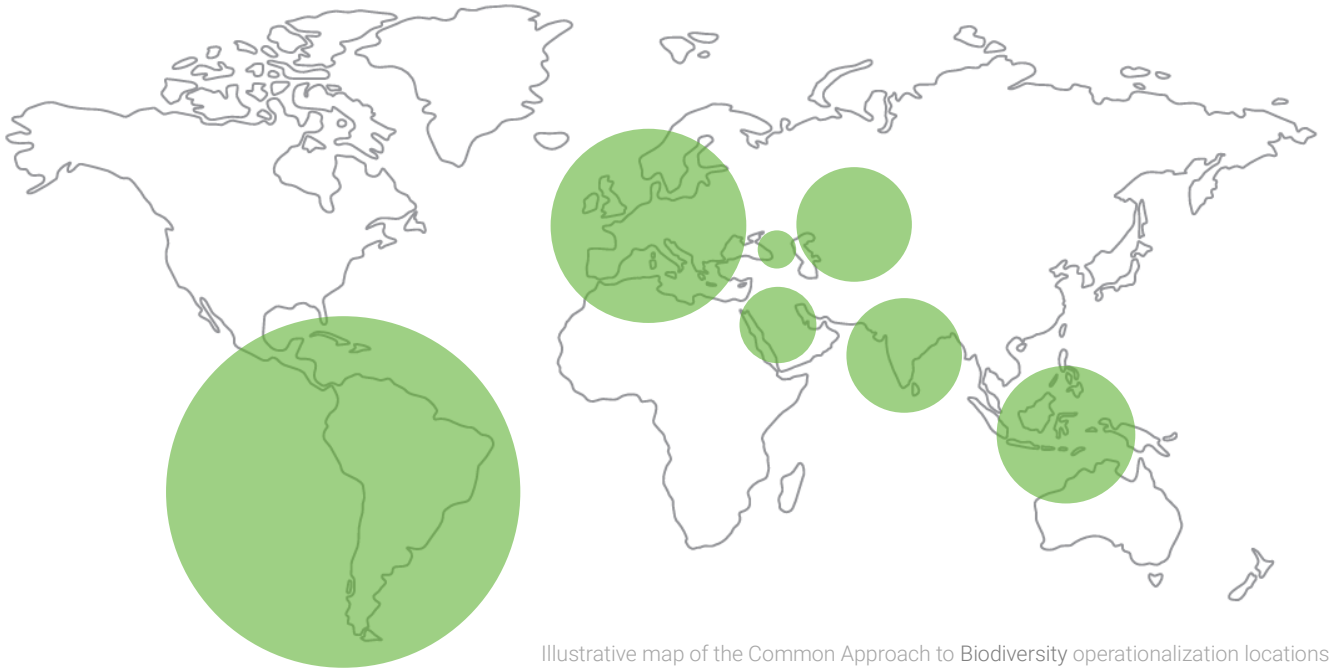
Additionally, during the past year, the EMG has collaborated with regional bodies, UNCTs, and RCs to operationalize the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity. Targeted webinars and briefings conducted for Saudi Arabia, India, Armenia and across the Southern African Development Community served as platforms for knowledge sharing and capacity building. These sessions generated considerable interest, prompting requests for deeper engagement and tailored support to embed the approaches in country programs and joint UN work.

In Armenia and Saudi Arabia, the Common Approach is serving as a supportive reference in the development of the UNSDCFs. In India, a mapping has been prepared to chart current UN efforts on biodiversity, ensuring better coordination and impact tracking. The mapping highlighted both where the UN system is strongly aligned and where there is space to grow, affirming that the UN system in India is well-positioned to contribute meaningfully to India's biodiversity ambitions. At the regional level, efforts are underway in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the Common Approach, share best practices, and gather input for further regional action.





The EMG, together with the UNEP Europe Office and the Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change in Europe and Central Asia, hosted a regional webinar for UNCTs and RCs. The session focused on best practices and lessons learned in integrating biodiversity considerations into UNSDCFs. Following up on this initiative, the EMG and IBC formally launched Key Advocacy Messages for



Illustrative map of the Common Approach to Biodiversity operationalization locations

Biodiversity Mainstreaming and a new Guidance Document for Integrating Biodiversity into CCAs and UNSDCFs. These resources provide UNCTs with practical tools and methodologies to support biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and ensure alignment with global commitments. The documents are intended to help RCs and UNCTs articulate the case for biodiversity in their policy engagement with governments and stakeholders, as well as to identify entry points for financing and implementation.

The EMG has observed growing momentum among UNCTs in their uptake of the Common Approach. In Indonesia, efforts are underway to develop an Integrated UN System Strategy for Biodiversity in the context of the Common Approach, aligned with the new CCAs for the next UNSDCF (2026 – 2030) and other national actions. UNCT Indonesia plans to leverage existing partnerships, such as the National Blue Agenda Actions Partnership, in the development and implementation of this Strategy. The team has also identified key entry points across the UN system where biodiversity intersects with climate action, agriculture, energy transitions, One Health, women's empowerment, finance, labour, human rights, and pollution



Midterm Report of the Common Approach to Biodiversity

Meanwhile, work is underway to develop a midterm report assessing the implementation of the Common Approach to Biodiversity so far. This report will provide an overview of the progress made in fostering coherent and collective action on biodiversity and nature-based solutions across the United Nations system. It will present both qualitative and quantitative insights into the implementation of the approach, showcasing best practices and key lessons learned.

86%

of UN agencies have adjusted their strategies, policies and programmes to align to the Common Approach to Biodiversity
(QCPR 2023)

Progressing Towards a Pollution-Free Planet

Endorsed by the EMG Senior Officials in 2023, the UN Common Approach to Pollution[7] paves way for a stronger, more coordinated global response towards a pollution-free planet. Modelled on the Common Approach to Biodiversity, this strategic framework leverages and advances existing interagency arrangements that address pollution-related issues, by transforming and strengthening capacities at global, national, and subnational levels. It promotes comprehensive system-wide coordination to support Member States in the implementation of global frameworks, such as the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC).

Throughout the past two years, the EMG Issue Management Group on Pollution has worked to promote the implementation of Common Approach to Pollution. The group has identified opportunities for collaboration on awareness raising and information exchange, mainstreaming pollution prevention and reduction; and monitoring and reporting on pollution. The group has also conducted the following activities:

Operationalizing the UN Common Approach to Pollution

In 2024, EMG Members provided a briefing on the Common Approach, and tailor-made assistance to reduce pollution, to the UN RC Offices and the UNCT in Bahrain.

Contributions to INC-5

Ahead of the first part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5) at the end of 2024, the EMG coordinated its Members to jointly reflect on the draft UN on the International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution. This background information supported EMG Members in developing individual submissions to INC-5

Cross Mapping the Common Approach to Pollution with the GFC

The EMG, in collaboration with the UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), is in the process of conducting a cross-mapping exercise to explore the extent to which the Common Approach already aligns with the GFC, identify remaining gaps, and determine where closer integration may be needed. Clarifying these linkages will not only strengthen coordination within the UN system but also enhance the capacity of Member States to deliver on the commitments of the GFC and move closer to the shared vision of a pollution-free planet.

In addition, a cross-mapping of the objectives of the Common Approach to Pollution with the SDGs has been prepared, illustrating how the implementation of the Common Approach can contribute to the achievement of the goals.



[7] UN System Common Approach to Transitioning Towards a Pollution-Free Planet

Supporting the Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

In 2020, the EMG Issue Management Group on Human Rights and the Environment was mandated to integrate the human right to a healthy environment into the work of the UN to ensure a coherent and rights-based approach to environmental action throughout the UN system. Through integrated programming tools, strategic influence in multilateral environmental processes, and targeted training, the EMG will equip UNCTs and governments to deliver rights-based environmental solutions on the ground. Joint efforts support the implementation of the human right to a healthy environment, strengthen human rights integration across the Rio Conventions and other MEAs, and build capacity on issues such as Indigenous Peoples' rights, environmental defenders, gender, and children's environmental health.

In collaboration with OHCHR, the EMG produced and launched Guidance on Integrating Human Rights in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (March 2024). The guidance was designed to support UNCTs, Member States, policymakers and stakeholders in integrating human rights into NBSAPs under the CBD. The guidance emphasizes rights-based approaches to biodiversity planning, including inclusive participation, protection of vulnerable groups (such as Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth), environmental governance, and alignment with international human rights and business standards. It highlights that, by embedding these principles, NBSAPs can achieve more equitable, effective, and accountable biodiversity outcomes, while strengthening coherence between biodiversity and human rights frameworks.

Human Rights Advocacy at the MEA COPs

In the margins of the 2024 COPs of the Rio Conventions and the 2025 COPs of the BRS Conventions, the EMG organised a series of activities to promote the integration of human rights-based approaches in the Convention's efforts to address biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change and land degradation.



Enhancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in UN Management

Greening the Blue

The UN system continues to integrate environmental considerations into the management of its operations and facilities through the UN-wide *Greening the Blue* initiative, coordinated by UNEP's Sustainable United Nations (SUN) Facility. The initiative supports UN entities in measuring their environmental performance, reducing their environmental impact and offsetting their residual greenhouse gas emissions. The SUN Facility provides technical assistance and capacity building to UN Entities, as well as services to support knowledge-sharing and reporting. Additionally, the SUN Facility is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the UN Strategy for Environmental Sustainability in the Area of Management, endorsed in 2019.

The Greening the Blue annual inventory process continues with nearly 60 UN entities collecting and reporting data covering their 2024 operations and facilities environmental performance. The 2024/2025 inventory was successfully conducted through the new data platform developed by SUN and UN Department of Operational Support (DOS) Global Service Centre. This comprehensive exercise engaged nearly 500 users from 42 entities, who submitted detailed reports from more than 1,100 locations. The results of which will be published in the upcoming "Greening the Blue Report" expected early December 2025.

In the last year, the UNEP SUN Facility has taken steps to improve and review methods and approaches. For example, compiling comments from the UN system on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) Sustainability Reporting Standards Exposure Draft on Climate-related disclosures; reviewing and drafting recommendations on the use of Energy Attribute Certificates; exploring how to improve data collection and data quality of water, wastewater, and waste data collected from the UN system; and discussing the UN system approach on off-setting in light of the transition from Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism to the Paris Agreement Article 6.4 mechanisms.

Greening the Blue Report 2024

The 2024 edition highlights the UN system's ongoing efforts to systematically reduce environmental impacts and embed sustainability across management functions. Covering the 2023 reporting year, the report encompasses 322,900 UN personnel and 58 entities across headquarters and field operations worldwide.

Key findings include a slight increase in per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 4.6 tonnes CO_2 equivalent in 2022 to 4.8 tonnes in 2023, representing a 9% rise in total emissions; however, emissions remain 24% below pre-pandemic levels. Waste per capita decreased by 4%, with improved reporting clarifying disposal methods: in 2023, 31% of waste was reused, recycled, composted, or used for energy recovery, up from 13% in 2022. UN entities continue to advance the application of Environmental Management Systems, moving toward system-wide implementation by 2025.

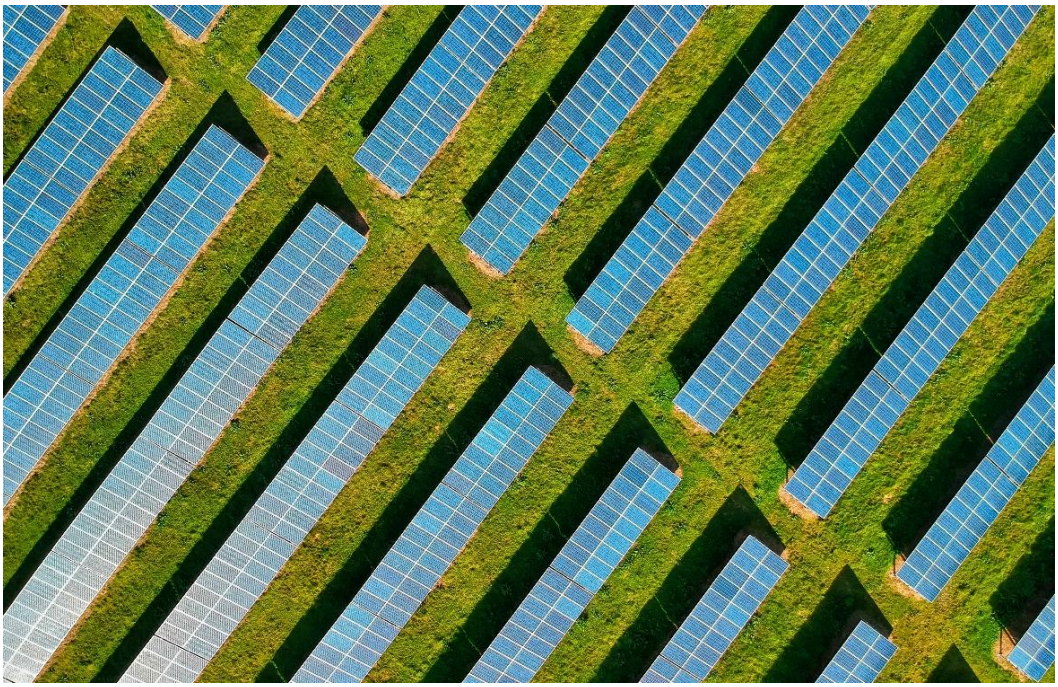


Seventy percent of entities provide environmental training to personnel on a voluntary or mandatory basis, and 83% have sustainable procurement policies in place. GHG emissions from facilities decreased for a second consecutive year, remaining 25% below pre-pandemic levels, while emissions from air travel increased by 27% compared to 2022, though still below pre-pandemic levels.

UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030: Towards Leadership in Environmental and Social Sustainability

In 2021, the UN Sustainability Strategy: Towards Leadership in Environmental and Social Sustainability was endorsed[8]. This Strategy aims to mainstream fundamental environmental and social sustainability principles into every aspect of the UN system, from ensuring that management functions, programmes, and partnerships respect sustainability principles, to joint reporting on the sustainability of the UN system. Currently, efforts are underway to identify a host entity (or entities) for the coordination of the implementation of the Strategy at the UN System level.

Meanwhile, 25 UN entities established the Network of UN Focal Points for the Environmental and Social Sustainability of Programmes (UNESSnet) to continue exchanging knowledge and experiences on the environmental and social sustainability of UN-led and UN-supported programmes and projects. The network is guided by the programme-related commitments of the Sustainability Strategy and by the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming. Between 2024 and 2025, the UNESSnet held several meetings, including an annual gathering, to exchange knowledge and experiences on specific topics.



[8] By the EMG Senior Officials, the United Nations High Level Committee on Programmes, the United Nations High Level Committee on Management.

Scaling-up Action on Urbanization, Gender and the Environment

At its 31st meeting in 2025, the EMG Senior Officials endorsed two new interagency workstreams, reflecting a strengthened commitment to collaborate and enhance UN system action on environmental issues. The Issue Management Group on Urbanization and the Environment will facilitate a coordinated approach to the implementation of the UN System-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development. The Issue Management Group on Gender and the Environment will seek to strengthen a coherent, gender-responsive and women's rights-based approach to environmental action throughout the UN system.

Enhancing Knowledge and Information Exchange: Dashboard of UN Environmental Initiatives

The EMG Secretariat continues to develop a dashboard that will visually map EMG member initiatives addressing the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. The dashboard, subject to adequate financial resources, will serve as a visualization of the SWFS, enhancing information and knowledge exchange among UN entities to achieve greater synergy, collaboration and coherence in their work on the environment and provide input to analytical reports on the state of collaboration on the environment in the UN system.



Strengthening Synergies across MEAs

Against the backdrop of an accelerating planetary crisis, the EMG Senior Officials in 2023 committed to strengthening coordinated UN system action to address the drivers of environmental change underlining the Rio Conventions, pollution-related conventions, and other relevant frameworks. This commitment seeks to address, in a coherent and synergistic manner, the planetary crises of climate change, nature loss, desertification, drought and pollution. It aims to highlight the interconnectivity of these issues, their respective conventions, and the collaborative actions required to address these issues, especially through supporting Member States led initiatives such as the Rio Trio Initiative.

To deliver on this, the EMG actively contributed to the COPs of the Rio Conventions[9] in 2024 and the BRS Conventions[10] in 2025. In collaboration with UNU-INWEH, the EMG organized three 'Rio Trio' Dialogues on Advancing Global Cooperation for Biodiversity, Climate Action and Land Degradation Neutrality. Building on this foundation, the EMG convened Heads and Senior Officials of UN entities and MEA Secretariats for high-level roundtable discussions at CBD COP16 (October 2024), the UNFCCC COP29, (November 2024), UNCCD COP16 (December 2024) and 2025 BRS COPs (May 2025). In addition, the EMG coordinated a UN Hub at CBD COP16, providing a platform for UN system entities to convene, collaborate, and exchange insights.

These events provided platforms for discussions and actions on strengthening coordination and collaboration within the UN system, scaling up joint support at national level, and promoting integrated solutions for sustainable development, climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, and pollution reduction across the conventions.

The EMG Secretariat produced a summary of the key recommendations and guidance on enhancing synergies across MEAs, resulting from these events. Areas identified for enhancing synergies include aligning complementary MEA policies; strengthening engagement of stakeholders including governments, UN entities, civil society organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector; channel rights-based approaches to MEA implementation; optimizing funding and resource use; integrated environmental programming; and coordinated monitoring and reporting on MEA obligations.

This focus will remain a priority for the EMG into 2026, with EMG Senior Officials at their meeting in September 2025 agreeing to continue exploring opportunities for the UN system to support the synergistic implementation of MEAs around climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, chemicals, and waste and pollution.

42 Entities contributed to the roundtable series

BRS
CBD
CITES
CMS
ESCWA
FAO
IFAD
ILO
IOM
ITC
ITU
Minamata
OHCHR
Ramsar
UN Habitat
UN Women
UN Youth Office
UNCCD
UNCDF
UNCTAD
UNDP
UNDRR
UNECA
UNECE
UNEP
UNESCO
UNFF
UNICEF
UNIDO
UNODC
UNOOSA
UNOPS
UNU- FLORES
UNWTO
WFP
WHO
World Bank

IUCN
WWF

RC Azerbaijan
RC Colombia
RC Saudi Arabia

[9] The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

[10] The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS)



EMG High-Level Roundtable Speakers at CBD COP16



EMG High-Level Roundtable Speakers at UNFCCC COP29



EMG High-Level Roundtable Speakers at UNCCD COP16



EMG High-Level Roundtable Speakers at the BRS COPs 2025

Fostering Multistakeholder Dialogue on Cross-Cutting Issues

EMG Nexus Dialogue Series

Through the Nexus Dialogue Series, the EMG continues to convene the UN system, bringing together experts from diverse institutions and disciplines to explore emerging, persistent, and systemic cross-cutting issues. These fora allow participants to discuss the thematic and institutional interlinkages between environmental issues, frameworks, and agendas, in the context of the wider SDG framework. Since March 2024, the EMG has coordinated a diversity of dialogues:

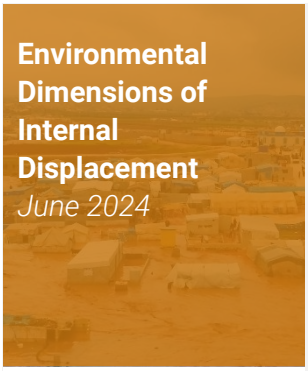


Repurposing Harmful Subsidies
May, September and November 2024

132
Participants

The environmental and economic impact of subsidies is often overlooked yet profound, particularly for vulnerable populations. The three-part series on Repurposing Harmful Subsidies focused on aligning public spending for climate and nature actions, the path to repurposing and reforming environmentally harmful subsidies through revitalising economies, and the opportunities and best practices to transform harmful subsidies. The series brought together key UN organizations including, UNEP, UNDP, United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Bank, alongside external organizations. The series generated guidance for collective action on repurposing subsidies for long term environmental sustainability. It contributed to a comprehensive understanding of harmful environmental impacts of subsidies.

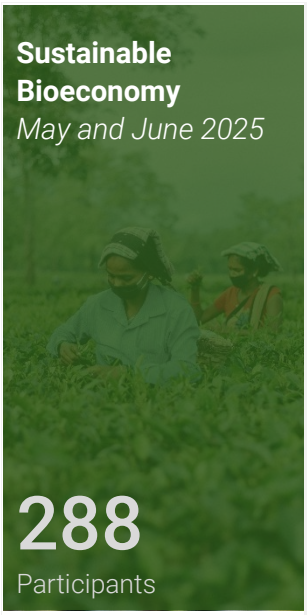
The EMG Secretariat captured the collective knowledge generated through the series in a compendium on repurposing harmful subsidies, complemented by a policy note distilling key recommendations and proposed actions for policy alignment and reform across the UN system.



Environmental Dimensions of Internal Displacement
June 2024

The event examined the environmental aspects of the drivers, responses, and solutions related to internal displacement. Moderated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the dialogue featured presentations and views from the UN Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement[11] , from local governments in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, as well as UNEP, FAO and the Global Platform for Action. The discussion generated recommendations that informed the development of a system-wide approach to internal displacement, led by the UN Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement under the auspices of the CEB and the HLCP.

[11] Assistant Secretary-General Robert Piper



Sustainable Bioeconomy
May and June 2025

288
Participants

To explore how coordinated global action on sustainable bioeconomy can contribute to tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, alongside food security, economic development and social inclusion, the EMG convened a two-part series on sustainable bioeconomy. The first dialogue examined a more cohesive approach to sustainable bioeconomy across UN agencies, identifying gaps and synergies among initiatives, convening representatives from FAO, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and OHCHR. The second dialogue focused on how bioeconomy practices can support climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and land restoration, while also addressing barriers to participation and ensuring equitable access to resources, knowledge, and markets. Bringing together CBD, UNCCD, and special envoy of UNFCCC COP30 and the Rural Outreach Program Africa. The event informed efforts to map existing initiatives, identify priorities and gaps, strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue, and it laid the groundwork for a potential joint UN approach to the sustainable bioeconomy, ensuring inclusive engagement, particularly with marginalized groups.

Urbanization and the Environment
July 2025

43
Participants

In advance of the establishment of a dedicated EMG Issue Management Group on Urbanization at the EMG Senior Officials Meeting in September 2025, the EMG and UN-Habitat coordinated a dialogue to gather insights and concrete suggestions from EMG member entities on the critical intersection of urbanization and the environment. The outcomes of the dialogue will shape the development of the group's Terms of Reference.

Concluding Messages

As the UN system seeks to respond to fast evolving global realities including accelerating environmental change, rising humanitarian needs, pressures on multilateralism, and increasingly scarce resources its role in advancing integrated and coherent delivery has never been more critical. Member States are also increasingly calling for system-wide responses to environmental priorities, whether biodiversity, pollution, climate, chemicals and waste, urban sustainability, or gender equality.

The continued expansion of EMG workstreams reflects this demand and signals the system's readiness to act collectively. The priority now is to ensure that this collective momentum strengthens the enabling conditions for country-level action by improving coherence across UN entities in how they support the integrated and synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, by aligning system-wide guidance and approaches, and by contributing to clearer policy tools that UNCTs can draw on when assisting Member States to translate global environmental commitments into concrete national results.

The progress achieved over the past two years demonstrates that when incentives converge, expertise is shared, and coordination mechanisms are empowered, the UN can act collectively and deliver more effectively. At the same time, the pace and scale of environmental challenges expose persistent gaps that require deeper cooperation, stronger institutional enablers, and a greater focus on operationalising joint approaches across the system, particularly at regional and country levels.

Looking ahead, sustaining momentum will depend on embedding environmental coordination into the core of how the UN plans, finances, and delivers its work. This includes strengthening joint resource mobilisation, enhancing collaborative access to environmental finance, deepening engagement with science-policy bodies and panels, and more firmly embedding environmental priorities within the wider UN coordination architecture, including the UNSDG and the CEB.

The ongoing UN80 reform process offers a timely opportunity to reinforce the structural foundations needed for more seamless cooperation across the UN system. By clarifying the links between intergovernmental guidance, institutional incentives, and interagency implementation, the reform can help ensure that coordination mechanisms such as the EMG operate with greater coherence, authority, legitimacy, and impact. Within this evolving context, the EMG can play an even more strategic role in advancing integrated science–policy approaches, supporting joint programming, enabling knowledge exchange, and fostering shared accountability and innovation. Strengthening these connections will support clearer vertical alignment between global policy frameworks and country-level implementation, while also enabling stronger horizontal collaboration among entities with complementary mandates at global, regional, and operational levels.

In this context, UNEA's leadership remains indispensable. Continued engagement by UNEA in system-wide environmental coordination helps sustain political visibility, reinforce shared accountability, and guide the alignment of incentives and resources. Through its strategic direction, UNEA can ensure that the environmental dimension remains fully embedded in UN planning, programming, and delivery, consistent with its universal mandate and convening role.

By deepening collaboration, reinforcing institutional mechanisms, and prioritising integrated delivery, the UN system can maximise the value of existing capacities and elevate its collective contribution to a healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable planet.