UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP EMG

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| **23rd Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Management Group**<br>Technical Segment, 18 September 2017, New York<br>Senior Segment, 20 September 2017, New York | **EMG**/SOM.23<br>Distribution: EMG members |

# Report of the Meeting

## I. Summary of proceedings

1. The twenty-third meeting of the Senior Officials of the Environment Management Group was held in New York on 18 and 20 September 2017. The meeting consisted of two segments as set out in the annexed agenda (Annex I). The technical segment was co-chaired by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment (UNEP).

2. The technical segment met on 18 September to consider the progress report of the EMG Issue Management Groups and Processes and to prepare the strategic discussion and actions for the future work of the EMG for the approval of the Senior Officials.

3. Subsequently, the senior segment met on 20 September to engage in a high-level strategic discussion and to approve the action points and work plan for the EMG for 2018. The strategic discussion included deliberations on delivering the 2030 Agenda in light of the Secretary General's reform, contributing to the Biodiversity Agenda through giving it a new momentum, the potential for the UN system to contribute towards Climate Change Agenda and to the agenda of the 3rd United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in addressing the issue of pollution, as well as a review of achievements made in enhancing internal sustainability. The meeting was attended by representatives of 28 member entities (Annex II). The working and information documents of the meeting are available on the EMG website: www.unemg.org.

### A.) Technical Segment

4. The technical segment was opened at 9.00 a.m. with introductory remarks by the Chair, Mr. Elliott Harris, Director of the EMG Secretariat, and Co-Chair, Mr. Tim Scott, Senior Policy Advisor at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Following the adoption of the agenda (Annex I), the technical segment discussed the actions on future work of the EMG, under agenda item 2, and as contained in the document (EMG/SOM.23/3/2017), it prepared decisions for the endorsement of the senior segment on the focus of the EMG's work going forward. A

summary of revised action points was submitted to the Senior Officials through its co-chairs. The meeting of the technical segment was declared closed at 12.50 p.m. New York time.

## B.) Senior Officials Segment

5. The senior segment was opened at 9.00 a.m. on September 20 by Co-Chair Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of UN Environment.

6. In his opening remarks, the Co-Chair invited new EMG Members and invited a tour de table and thanked UNDP for their Co-Chairing.

7. The UNDP Co-Chair, Magdy Martínez-Solimán, responded with appreciation of the continued partnership for which the EMG provides an opportune platform.

8. Following the adoption of actions and the strategic discussions, the twenty-third meeting of the Senior Officials of the Environment Management Group was declared closed at 12.30p.m.

# II. Conclusions

## A. Technical Segment

### I. Considerations of ongoing work and recommendations to the Senior Officials segment

#### *The IMG on Tackling e-Waste*

9. The EMG Director briefed the technical segment on the progress made in the IMG, since its endorsement at the 22nd meeting of the Senior Officials in 2016. An overview of the e-waste mapping exercise recently undertaken and the subsequent synthesis report, attached as (INF/1), was provided. EMG Members were notified of the report's recommendations and the plan for how to follow-up on these.

10. In response to an inquiry by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations University (UNU) clarified that the IMG is suggested to be extended to delve deeper beyond the current findings of the IMG, and to promote further synergies at the programmatic level.

11. The technical segment agreed on the following actions:

*Action I:* The Issue Management Group (IMG) on Tackling E-waste

The Senior Officials:

1. Take note of the achievements made by the IMG on Tackling E-waste, including preparation of the E-waste Synthesis Report and the Joint Statement, which outlines the commitments of respective Heads of agencies towards the follow-up of the recommendations listed in the Synthesis Report;

2. Decide to extend the IMG for one more year to:
    a. Undertake a gap analysis for identifying possible long-term programmatic cooperation and collaboration on tackling e-waste;

    b. Establish means for further and systematic sharing of knowledge among UN agencies on e-waste management partnerships and programmes, including developing a repository of project expertise, country level information and related data;

    c. Deepen the liaison between the IMG on Tackling E-waste and the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the UN, through further reciprocal briefings and exchanges of best practices, information and case studies.

### *Consultative Process on Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System*

12. An update was provided to the technical segment by the EMG Director on the ongoing work of the Consultative Process including progress made in its three work streams as outlined in the Progress Report (SOM23/3/2017).

13. IFAD, who with UNDP co-lead work stream 2 on a common approach to environmental and social safeguards, noted that good progress has been made, however, at a slower pace than expected. A more active involvement of humanitarian entities in the work stream was encouraged.

14. In this regard, the EMG Director welcomed a more active collaboration with humanitarian agencies in the EMG in general.

15. The technical segment agreed on the following actions:

*Action II:* Consultative Process on Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System

The Senior Officials:

1. Take note of the progress made in the three work streams as well as of the briefing note and draft brochure prepared to facilitate communication on the importance of UN organizations foreseeing and managing the environmental or social impacts of their own activities and on the relevance of a common approach on ESS measures;

2. Welcome the progress made by UN agencies in introducing and integrating environmental sustainability at the three entry points outlined in the ESS Framework and recognize the utility of the Framework in this regard;

3. Agree to extend the Consultative Process for one more year to:

    a. Complete the comparative analysis and continue the preparation of a common approach to environmental and social safeguards for programming in the UN system and to initiate a voluntary phase of application of the common approach;

    b. Complete the brochure explaining the ESS Framework and its links to the 2030 Agenda;

    c. Building on the Interim Guide, develop a webpage on the EMG website where guidance material and agency examples on the implementation of the ESS Framework and other related information will be shared;

    d. Consider opportunities for knowledge sharing, collective learning and coherence in corporate sustainability reporting in UN entities;

    e. Report on progress to the next Senior Officials' meeting.

### *The IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management in the United Nations system*

16. The EMG Director highlighted the progress in the IMG, including on the Greening the Blue environmental inventory for the UN system. He noted that the 2017 report will be released in November 2017, before the UNFCCC COP.

17. In addition, the Co-Chair made note of the report showing achievements during the first 10 years of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy, which has been drafted following a request of the midterm meeting of the EMG technical segment in May 2017.

18. Sustainable UN (SUN) encouraged a discussion on enhancing sustainability in One UN – buildings at country level, for example by looking at their procurement processes. It was suggested that the current UN reform could be used to show that environmental sustainability

management is included in the operations of UN offices beyond headquarters. Emphasising the potential in greening back-office operations, the Co-Chair backed this up, highlighting that opportunities may also include UN country reforms and the strengthening of the UN Resident Coordinator role.

19. WFP highlighted that they would look forward to supporting the greening of back-office operations.

20. The technical segment agreed on the following actions:

*Action III:* System-wide commitments on environmental sustainability management

The Senior Officials:

1. Endorse the above report on activities of the IMG on environmental sustainability management and invite the EMG to continue its joint work, to ensure progressive implementation of the UN Roadmap for Climate neutrality by 2020 including the new streams of work related to waste management, water management and staff awareness;

2. Request the IMG to collaborate with the appropriate committees within the CEB to ensure that environmental management and the Roadmap for a Climate Neutral UN by 2020 is well integrated in the CEB discussions for internalizing SDGs in the work of the UN system at all levels.

### *Environmental Peer Reviews of EMG members*

21. The EMG Director provided an overview on the progress in this area, pointing to the growing interest among UN entities to be peer reviewed for the environmental management of their facilities.

22. With reference to the suggested action points, DFS stressed that they would be ready to be peer reviewed only in 2020.

23. The technical segment agreed on the following actions:

*Action IV:* Environmental management peer reviews of United Nations organisations

The Senior Officials:

1. Welcome the continued interest by EMG members to be reviewed on their environmental performances and take note of the usefulness of the Peer Review Process as a means to enhance environmental sustainability in the Headquarters and Field Operations of the UN agencies;

2. Welcome the concluded Peer Review Reports of WFP, UNDP and UNRWA and thank the contributing UN entities for taking part in the review process;

3. Welcome the continuation of the Peer Review Process and the interest expressed by UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNOPS and DFS to engage in the next phase of the peer reviews;

4. Consider developing guidelines and documenting good practices to support agencies that wish to undertake peer reviews independently, as an output of the peer review process.

## *Consultative Process on a UN System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment*

24. The EMG Director gave an introduction to the work and progress made by the Consultative Process, including the production of the first synthesis report.

25. The Co-Chair searched for clarification on whether the current version of the report is to be considered final or if any further inputs by EMG Members are required. The EMG Secretariat clarified that the current draft would be circulated for final approval following the Senior Officials Meeting.

26. IFAD inquired how much appetite there would be from UN entities in providing inputs to a synthesis report on an annual basis, taking into consideration the time required to provide input to the first report. Updating the synthesis report on a biennial basis was suggested, which could be in line with the reporting cycle to UNEA. This could be supported by a running automatic feed-in of decisions by UN entities' governing bodies to an online platform. UNICEF intervened, noting that biennial reporting might be preferable also from the perspective of avoiding duplication of other reporting work that agencies are engaged in. Furthermore, more time in between reporting would allow more time for quality analysis of the information collected.

27. The EMG Secretariat noted that annual reporting would keep up the momentum, further referring to the diversity that would be expected in reporting from year to year. Use of the knowledge platform created for the SWFS was encouraged. WFP intervened by highlighting that the SWFS is not just about reporting but also about galvanizing action, encouraging agencies to remain committed to tackling the SDGs.

28. ITU, supported by UN Environment, encouraged the EMG Secretariat to distribute an email to EMG Members, requesting their views on how long the reporting periods should be.

29. It was agreed that a discussion document would be prepared by the Secretariat to seek feedback from EMG Members on the periodicity, function and form of the synthesis report.

### Action V: Consultative Process on a UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment

The Senior Officials:

1. Welcome the finalization of the 1st Synthesis Report of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies as a significant contribution to identifying illustrative examples of system-wide cooperation and collaboration on the environment in support of implementing the 2030 Agenda;

2. Extend the Consultative Process to support the implementation of the Framework, including preparation of the second edition of the SWFS Synthesis Report, delineate plans for future Synthesis Reports, and foster ongoing information sharing via the SWFS Knowledge Exchange Network and interagency fora such as the EMG Nexus Dialogues;

3. Request the Consultative Process to provide a report on its progress to the meeting of the Senior Officials.

## *Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG in Enhancing Coordination on the Environment in the UN System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

30. The EMG Director provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Task Team on Maximising the Effectiveness of the EMG.

31. The Co-Chair then opened the floor for any comments. No comments were made.

### Action VI: Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG in Enhancing Coordination on the Environment in the UN System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Senior Officials:

1. Endorse the updated Terms of Reference and new Rules of procedure for the Environment Management Group and mandate the Secretariat to report on progress on the implementation of the recommendations and findings of the effectiveness report to the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in line with its Resolution 2/5;

2. Decide to conclude the work of the Task Team in light of the completion of its mandate.

## *EMG Nexus Dialogues*

32. The EMG Director provided an overview of the EMG Nexus Dialogues, making reference to two dialogues that were held in April (launching of dialogue series) and July (the poverty-environment nexus), and the third dialogue to be held on 19th October, 2017 (humanitarian-environment nexus).

33. IFAD saw the dialogues as learning opportunities and as a way to highlight the benefits or working outside of silos. A stronger emphasis on follow-up of the dialogue outcomes was requested, as well as consideration of the amount of dialogues in one year. It was agreed that it

is important for the EMG to take the findings of each dialogue forward –not just to close the discussion at the end of each event.

34. DFS emphasized the challenge of attending the dialogues in person for entities whose mandates are not environment focused and suggested that the opportunity to attend via video conferencing be provided. The e-discussions were referenced, as a way to bring agencies into the dialogue, who may not otherwise be able to attend in-person. It was also highlighted, that keeping the dialogues as inclusive as possible could be possible through piggy-backing on other major events.

35. When discussing themes for future dialogues, ITU noted that ICT and e-waste might be an interesting topic. The Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) welcomed the ideas shared in the progress report and expressed that the topic of biodiversity in light of the post-2020 Framework lends itself well to the modality of the dialogues. The HLPF discussions on biodiversity in July 2018 could be a good time to organize the dialogue.

### Action VII: EMG Nexus Dialogues

The Senior Officials:

1. Welcome the Nexus Dialogue Series as a new modality under the EMG for continued exchange of knowledge and information and for enhancing cooperation and partnerships between the UN system and other stakeholders on the implementation of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda;

2. Invite UN agencies to sponsor and identify themes for dialogues and to provide comments for improving the organization of the future dialogues.

## II. Consideration of new issues proposed for inclusion in the EMG work plan

### *Integrating environment into humanitarian action*

36. UN Environment introduced the proposal for a new Issue Management Group on mainstreaming environment into humanitarian action with the purpose to facilitate strengthened collaboration between the humanitarian and environment sectors and to promote low-emission and low-impact humanitarian assistance. Reference was made to the upcoming Dialogue on the humanitarian-environment nexus, the outcome of which would feed into Terms of Reference for the new IMG.

37. UNDP, WFP and UNICEF expressed their support for the proposal acknowledging the added value that the EMG could bring to this nexus by giving it traction at a higher level.

38. IFAD and DFS also welcomed the initiative and suggested that links would be made to ongoing EMG processes such as the work on safeguards by the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability. ITU expressed its support for the proposal and suggested it may contribute to the work of the IMG in the area of emergency telecommunication.

## Action VIII: Integrating the environment into humanitarian action

The Senior Officials:

1. Welcome the organisation of an EMG Nexus Dialogue on the integration of the environment into humanitarian action in Geneva in October 2017;

2. Taking into account the outcome of the Dialogue, request the EMG Secretariat in consultation with interested EMG Members, to prepare Terms of Reference for a possible Issue Management Group in this area, for consideration of the Senior Officials.

### *Promoting the progressive development of law for environmental sustainability*

39. UN Environment introduced the proposal to engage EMG Members in system-wide collaboration to promote the integrated application of environmental law in the context of promoting sustainable development and good governance.

40. IFAD noted that this collaboration could be especially useful for agencies that do not have a strong environmental legislation programme that, however, occasionally are requested to support their Member States in this area.

41. DFS suggested that the IMG's Terms of Reference could include consideration of how the UN can support environmental legislation in countries whose administration has been destroyed as a consequence of war or conflict. An output of the IMG's work could be a toolkit or guidance on this. All EMG Members were encouraged to provide input to the Terms of Reference for this work.

42. The Co-Chairs suggested that the IMG could focus on the implementation of SDG16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, specifically on how better governance can be reached as required by this Goal. Should the IMG wish to focus on one area of work, it could for example look specifically at biodiversity compliance. Links could also be made to the Global Pact on the Environment proposed by France.

## Action IX: Promoting the progressive development of law for environmental sustainability

The Senior Officials:

**1.** Invite EMG Members to nominate focal points to an informal network of legal practitioners across UN entities and MEA secretariats to start identifying areas of common interest on environmental law;

**2.** In that regard, welcome the organisation of an EMG Nexus Dialogue on law for environmental sustainability;

**3.** Taking into account the outcome of the Dialogue, request the EMG Secretariat in consultation with interested EMG Members to identify potential areas for collaboration in the area of law for environmental sustainability, including in capacity building through training and learning on environmental law, especially for public policy officials, and submit a proposal for further consideration of the Senior Officials.

### *Proposal to revive system-wide collaboration on biodiversity*

43. The CBD Secretariat presented the proposal to reintroduce an interagency process on biodiversity, making reference to the need for system-wide participation in the outlining of the post-2020 Framework and the urgency in collectively speeding up implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It was proposed that the EMG could add value to this process by generating attention to the biodiversity issue across the system and that an input could be most useful following the CBD COP14 to be held in November 2018.

44. UNDP supported the proposal, suggesting that the formalization of an IMG could take place already before the next CBD COP. One focus of the IMG could be on more effective communication around the complexity of the biodiversity issue to all levels.

45. CITES and WFP expressed their support for bringing biodiversity back on the EMG agenda, highlighting the dependence of human existence on biodiversity and the need for backing from all agencies, even if their mandate does not directly deal with biodiversity issues.

46. UN Environment and IFAD suggested that efforts be made to change the narrative around biodiversity by explaining how it is linked to livelihoods and disaster reduction in a similar fashion that climate change discourse has been successfully mainstreamed. The challenge is to reach beyond the already converted, and to enhance visibility of biodiversity in non-traditional contexts.

47. IFAD pointed to the need to enhance capacity on biodiversity in the UN system, highlighting the need to support institutions with few key indicators to report back on progress from a biodiversity perspective.

48. The Co-Chairs added that the proposed dialogue on biodiversity may well be a critical place to discuss the issue of communicating biodiversity more effectively, linking it to our needs as humans and re-raising the issue of how biodiversity contributes to the mandate of UN entities. It was suggested that the nexus dialogue is prepared in depth under CBD's leadership with a focus on advocacy and communication. This could lead to a clear system-wide message to Member States on what needs to be done to reach the 2020 Targets. Ideally the dialogue would be arranged in spring 2018 in order to feed into both the HLPF, Subsidiary Body meetings under the CBD and ultimately the CBD COP14.

### Action X: Renewing system-wide collaboration on Biodiversity

The Senior Officials decide to revitalise its work on biodiversity by:

1. Organizing an EMG Nexus Dialogue on biodiversity in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2018 to identify areas for an EMG contribution;
2. Based on the outcome of the Dialogue, requesting the EMG Secretariat in consultation with interested EMG Members, to prepare Terms of Reference for a possible UN system contribution to the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

## III. Preparation of the strategic discussion during the senior segment on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the EMG

49. The EMG Director introduced the Strategic Note (EMG/SOM22/5), followed by a discussion by the technical segment in preparation for the strategic discussion by the Senior Officials.

50. The EMG Director suggested that, in addition to the presentations by the Executive Directors of the CBD and the UNFCCC, focus would be on the United Nations Secretary General's Reform, more specifically on how to strike a balance between operational and normative work through an environmental perspective, and how the normative work informs work on the ground.

51. As part of the discussion on EMG's continued engagement in the area of biodiversity, it was suggested that the Senior Officials discuss how to ensure that biodiversity agenda is appropriately reflected in updated or renewed UNDAFs.

52. With regard to the suggested topic "Emerging threats to global environmental security and potentials for UN system-wide response", DFS suggested in-depth consideration of the forum in which this topic would best be pursued.

53. Principals were encouraged to bring specific issues to the table that they would wish to discuss in a nexus context.

## IV. Environment Management Group work plan for 2018

54. The technical segment considered a draft work plan for 2018, organized according to expected accomplishments and milestones over a 12-month period as they pertain to programmatic, management and operational issues, as well as to overall cooperation, as presented in document EMG/SOM23/06.

55. The Co-Chairs highlighted that the work plan remains indicative and un-costed, as there is no common budget for EMG activities. EMG Members were encouraged to continue supporting the implementation of the work plan through in-kind and financial contributions as appropriate.

56. Updates to the work plan following the outcome of the Senior Officials Meeting will, among other issues, include the number and sequence of Nexus Dialogues and the periodicity of the SWFS synthesis report.

*Action XI:* Approval of the EMG Work Plan for 2018

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| The Senior Officials approve the EMG work plan for 2018 based on the understanding that the EMG Secretariat will revise the plan presented in document EMG/SOM.23/06 to ensure that the plan fully reflects the actions agreed by the 23rd Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG. |

## V. The next Senior Officials Meeting

57. Acknowledging the challenges involved in organizing and attending meetings during the General Assembly week, the Co-Chairs proposed that the 24th Senior Officials Meeting would take place on the Monday and Wednesday of the opening week of the General Assembly.

58. IFAD inquired about the possibility for an EMG Member Agency to host the Senior Officials Meeting in Europe where many agencies are based. Another opportunity would be to organize the technical segment as a video conference the week before the General Assembly.

59. UNDP inquired about the possibility to increase the gap between the technical and the senior segment

*Action XII:* Date and venue of the next Senior Officials' Meeting

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| The Senior Officials request the EMG Secretariat to circulate to the EMG Members the date and venues for the 24th Meeting of the Senior Officials, and consult with Members on its agenda. |

### VI. Any other business

60. No other issues were discussed.

61. The Co-chairs of the technical segment closed the meeting at 12.50 p.m.

## B. The Senior Officials Segment

### 1. Opening

62. In his opening remarks, the Co-Chair Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of UN Environment, expressed solidarity with all countries affected by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and storms that threaten ecosystem services on which human welfare is dependent. He welcomed the Ozone Secretariat and the International Organization for Migration as new members of the EMG and the IFRC as a new observer and invited participants to consider the agenda.

63. Following a tour de table, Co-Chair Mr. Magdy Martinez-Soliman, Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, expressed his appreciation of the role of the EMG in supporting coordination of the efforts of the UN system around the 2030 agenda and its environmental dimensions.

### 2. Consideration and adoption of the recommendations from the technical segment

64. The Senior Officials were briefed by the EMG Director on the outcomes of the preceding technical segment, including a description of the recommended actions for approval of the Senior Officials as well as an overview of the common views expressed in discussions. The following remarks were made:

- EMG Members were invited to suggest nexus areas that could be discussed during a Nexus Dialogue in 2018.
- UNITAR suggested that the outcome of the Nexus Dialogues, for example the planned dialogue on environmental law, could serve as input to trainings developed by the

organization and offered to take part in the follow-up work of the Dialogues. In this regard, UNITAR proposed an amendment to action point IX.3.

65. The suggested actions were then reviewed and adopted by the Senior Officials.

## 3. Strategic discussion on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the EMG

The Senior Officials provided their views and perspectives on the following issues:

### a) Recent progress and developments of the Climate Agenda and the engagement and expectations from the UN system

66. The Senior Officials heard an update on the recent developments and next steps on the climate change agenda by the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Ms. Patricia Espinosa.

67. The Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of the EMG in the context of the proposal by the UN Secretary General for the reform of the United Nations development system.

68. EMG Members were informed that the Paris Agreement is now fully in force, with 160 ratifications and work currently underway on operating guidelines and manuals being prepared to make it fully operational. While uncertainty remains with regard to some technical aspects, pressure of delivering on the Agreement by the set deadline is strong. Despite the announcement of the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement by the Unites States, a strong sense of unity in political leadership worldwide can be seen. Clear progress is made in the intergovernmental process and in developing countries. The Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of acknowledging and reflecting on this progress that is happening on the ground in the intergovernmental process.

69. The Executive Secretary then made reference to the main milestones on the climate change agenda in the coming years. The next COP (COP23) will be held in November 2017 hosted by Fiji in Bonn, where a high level event on UN coherence and coordination will be organized. In addition, a meeting outside of the formal process will be convened by France in December 2017, acknowledging that two years have passed since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. COP24 in Poland in 2018 is expected to approve the operating guidelines for the Paris Agreement and to hear an assessment on where the world stands on its delivery. In 2019 the Secretary General's Climate Summit will be held and finally, in 2020, countries are expected to present revised versions of their NDCs.

70. With regard to facilitating implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Executive Secretary stressed the importance of collaboration with non-party stakeholders such as regions, financial communities, business and other UN entities. The Convention Secretariat is not and should not become an implementing agency – instead, the capacity of other UN entities to support countries to deliver on the ground is acknowledged and cherished.

71. Emphasis now is on identifying and understanding the challenges that countries face in implementing the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) from a pragmatic standpoint. The Executive Secretary welcomed UN entities and stakeholders outside the UN system to form

partnerships to help bring countries closer to those who are responsible for delivering commitments under the Agreement. In particular, the need to support the establishment of national and institutional legal frameworks and mechanisms that would allow countries to incorporate their climate change goals and the SDGs into their national planning and policies, was highlighted.

72. Finally, the Executive Secretary highlighted that with the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change is an issue at the centre of development, and not a separate agenda. By combining our minds, efforts, capacities and resources, we can deliver not only on the climate change agenda but also on the SDGs, and there through, to the wellbeing of people.

73. Participants in the room then provided their reactions. UNIDO suggested that the EMG is a good place for consultation on the SDGs and 2030 Agenda. With environment being one of three pillars of its operations, UNIDO's work is closely linked to SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, with particular emphasis on energy efficiency. In this area, UNIDO welcomes and commits to partnering with all interested agencies.

74. UNCTAD stressed the importance of aligning narratives and communication surrounding the Paris Agreement, especially in dealing with climate skepticism. In response, UNFCCC offered to share with other UN entities narratives produced by the Convention Secretariat in this regard.

75. UNITAR noted that there is more learning required, in order to get a better understanding of the agenda including the SDGs and parties' Nationally Determined Contributions. Furthermore, the need for a greater statistical capacity to help countries understand the issue and the indicators to measure progress, was highlighted.

76. WMO pointed to the impact of climate disasters on several of the SDGs. For example, developing countries have seen drops of up to 30% in their GDP as a consequence of natural disasters such as hurricanes, leading to development obstacles. In light of the UN Secretary General's reform, WMO stressed that entities need to join forces instead of working independently, especially on communicating climate science.

77. WHO agreed with the need to align narratives and communication, making sure that messages are delivered in a strategic and understandable way. It was suggested to prepare a corporate strategic catalogue listing 23 reasons for why we need to deliver on tackling climate change in advance of UNFCCC COP23.

78. The CBD Secretariat highlighted the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems in providing solutions to climate change, as well as vice versa. The link between biodiversity and climate change needs to be better communicated to country leaders, while mainstreaming biodiversity into UN entities' agendas remains critical.

79. UNCTAD highlighted as main challenges the inadequate mainstreaming of carbon technology, insufficient access to carbon footprint assessments and the slow process of formalizing laws that require environmental commitments by enterprises.

80. In response to the interventions, UNFCCC concluded that the time has come to view environment as central to the development process and that it would be interesting to consider

how the EMG could support this nexus in the frames of the Secretary General's Reform. It was agreed that UNFCCC will take the lead in preparing a communications piece that outlines narratives on climate change that can be used by all agencies in their communication with stakeholders and Member States.

81. ICAO suggested that the narratives touch upon risks and economic losses as a result of extreme weather events, and outlines how the UN is supporting countries in addressing these risks. Examples of risks that are closely linked to the everyday lives of people, such as losing your home as a result of a storm, could be included to increase the perception of relevance.

### b) Revitalizing the biodiversity agenda in the context of SDGs implementation and climate change. Expectations from the UN system.

82. The Senior Officials heard an intervention by the Executive Secretary of the CBD, Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, on current issues on the biodiversity agenda.

83. The Executive Secretary highlighted the relevance of biodiversity to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and advocated for strengthened collaboration within the UN system to speed up the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Strategic Plan, in particular with reference to establishing connections to ministries of finance. At the same time as acceleration of the implementation of the current targets is urgently needed, the CBD is looking ahead to the post 2020 agenda.

84. More effective support is needed at national and local levels to see the necessary changes on the ground. The biodiversity agenda is not well known outside of the inner circle, and the fact that biodiversity is fundamentally critical for human wellbeing needs to be better communicated in order for the biodiversity agenda to be prioritized. The Executive Secretary called for a multi-ministerial, One UN approach and the involvement of all players and sectors, including the private sector, to create transformational change in support of the biodiversity agenda.

**85.** With regard to mainstreaming biodiversity in a national context, UNITAR referred to experiences in gender mainstreaming, stressing that mainstreaming activities will not be successful unless governments truly invest in these. In a UN context, it would be important to identify the main interlocateur at country level. How can resident coordinators best be supported in their communication on biodiversity to their national counterparts?

**86.** UNDP confirmed its support to the Executive Director's appeal and highlighted the challenge involved in showing success in biodiversity work due to the absence of biodiversity a single set of specific metrics or index.

**87.** The EMG Director compared the biodiversity discourse to the one of climate change, noting that while climate change is a complex matter, communication around it focuses on one main theme (global warming) and one main issue to address (fossil fuels). Biodiversity would benefit from a similar narrative. A nexus dialogue on biodiversity could contribute to mobilizing the UN system in preparation for the HLPF (where goal 17 on Life on Land will be discussed) and next CBD COP.

**88.** UNICEF welcomed guidance in terms of how it could contribute, taking into consideration the community engagement in which the organization is involved.

**89.** From the point of view of business opportunities, UNCTAD suggested to expand the discussion to cover bio trade. A nexus dialogue that focuses on sustainable bio trade was suggested.

**90.** WHO made reference to its efforts in the area of biodiversity and health, and suggested that key messages on biodiversity should include how biodiversity affects our daily lives. A compelling way to communicate the importance of biodiversity could, for example, be to show that without it, we would lose access to many of the drugs on which we rely.

91. OHCHR saw biodiversity as a political tool to be mobilised, highlighting the fact that many human rights that are guaranteed by law depend on biodiversity, such as access to food, water, life and cultural rights. To take affirmative measures to protect biodiversity is important also from a human rights and legal perspective.

92. The Co-Chair pointed out that the theme for UNEA IV in Nairobi in 2019 has not yet been selected, and that a potential focus on biodiversity could support the preparations for the CBD COP in China 2020. A simple message, such as the message on the 2 degrees Celsius limit in climate change, should be developed and communicated for biodiversity. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that biodiversity is complex, covering not only land but probiotics and life below water as well.

93. The Executive Secretary of the CBD concluded by encouraging colleagues to continue bringing ideas to the table in terms of aspiring targets and innovative biodiversity friendly practices. She noted the scope for involving UN entities in the biodiversity work, and the challenge in communicating a simple and easily understood biodiversity message. A nexus dialogue could support the alignment of narratives by showing how the agendas of UN entities are connected from a biodiversity perspective.

### c) The Secretary-General's vision on the repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. How can the EMG support UN country-level assistance to Member States in integrating and implementing the 2030 Agenda

94. The Senior Officials were briefed on the Secretary General's reform by Co-Chair Magdy Martinez-Solimán, Assistant Secretary General, UNDP, who referred to environment as inseparable from development, as one of the main integrators of the 2030 Agenda and a major engine of reform.

95. The Co-Chair highlighted that the reform demands more efficient ways of working together where collaboration is promoted instead of competition of resources - a process which is also ongoing between governmental departments at country level. A substantive integration of efforts from the conceptual and the policy point of view is required, calling for more sophisticated ways to operate both individually and together in order to enhance the transition from normative to operational activities.

96. In the context of promoting more collaboration, the reform enables efficiency gains at the global, regional and country level without hurting the diversity, autonomy and capacity to operate within specific set of skill. There is, however, a recognized need for better processes and cost effective solutions to deliver the substance the UN is expected to deliver.

97. Finally, the Co-Chair stressed the defending of the values on which the UN is based as a very important part of both the reform agenda and the SDG narrative. The reform promotes a more principled stance and a more explicit expression of what the UN stands for, defending the

rights-base that underpins the UN discourse also in situations that are politically sensitive, such as dealing with climate skepticism or dismissal of science. A new configuration of UN Country Teams is needed, where the Country Teams and Resident Coordinators will be given a more assured role as standard bearers.

98. The Co-Chair pointed to more than 100 requests from countries to the UN development system, asking for support in reforming themselves through implementing the SDGs. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, the UN is requested to provide support in particular when it comes to putting the necessary institutional architecture in place at country level, facilitating the coordination of different policies such as the NDC and the SDGs, supporting the creation and reporting of data and baselines to measure progress towards the goals, promoting advocacy that encourages governments to back up the Agenda and to take the necessary steps to implement it, and finally, to support financing for development, i.a. through the development of relevant tools.

99. In conclusion, the Co-Chair emphasized coherence and the creation of more integrated UN teams on the ground to be at the centre of the reform.

100. UN Habitat inquired whether the Secretary General's report touches upon flexible ways to pool expertise in terms of governance and how this expertise can be provided to governments as integrated packages. The Co-Chair emphasized that the UN needs to move away from acting solely with federal governments towards interacting directly with other levels of governance, such as cities.

101. The SDG Fund informed that it aims to integrate environment into its programmes, understanding the complexities and challenges in this field of work.

### d) "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet"- contribution of the UN system to third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA III)

102. The Senior Officials were briefed on the upcoming 3rd Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly by the Co-Chair, Deputy Executive Director Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw of UN Environment. The Assembly will be held in Nairobi on 4-6 December, 2017. A ministerial level meeting will be held on moving towards a pollution-free planet.

103. The thematic covers several types of pollution, such as air and land pollution, solid waste and waste water, and the impacts of pollution on health, biodiversity, peace and security and economy.

104. The Senior Officials were briefed that the discussion will focus on galvanizing actors to come together in transforming challenges into opportunities.

105. WHO supported the focus on the health-environment nexus and emphasized the importance of bringing health related arguments to the front of the pollution discourse, also in terms of cost savings that can be made by avoiding chronic diseases through ensuring a cleaner living environment.

### e) Update on measures for enhancing sustainability of internal UN operations - needs and expectations from the UN agencies

106. The Senior Officials heard an update by the EMG Director, Mr. Elliott Harris, on the ongoing work to enhance environmental sustainability in UN operations and progress made since the adoption of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy in 2007. Particular reference was made to the increasing number of UN entities that are climate neutral and to the ongoing work of greening peacekeeping missions.

107. WHO stressed the importance of the UN to lead by example, also in organizing its own meetings as sustainably as possible.

108. DFS emphasized that reducing its environmental footprint is a priority for the organization, currently focusing on reducing the carbon footprint through more sustainable energy production and lowering consumption of both energy and water. A strategy on environment for peace keeping operations was launched in 2016, as part of which missions will report on their environmental management at the end of the ongoing budget year.

109. ICAO offered its support to agencies in calculating emissions as a result of aviation as well as in providing advice as to where in the world meetings can be arranged causing the least possible emissions from travel.

## Closure of the meeting

110. No other issues were discussed.

111. The Co-Chairs thanked the Senior Officials for their contributions and engagement and closed the meeting on 20 September at 12.30pm.

**Annex I**

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|---|---|
| **23rd Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group**<br><br>Technical Segment, 18 September 2017 (09.00 -17.00. NY time)<br>**UN HQ Conference Building, Conference Room 9 (CR9) 1st basement** | **EMG**/SOM23/2a/2017<br><br>14 September 2017<br><br>Distribution: EMG Members |

*The **technical segment** of the 23rd meeting of the EMG Senior Officials will meet on 18 September in advance of the senior segment of the Senior Officials Meeting to consider the progress reports of the IMGs, Consultative Processes and Task Teams, and to discuss and agree on the suggested action points for their future work.*

**Provisional agenda for the technical segment of the 23rd Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group**

**18 September 2017**

1. Opening remarks by the Co-Chairs
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Considerations of ongoing work and recommendations to the senior segment:
   (a) IMG on e-waste
   (b) Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system
   (c) IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management
   (d) Peer-Reviews of environmental management of United Nations entities
   (e) Consultative Process on a UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment
   (f) Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
   (g) EMG Nexus Dialogues
4. Consideration of new issues proposed for inclusion in the EMG work plan
   (a) Integrating environment into humanitarian action
   (b) Promoting the progressive development of law for environmental sustainability
   (c) Proposal to revive system-wide collaboration on biodiversity
5. Preparation of the strategic discussion during the senior segment on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the EMG
6. Environment Management Group work plan for 2018
7. The next Senior Officials Meeting
8. Any other business

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| **23rd Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group**<br><br>Senior Segment, 20 September 2017 (09.00 -12.30. NY time)<br>**UN HQ GA Building, Conference Room F (CR-F) 1st basement**. | **EMG**/SOM23/2b/2017<br><br>14 September 2017<br><br>Distribution: EMG Members |

*The **Senior Officials** are expected to formally endorse the report of the technical segment without further discussion, including any decisions contained therein, unless there is a specific request for discussion by a participant. The senior segment will focus on providing strategic directions for the future work of the Environment Management Group in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.*

**Provisional agenda for the Senior Officials segment of the 23rd Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Management Group**

**20 September 2017**

1. Opening remarks by the Co-Chairs

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Consideration and adoption of the recommendations from the technical segment of the meeting on actions related to the ongoing and future work of the Environment Management Group

4. Strategic discussion on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the Environment Management Group:

   a) *The Secretary-General's vision on the repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. How can the EMG support UN country-level assistance to Member States in integrating and implementing the 2030 Agenda?*

   b) *Revitalizing the biodiversity agenda in the context of SDGs implementation and climate change. Expectations from the UN system followed by an update on the recent progress on the Climate Agenda and the engagement of the UN system in this regard.*

   c) *Recent progress and developments of the Climate Agenda and the engagement and expectations from the UN system*

   d) *"Towards a Pollution-Free Planet"- contribution of the UN system to third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA III).*

   e) *Update on measures for enhancing sustainability of internal UN operations - needs and expectations from the UN agencies*

5. Any other business

6. Closure of the meeting

**C. Proposed organization of work of the technical segment on Monday, 18 September**

| Time (NY) | No. | Agenda Item | Associated Document | Presentation by |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9:00-9:10 | **Agenda item 1** | Opening remarks by the Co-Chairs (tbc) | | *Co-Chairs* |
| | **Agenda item 2** | Adoption of the agenda | EMG/SOM.23/2a | *Co-Chairs* |
| 9.10-10:30 | **Agenda item 3** | Consideration of ongoing work and recommendations to the senior segment:<br>a) IMG on e-waste<br>b) Consultations on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations system<br>c) IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management<br>d) Peer-Reviews of environmental management of United Nations entities | EMG/SOM.23/3 | *EMG Secretariat* |
| 10.30- 10.50 | | COFFEE BREAK | | |
| 10.50-12.00 | **Agenda item 3 cont.** | e) Consultative Process on a UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment<br>f) Task Team on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<br>g) EMG Nexus Dialogues | | *EMG Secretariat* |

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| 12.00-13.00 | **Agenda item 4** | Consideration of new issues proposed for inclusion in the EMG work plan<br><br>a) Integrating environment into humanitarian action<br><br>b) Promoting the progressive development of law for environmental sustainability | <br><br>EMG/SOM.23/4a<br><br>EMG/SOM.23/4b | <br><br>*UN Environment*<br><br>*UN Environment* |
| 13.00-14.00 | | LUNCH BREAK | | |
| 14.00 – 14.45 | **Agenda item 4 cont.** | c) Proposal to revive system-wide collaboration on biodiversity | EMG/SOM.23/4c | *CBD Secretariat* |
| 14.45 – 16.00 | **Agenda item 5** | Preparation of discussion during the senior segment on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the EMG | EMG/SOM.23/5 | *EMG Secretariat* |
| 16.00-16.30 | **Agenda item 6** | Environment Management Group work plan for 2018 | EMG/SOM.23/6 | *EMG Secretariat* |
| 16.30-16.40 | **Agenda item 7** | The next Senior Officials Meeting | | *EMG Secretariat* |
| 16.40-16.55 | **Agenda item 8** | Any other business | | *Co-Chairs* |
| 16.55 – 17.00 | | **Closure of the technical segment of the meeting** | | *Co-Chairs* |

## D. Proposed organization of work of the senior segment on Wednesday, 20 September

| Time (NY) | No. | Agenda Item | Associated Document | Presentation by |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9:00-9:25 | **Agenda item 1** | Opening remarks by the co-chairs | | Co-Chairs<br><br>Tour de table of the new Senior Officials |
| 9.25-9.30 | **Agenda item 2** | Adoption of the agenda | EMG/SOM.23/2b | |
| 9:30-10:15 | **Agenda item 3** | Consideration and adoption of the recommendations from the technical segment of the meeting on actions related to the ongoing and future work of the Environment Management Group | *Table of decisions prepared by the technical segment* | EMG Secretariat |
| 10-15-12.20 | **Agenda item 4** | Strategic discussion on key environmental issues warranting a UN system-wide response and directions for the future work of the Environment Management Group | EMG/SOM.23/5 | Chair and Senior Officials |
| 12:20-12.30 | **Agenda item 5** | Any other business | | |
| 12.30 | | Closure of the Senior Officials Meeting | | |

**Annex 2**

**List of Participants**

**Technical segment on Monday, 18 September**

| | Organisation | Name | Function |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | UNICEF | Cristina Colon | Policy Specialist |
| 2 | UNICEF | William Abi Abdallah | Specialist, Eco-efficiency |
| 3 | OCHA | Barnaby Jones | Executive Officer |
| 4 | DFS | Sophie Ravier | Environmental Officer |
| 5 | UNU | Ruediger Kuehr | Programme Head |
| 6 | UN Environment | Juan E. Chebly | Lead Adviser |
| 7 | UN Environment | Mamadou Kane | Head, International Environmental Governance |
| 8 | UN Environment | Yoshie Fujiyama | Associate Programme Officer |
| 9 | UNDP | Tim Scott | Policy Adviser |
| 10 | UNDP | Maria Cruz Gonzalez | Policy Specialist, Environment and Natural Capital |
| 11 | IFAD | Margarita Astrálaga | Director, Environment Climate Division |
| 12 | ITU | Kadiatou Sall-Beye | Project Officer |
| 13 | UNODC | Yuping Chan | Policy Adviser |
| 14 | UNODC | Hans Song | Intern |
| 15 | CEB Secretariat | Taeko Yokota | Programme Management Officer |
| 16 | CEB Secretariat | Xenia von Lilien | Programme Officer |
| 17 | CBD | Neil Pratt | Senior Environment Affairs Officer |
| 18 | UN Headquarters | Violaine Haeringer | Environmental Sustainability Manager |
| 19 | CITIES | David Morgan | Chief, Governing Bodies |
| 20 | WIPO | Melissa Marrero | Intern |

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| **21** | WFP | Julie MacKenzie | Senior Consultant |
| **22** | WFP | Micol Mulon | Environmental Consultant |
| **23** | WFP | Georgina Stickels | Environmental Sustainability Manager |
| **24** | Ozone Secretariat | Katherine Theotocatos | Programme Management Officer |
| **25** | ICAO | Lorenzo Gavilli | Environmental Officer |
| **26** | SUN | Isabella Marras | |
| **27** | SUN | Hillary Green | |
| **28** | EMG Secretariat | Elliott Harris | Assistant Secretary General, UN Environment |
| **29** | EMG Secretariat | Jannica Pitkänen-Brunnsberg | Programme Management Officer |
| **30** | EMG Secretariat | Hossein Fadaei | Head |

**List of Participants**

**Senior segment on Wednesday, 20 September**

| | **Organisation** | **Name** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | OCHA | Barnaby Jones | Executive Officer |
| **2** | DFS | Elizabeth Rolando | Chief, OVSG |
| **3** | DFS | Sophie Ravier | Environmental Officer |
| **4** | UN Environment | Ibrahim Thiaw | Deputy Executive Director |
| **5** | UN Environment | Mamadou Kane | Head, International Environmental Governance |
| **6** | UN Environment | Anne Le More | Chief of Staff |
| **7** | UN Environment | Juan E. Chebly | Lead Adviser |
| **8** | UN Environment | Marlene Nilsson | Operations Officer |
| **9** | Ozone Secretariat | Megumi Seki Nakamura | Deputy Executive Secretary |

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| **10** | UNDP | Nik Sekran | Director, Sustainable development |
| **11** | UNDP | Magdy Martinez-Soliman | ASG and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support |
| **12** | UNDP | Tim Scott | Policy Adviser |
| **13** | ICAO | Jane Hupe | Deputy Director, Environment |
| **14** | UNECE | Marco Keiner | Director, Environment Division |
| **15** | WIPO | Lucinda Longcroft | Head NY Office |
| **16** | UNFCCC | Patricia Espinosa | Executive Secretary |
| **17** | UNFCCC | Daniele Violetti | Chief of Staff |
| **18** | UNFCCC | Miriam Medel | Special Assistant |
| **19** | UNCTAD | Mukhisa Kituyi | Secretary General |
| **20** | UNCTAD | Chantal L. Carpentier | Chief, New York Office |
| **21** | OHCHR | Craig Mokhiber | Deputy to the ASG for Human Rights |
| **22** | CEB Secretariat | Xenia von Lilien | Programme Officer |
| **23** | UNIDO | Li Jong | Director General |
| **24** | UNIDO | Ayumi Fujino | Director, Strategic Planning and Coordination, ODG |
| **25** | UN-Habitat | Filiep Decorte | Acting Director, NY Office |
| **26** | UN-Habitat | Patricia Holly | Senior Strategic Partnerships Adviser |
| **27** | FAO | Armine Avagyan | Natural Resource Management and Climate Change Adviser |
| **28** | WFP | Stanlake Samkange | Director, Policy and Programme Division |

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| **29** | UNICEF | Fatoumata Ndiaye | Deputy Executive Director |
| **30** | UNICEF | Cristina Colon | Policy Specialist |
| **31** | ILO | Christophe Perrin | Deputy Director General |
| **32** | UNITAR | Nikhil Seth | Executive Director |
| **33** | UNITAR | Marco A. Suazo | Head, UNITAR New York Office |
| **34** | CBD | Cristiana Paşca Palmer | Executive Secretary |
| **35** | CBD | Neil Pratt | Senior Environment Affairs Officer |
| **36** | CBD | Joanne Catalina Santamaria | Forest Programme Officer |
| **37** | WMO | Petteri Taalas | Secretery-General |
| **38** | WMO | Paul Egerton | Director, UN Affairs |
| **39** | IFAD | Travis Renz | Partnership Adviser |
| **40** | WHO | Maria Neira | Director, Public Health and the Environment Department |
| **41** | SDG Fund | Catherine Wong | Programme Specialist |
| **42** | IOM | Mariam Chazalnoel Traore | Migration, Environment and Climate Change Specialist |
| **43** | UNODC | Yu Ping Chan | Policy Adviser |
| **44** | EMG Secretariat | Elliott Harris | Assistant Secretary General, UN Environment |
| **45** | EMG Secretariat | Jannica Pitkänen-Brunnsberg | Programme Management Officer |
| **46** | EMG Secretariat | Hossein Fadaei | Head |