

THE EMG NEXUS DIALOGUES

NEXUS DIALOGUE TWO, 13-14 JULY 2017

UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP EMG

The EMG Nexus Dialogue Series provides an occasion for UN agencies and other stakeholders to identify areas of mutual interest in the area of environment and to better understand the transmission channels through which an action in one sector may impact the outcomes of another.

Nexus Dialogue Two: Poverty and Environment in the SDGs - How a Nexus approach enables effective partnerships, synergy and implementation at country level

The poverty-environment nexus

Fundamental to human dignity is the right to live in a clean environment, one that supports livelihoods and allows people to remain secure in their homelands. Never in history has the need to safeguard natural resources and the environment been more strongly demonstrated than now, when climate distress and conflicts have become so acute.

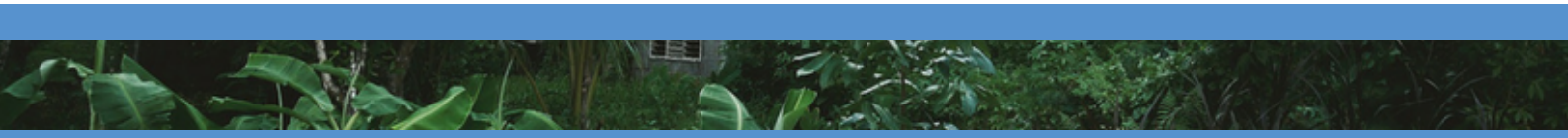
The second EMG Nexus Dialogue was arranged in collaboration with the joint UNDP–UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). PEI has been an effective global advocate for strengthening environmental management and natural resources in the interest of the poor, by championing these issues in partnership with governments.

July 13 2017

The Technical Segment explored opportunities to strengthen implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by looking at linkages across SDG targets, lessons learned, and good practice at the poverty-environment nexus. Presenters and participants considered avenues for further synergies and partnerships within the poverty and environment nexus, and deliberated on ways in which to better integrate poverty and the environment simultaneously into policymaking, legislation, investments and budgetary processes.

July 14 2017

The Policy Segment allowed Senior Officials of UN entities, Member States and other stakeholders to share their perspectives on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the context of strengthening the poverty-environment nexus. Panelists addressed poverty-environment nexus challenges and opportunities for enhancing partnerships and issues requiring strategic planning by the UN system, including through the work of the EMG.



For more information, visit the EMG Website
unemg.org/emg-nexus-dialogues

Technical Segment Overview



Mr. Tim Scott from the **United Nations Development Programme** gave an overview of the history of the poverty-environment nexus and how marginalised populations are at the centre of this nexus issue. Through his presentation, he highlighted the importance of mainstreaming poverty and environment linkages in development planning to address the demands of a growing population.

Mr. Eric Kemp-Benedict from the **Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)** discussed the "triple zero" targets identified by the Poverty-Environment Partnership, and how these targets can be seen as an alternative to the SDGs. By linking multiple silos to bring respective countries, NGOs, UN agencies, sectors, and initiatives together, the SEI network visualisation tool seeks to connect stakeholders at the poverty-environment nexus using shared and public information.

The coordinator of **Poverty Environment Initiative** in Burkina Faso, Mr. Rasmane Ouédraogo, emphasised the importance of synergistic action in the case of Burkina Faso, between the finance and environment ministry, when creating sustainable development plans in order to integrate the SDGs into national policy. Additionally, involving local populations in the development planning is crucial to the successful integration of the SDGs.

Ms. Keila Gramajo from the **Government of Guatemala** demonstrated how the SDGs and national development plans can be used to address the poverty-environment nexus in Guatemala, specifically when addressing the relationship between poverty reduction and effective water and land management.

Focussing on Tanzania, Mr. Erik Chavez from **Imperial College London**, revealed how financial mechanisms such as risk modelling can be used to address agricultural resiliency, productivity and sustainability. "Optimising farm-level risk transfer", the burden of risk is shared among diverse stakeholders. This reduces the risk of loss for individual smallholder farmers and decreases the cost of insurance, allowing more individuals to participate in the market and keep themselves out of poverty.

Mr. Michael Stanley-Jones from the **Poverty-Environment Initiative** focussed on Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda, by discussing how the gender gap within the agricultural sector can be detrimental towards agricultural productivity. Allowing women to have equal land use rights as men and participate in natural resource management can help alleviate poverty and improve the state of the environment.



Mr. Nik Sekhran from the United Nations Development Programme and Ms. Isabell Kempf from UN Environment presented the new programme on **Poverty-Environment Actions for Sustainable Development Goals.**

EMG online e-discussions

Mr. Juan Chebly from UN Environment gave an introduction into the most recent **EMG online e-discussions**, resulting in 31 quantitative inputs. These ranged from highlighting the importance of increasing youth involvement in raising awareness and capacity-building around climate change to continuing work with the SDGs. There were also discussions on how the nexus approach can be used to continue working towards the SDGs at country level.

Breakout sessions

The breakout session focused on what strengthening and scaling up the poverty-environment nexus would look like in practice, specifically who would be involved, what resources are needed, and how this vision would be achieved. Specific strategies identified for future improvement included carrying out a **cost-benefit analysis** of the use of natural resources and the creation of **safeguard frameworks** to channel foreign direct investment (FDI). Other suggestions aim at increasing engagement and the pooling of resources among stakeholders like **educational institutions**, business and **grassroots communities**. As for the role of the United Nations, providing support to institutional capacity, helping in the development of private-public partnerships, and creating a platform for collaboration between stakeholders are all crucial steps in supporting the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.



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High-Level Segment Overview



Mr. Tom Bigg (International Institute for Environment and Development) provided a summary of the conclusions from the Technical Segment using 7 phrases that encapsulated the issues and discussions: **concepts, countries, coherence, consultation, challenges, collaboration and costs.**

Of these 7 C's, Mr. Rasmane Ouédraogo (Government of Burkina Faso) emphasised most the importance of collaboration and synergistic action among partners, whether it be different levels of government, ministries, organisations, and agencies.

Ms. Isabel Kempf (UNDP-UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative) built on these points as she discussed the need to work through central ministries and to push for new FDI. Redirecting fiscal policy is crucial to effectively address this issue both at the national and local level. By embracing the complexity of how human rights issues are intertwined with poverty-environment issues, agencies can collaborate on these issues and speak with one voice.

Mr. Tim Scott (UNDP-UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative) noted that public policy is key to creating policy coherence, and that there is a need to do a lot more to link this policy to the private sector since this is currently the source of investment and available jobs.

Mr. Paul Ladd (UN Research Institute for Social Development) discussed how there should be a stronger connection among social, economic and environmental policy in approaching the poverty-environment nexus. It is positive that horizontal policy coherence is underway and is looking promising with cross-departmental ministerial work such as bringing together issues of water, food and social protection and how they relate to the environment. This, however, must go beyond governments and it needs to reach scientific and other national stakeholders who can contribute to policy development.

Mr. Elliott Harris (Environment Management Group) supported this thinking, stressing that there needs to be more collaboration among diverse actors to drive the development of policy across countries. It is absolutely necessary to incentivise the better management of natural resources, perhaps by placing a monetary value on ecosystem services. This, along with policy coherence, will assist in poverty reduction.

Mr. Erik Chavez (Imperial College London) affirmed the importance of placing value on ecosystem services, but he also argued that it isn't enough to have businesses and banks interacting with smallholder farmers. It is necessary to go beyond putting an economic value on ecosystem services, and instead quantifying risks in order to align more accurately with the incentives of stakeholders.

The panel discussion closed with Mr. Elliott Harris highlighting how addressing the poverty-environment nexus through a series of small steps rather than attempting one massive approach will be most effective. To avoid policy paralysis since there is so much to be done, it is helpful to address one theme with which champions on the topic can organise around and start moving forward with an approach.

Ultimately, we need to incentivise better management of natural assets from the global scale to the local scale. This will require the engagement of individuals and agencies at all levels, although inspiring engagement at local level where policy truly has an effect is of particular importance.



Future Dialogues

EMG Nexus Dialogue 3: Environmental and Humanitarian Nexus, 19 October 2017 in Geneva
Environmental disasters and degradation have contributed to the overwhelming number of internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees. The humanitarian sector must often react swiftly, whilst the environment timeline is often longer-term. There are possibilities to include the environment in operating procedures and training. Skills-sharing and institutional structures to foster joint work were identified as entry points to this nexus.

EMG Nexus Dialogue 4: Urban Pollution and Health Nexus, December 2017 in Nairobi
Poor quality of the environment is increasingly linked to the global causes of illness and death. In urbanized environments, environmental hazards include exposure to air, water, and chemical pollution. The SDGs play an important role in this nexus, highlighting that isolated actions to improve health are unsustainable, and that the environment must be an entry point into addressing global health. Focus could include common threats and potential synergies: waste, urban heat islands, and increased incidence of disease.







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