

EU and its Member States - Submission on Question 2

The current fragmentation of the international environmental governance system, while not necessarily being a gap in the narrow sense, creates particular challenges and a need for mutual awareness, coordination and synergistic work.

In order not to duplicate existing initiatives and respecting the distinct mandates and decision-making structures of individual agencies, MEAs and institutions, we consider that the AHOEWG could recommend sending some political, general messages that would address some of the inefficiencies that are seen to affect the governance of the different actors.

It is important to avoid repetition of previous discussions and processes regarding international environmental governance but to enhance the implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio+20), in particular Chapter C including its Paras 88 and 89.

1) Strengthening IEG by enhancing the environmental dimension, including through improved synergies and cooperation among environmental treaties

The EU and its Member States want to confirm the support to enhanced cooperation and coherence on environment throughout the UN system and believe that the GPE process could thus support action on strengthening the roles of UNEP and UNEA and enhance effectiveness of the MEAs.

We stress the importance of achieving coherence and collaboration among environmental instruments (both MEAs and non-binding processes), in particular to improve their overall implementation, by enhancing synergies, cooperation between various actors and avoiding duplication and conflicts. In that context, we recognize the existing governance structures and the need to avoid creating unnecessary new governance structures by exploring the potential of enhancing coherence and collaboration within the existing governance systems.

International environmental governance is furthermore a multi-actor governance system that includes states, international institutions, treaty bodies, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and the private sector. Enhanced synergies and coherence is therefore relevant for all of them.

Possible recommendations from the AHOEWG could

- ⇒ Reaffirm the importance of fully implementing para 88 and 89 of The Future We Want; this process should support the strengthening of UNEP and UNEA resulting from the Rio+20 outcome;
- ⇒ Encourage the States that have not yet done so, to become party to MEAs;
- ⇒ Call on all parties to MEAs to actively pursue policy coherence at all relevant levels, to avoid duplication of reporting and/or monitoring processes by using the same reporting channels and not creating additional burdens;
- ⇒ Call for better availability of information on implementation and compliance as a basis for gathering information on and sharing of best

practices; and invite states, in particular parties to respective regimes, to consider improving and streamlining the reporting on implementation, taking into account the burden on parties.

- ⇒ Call upon UNEP/UNEA, the Secretariats of the different MEAs and relevant scientific bodies to further pursue respective efforts to increase synergies, cooperation and efficiency to avoid duplication of work, taking note of the work already done, in particular within the chemicals/waste conventions cluster as well as among the biodiversity-related conventions, provide encouragement and recommendations for the work to continue.
- ⇒ Call upon UNEP to involve relevant MEA Secretariats in the preparations for UNEA to enhance interaction and involvement by the relevant MEAs and ensure coherence between the decision-making processes;
- ⇒ Call upon the scientific community to 1) share information among the different scientific bodies that support the work of related multilateral environmental agreements and 2) enhance cooperation among the leading scientific institutions, in particular IPCC and IPBES, for their work on biodiversity, climate change and land degradation.
- ⇒ Underline the importance of active and meaningful stakeholder engagement in the different for a.

2) Strengthening IEG by enhancing mainstreaming of environment throughout the UN

To achieve UN system-wide integration of environmental concerns, it is important to harness the interlinkages between international environmental law and the 2030 Agenda. At least ten out of the 17 SDGs are strongly related to the environment, supporting directly the implementation of internationally agreed environmental goals and targets, including those of the major MEAs.

In this context, it is important to strengthen existing UN coordination mechanisms that aim at this, in particular the Environmental Management Group which was established by UNGA to enhance United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements and through which UNEP has the mandate to bring together all the players, including the MEAs. This should receive full and strong support from the UN Chief Executive Board.

The AHOEWG could recommend further work to explore and strengthen these interlinkages and in this way, the GPE Process could boost implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda through more coordinated support by the UN agencies.

UNEA (Res 1/11) further requested the Executive Director, mainly through the Environment Management Group (EMG) and in line with paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, to develop system-wide strategies the environment and to invite the engagement of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination to facilitate broad ownership in the United Nations at all levels.

The continued survey and reporting exercise through a UN System Wide Framework Strategy (SWFS) was identified by Member Agencies as a helpful way to foster integration via increased collaboration and coherence across EMG Member Agencies. The EMG can effectively continue to help facilitate the exchange of state-of-the-art environmental know-how and information within and outside the UN System via real-time information sharing and knowledge management

services. The EMG has already taken steps in this direction by launching the SWFS Knowledge Exchange Network online platform in support of participatory drafting and editing of this report.

The EMG could support UN Environment and other UN agencies in the UN Sustainable Development Group by facilitating access to environmental knowledge and expertise to regional offices or Resident Coordinators Offices to support the development of country plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

Efforts could be strengthened to ensure that environmental norms outlined in MEAs are better integrated and implemented through UN agencies' programmes, projects and policies. Activities have been undertaken in this regard, for instance, overviews of how UN entities contribute to the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been prepared by the EMG, but since their initial release, proper follow-up has been missing. The need to better communicate around the importance of implementing the MEAs (for instance by highlighting the socio-economic impacts of environmental degradation) to other than environmental audiences has also been noted.

For interagency coordination on the environment to be effective, it is crucial to ensure that the EMG has the means and is enabled to do its work. Ownership and engagement by UN agencies in the Environment Management Group's activities could be achieved through a Secretariat, in which other UN entities are welcome to engage financially or in-kind, as well as a rotating chair.

Possible recommendations from the AHOEWG could be to

- ⇒ Reaffirm the importance of the EMG as the United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements (UNGA Resolution 53/242) and call for active involvement and support, politically, financially and in-kind, of all its members, in particular through the UN Chief Executive Board;
- ⇒ Request the EMG, through its Chair, to map existing global and regional action plans and agreements to create an overview of coverage and identify interlinkages;
- ⇒ Recognize the System Wide Strategic Framework as an important tool for enabling the UN to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and call on the UNEP ED (in her capacity as Chair of the EMG) to strengthen system-wide inter-agency coordination related to issues in the field of environment and human settlement through the follow-up on the options identified in the SWSF;
- ⇒ Encourage the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination to support the implementation of the Framework in the respective organizations;
- ⇒ Call upon Member States to increase political support for the System-wide Framework of Strategies;
- ⇒ Strengthen the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in other sectors through the relevant sectoral UN coordination mechanisms, e.g. UN Oceans, UN Water, UN Energy, etc.