



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

United Nations Environment Programme
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Towards a Global Pact for the Environment

Reference is made to the letter dated 26 March 2019, from the co-chairs of the ad hoc open-ended working group to consider options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environmental related instruments, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018.

Norway is committed to taking action to strengthen international environmental governance by addressing gaps and welcomes the opportunity to consider the best means of doing so.

Norway is not convinced that a codification of legal principles in a legally binding instrument will add value to international environmental law. On the contrary: A codification can narrow down the principles and freeze a certain interpretation. Hence, we are concerned that such an approach would impede the functions and the future development of international environmental law.

Norway believes that the need to add value to international environmental law must guide us in the next steps of this process.

There are several options to address gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments that we believe could add value.

We especially would like to point out that there are gaps related to challenges which are still not covered by international treaty law, such as marine plastic litter and microplastics entering into the oceans. Norway proposes that the ad hoc open-ended working group could make recommendations on further actions to be taken, taking into account the ongoing work under the auspices under the United Nations Environment Assembly.

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Proposals to strengthen environmental treaties could also be assessed under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Montreal Protocol, the Basel, the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

Another option is to improve cooperation, coordination and synergies between multilateral environmental agreements under the guidance of a common vision of international environmental law for example in a resolution by the UN General Assembly.

Furthermore, a partnership construct that could bring together state and non-state actors to address the implementation of complex environmental problems is worth considering. A post 2020 global biodiversity framework is to be negotiated in China in October 2020. A successful implementation of the framework will depend on strong commitments not only from Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity but also from a range of other stakeholders such as private companies. Hence, a complementary structure where financing, capacity building and other cross-stakeholder issues can be discussed could possibly add value. This could potentially also be an important contribution to achieving SDG 17 to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

In Norway's view further work and analysis is needed to explore the merits of these options and other alternatives which could add value to global environmental governance.

Yours sincerely

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