

**Ministerial Dialogue of the Second Session of the
United Nations Environment Assembly**

**“Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development”**

26 May 2016

Background

1. This background note has been prepared to support the Ministerial Dialogue during UNEA-2. It builds on the Note of the Executive Director on “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (UNEP/EA.2/INF/4) available at <http://web.unep.org/unea/documents> .

Objectives of the Ministerial Dialogue

2. The main objective of the high-level event will be to provide a platform for Member States, UN agencies, civil society, major groups and other stakeholders to examine and discuss how coherence, consistency, complementarity and coordination between the existing international agreements, the multiple actors involved and the different levels of action (local, national, regional and global) can be best enhanced in order to promote a more effective and efficient delivery of the 2030 Agenda, particularly of its environmental dimension.
3. The ministerial dialogue will have the opportunity to provide guidance on the four action clusters for a review system for the 2030 Agenda, which include: (a) strengthening the role of the HLPF in the review and follow up system; (b) regular, state-led reviews on the implementation of SDGs; (c) mobilization of global engagement in the implementation of the 2030 development agenda; and (d) enabling ownership and participation of major groups and other stakeholders.
4. At the global level, UNEA has an important role in providing guidance on global norms and standards, and for keeping the environment under review, which requires the development and use of adequate tools, follow-up on the science-policy interface, prompt action on emerging issues and the consolidation of thematic follow-up and review processes. Sustainable development requires strengthened capacities and effective institutions, and the Environment Assembly can help to frame the role of UNEP in that regard, as well as its contribution for systemic change, in particular as a catalyst for policy and institutional coherence, effective partnerships and accountability.
5. The Environment Assembly will need to translate such guidance towards the environmental dimension by ensuring that effective linkages are made with follow-up and review arrangements, including to United Nations conferences and processes that are related to the multilateral environmental agreements. While the high-level political forum on sustainable development should focus on integrating the multiple outcomes related to those processes, ensuring a multidimensional and global perspective, the Environment Assembly could guide its own processes on the integration of the environmental dimension in accordance with the preparations and outcomes of the high-level political forum, including the potential cross-cutting themes that are likely to inform its annual Goals review and follow-up.

6. The high-level political forum (HLPF) is mandated to strengthen the science-policy interface, including by considering the global sustainable development report produced by the United Nations system. UNEA could support UNEP's role in bringing together relevant information and analyses with respect to the environmental dimension of sustainable development and consider the findings and recommendations of the report in its deliberations and strategic guidance, also in the context of the UNEP programme of work.
7. UNEA could also consider how to ensure coherence and integration of recommendations and resolutions and explore options for its inputs to be presented in different United Nations settings through its President. Strengthening the interlinkages and informal exchanges between bureaus of existing governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes and the Environment Assembly would give further opportunity to look for synergies and integration within the 2030 Agenda.
8. UNEA has a crucial role to play in delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda through its inputs to the Economic and Social Council in the form of outcomes and messages. The cycle of regular assessments and reports of UNEP should be reviewed in the light of decisions on the follow-up and review process.
9. UNEP has a crucial role to play in providing assessments, policy-analysis, and integrated approaches to support the delivery of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda including the follow-up and review process. UNEP's Medium Terms Strategy 2018-2021 and its Expected Accomplishments of the Programme of Work 2018-2019 are aligned with the expected outcomes of the SDGs in 2030.
10. The success of the global 2030 Agenda depends on the extent to which the goals and targets find expression in domestic policy and processes. Many countries have, or are preparing national development plans – which may be in some cases aligned with the global 2030 Agenda. UNEP can support countries' implementation of the SDGs through its partnerships, networks and initiatives with UN agencies, member states and stakeholders and by Delivering as One UN through the UNDAFs.
11. UNEP is also developing knowledge sharing platforms and supporting institutional capacity to monitor progress towards successful outcomes, to facilitate national reporting on the global sustainable development goals. National reporting will involve the use of indicators and indices, which preferably will be correlated with the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator framework.
12. UNEP aligns its strategic planning to the 2030 Agenda and strengthen embedded interactions with the rest of the UN system, through *inter alia* the UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment, to ensure coherence, avoid duplication, and build universality and partnerships, while addressing emerging environmental issues.
13. The dialogue will be divided into two sessions of moderated discussions. It is proposed that session 1 be held under the topic: **Commonalities and complementarity: joining forces for a more effective delivery of the 2030 Agenda** while, session 2 could address the topic: **Ensuring delivery on the environmental dimension in implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national regional and global levels.**

Guiding questions for session 1

14. Session 1 will allow Ministers and special guests to identify commonalities and complementarities between the implementation of international agreements be promoted in order to ensure the integrated and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- How can commonalities, complementarity and coherence between the implementation of existing international agreements - such as the Sendai Framework for DRR, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) - be promoted to enhance implementation of the agreements themselves as well as their contribution to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs?
 - What role could Ministers of the Environment play in the strengthening of those commonalities, complementarity and coherence?
 - What could be the contribution from Ministers of the Environment to implement the 2030 Agenda and to contribute the National Voluntary Reviews to the HLPF?
 - What message should UNEA send to the Habitat III Conference in support of the implementation of a new urban agenda?
- Governments will lead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, with the support of all partners. How can the the integration the environmental dimension and its implementation be best supported at country level?
 - What are examples of the environmental dimension driving whole-of-government approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda?
 - What are the most pressing needs in terms of science and knowledge, tools and methodologies, or other institutional capacity that could support of these processes?

Guiding questions for session 2

15. Session 2 will allow participants to identify policy, institutional, and other arrangements that are needed to ensure the integrated and effective delivery on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and speed up its implementation at global, regional and national level. To this end the following guiding questions have been identified on the basis of the Note of the Executive Director (UNEP/EA.2/INF/4):

- The 2030 agenda is universal, and applies to all countries, developed and developing, and all actors, policy makers and multi-stakeholders. A key feature of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs is their integrated nature, aiming to break down silos.
 - How can cooperation and coordination among institutions be fostered to deliver more effectively the 2030 Agenda?
 - How can various existing processes linked promote integration in the UN system?
 - How can UNEP contribute to strengthening the sense of collective ownership among its stakeholders to be actively involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
- How can the regional and global levels become effective levers in the delivery of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda speeding up its implementation?
 - How can the global level best support the national and regional levels in the effective delivery of the environmental dimension?

- How can UNEP best support arrangements to bring the regional level at the front line of the environmental dimension`s implementation?

Format and outcome of the Ministerial Dialogue

16. To ensure the ample participation from ministers and heads of delegations, the session will be organized as a high-level, interactive, moderated dialogue. Each session will be introduced by a framing intervention from an invited key-note speaker. The dialogue amongst Ministers will be further facilitated by interventions from heads of UN organizations, UN Regional Commissions and other international organizations who will contribute to frame the implications for the UN system of the environmental UNEP/EA.2/INF/3 7 dimension of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
17. In addition, the President may invite Ministers of the Environment to share insights on national, regional and sub-regional challenges associated with the overarching theme as well as on the contributions that Multilateral Environmental Agreements can play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
18. Delegations will be given the floor in the order in which they signal their request to speak. Based on the requests received, the President may give first priority to those Member States represented at the Ministerial level. Representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders, heads of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations may be invited to speak during the plenary at the discretion of the President.
19. In order to ensure interactive dialogue, it is requested that interventions be kept to three minutes.
20. The President and the moderator of the dialogue will summarize the debates during the closing segment of the Assembly.

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Thursday, 26 May 2016

Draft Programme

Time	<i>Morning</i>
11:30-13:00	Session 1 Commonalities and complementarity: joining forces for a more effective delivery of the 2030 Agenda
	<i>Afternoon</i>
15:00-17:45	Session 2 Ensuring delivery on the environmental dimension in implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels
17:45-18:00	Closing of the Ministerial Dialogue