

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Sub-Committee meeting
Wednesday 24 May 2017
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi Gigiri,
Conference Room 4

Concept Note on the Leadership Dialogues of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

Introduction

The 2017 UN Environment Assembly will gather in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4-6 December under the overarching theme “Towards a Pollution Free Planet”.

A key feature of the Assembly’s structure is the launch of a series of high–level, interactive *Leadership Dialogues* designed to provide an opportunity to participating Ministers, private sector leaders, and other leading personalities to intensify high-level engagement and discuss and articulate solutions that contribute towards a pollution–free planet: they will be an important opportunity for leaders to provide strategic direction and set the foundations and accelerate action on the pollution agenda.

Health, both of people and the planet, is in fact considered central to the attainment of sustainable development; and good health is an outcome produced by many factors and investments in a healthy environment and resultant human well-being contributes to the broader development progress of a country. The Assembly’s keynote report-“Towards a Pollution free Planet”-will provide the latest scientific information on how pollution impacts ecosystems, human health and well-being. It will also identify key transformative recommendations for solutions. The *Leadership Dialogues* will be guided by these recommendations to overcome the pollution challenges, bringing the world closer to achieving a pollution-free planet.

The *Leadership Dialogues* will take place on Tuesday, 5th December 2017 and will be assigned the following time slots:

- Morning sessions : from 11.00 to 13.00
- Afternoon sessions: from 15.00 to 18.00

From a general organizational perspective, there could be room for a sequence of 4 interactive high–level dialogues throughout the designated day.

The Concept

Informed by the diagnostics and the latest scientific information provided in the Assembly’s keynote report, the *Dialogues* will be interactive, moderated and designed to facilitate exchange of information, best practices, challenges and ambitions among political leaders, Ministers, business and finance sector leaders, scientists and key stakeholders. In engaging with each other, they will be able to address the full spectrum of issues related to the multifaceted theme of pollution and to inject political momentum and direction towards addressing key policy and action gaps and identifying principles and transformative, concrete actions at the global, regional, national and local levels on key pollution risk areas.

These thought-provoking discussions will be professionally moderated and possibly structured around four *Dialogues*, where Ministers will take the specific challenge of pollution to the national level, with an opportunity for sharing “real life” narratives, best practices and technology for overcoming the challenges and scaling up solutions.

At the end of each *Dialogue*, which will be streamed live, there will be an opportunity to engage and take questions from actual and virtual audiences.

The Format

The Assembly’s “Keynote Report” provided by UN Environment’s Secretariat will form the substantive anchor for the dialogues, providing leaders with scientific evidence and information on concrete challenges and articulating relevant recommendations for action.

Upon this foundational basis, the organization of the interactive dialogues may be built around different scenarios/options.

1. Option 1 (Sectoral)

Each *Leadership Dialogue* is structured to mirror the areas of pollution addressed in the Keynote Report and thus be embedded with the challenges and recommendations of the report. These include clean air, clean water, clean seas, sound management of chemicals and waste and restored land.

2. Option 2 (Cross – cutting)

Each *Leadership Dialogue* addresses pollution through a specific cross-cutting issue: (i) education and public awareness on pollution; (ii) enforcement and compliance; (iii) partnerships and actions on pollution; and (iv) finances, economics and technology to reduce pollution.

3. Option 3 (Real – life dilemmas)

Each *Leadership Dialogue* addresses pollution through specific, real-life lenses, which may mirror the fundamental dilemmas faced by citizens, private sector actors and decision-makers when tackling pollution: (i) jobs - employment vs pollution regulatory frameworks/standards; (ii) money - investing in green solutions vs defending “legacy” investments; (iii) conflict - citizens’ health and enterprises’ viability partnerships and actions on pollution; and (iv) decision-making - central governments vs local authorities in combating pollution.

4. Option 4 (real – life & cross – cutting)

The *Leadership Dialogues* to be organized around four sequential cross-cutting areas:

- a) **Science:** The first *Dialogue* should set the scene on what are the drivers that impact policymaking. Science is the source of impact evidence, facts and figures; but also drives innovation and solutions, and makes them real-time and accessible.
- b) **Life in Real Time:** will address specific pollution challenges at the national level. For example, at the urban level, waste/plastic waste is a significant source both of hazardous pollution and of business opportunity. Air pollution too. This *Dialogue* can bring together mayors, private sector and consumers/general public.
- c) **Legislation:** will focus on how legislation can help or hinder innovation, trigger or halt solutions. This could address how regulations can be a safeguard (i.e. against hazardous waste) and incentivize innovation (i.e. tax reforms, subsidies, etc); it can also address law enforcement challenges.
- d) **Financing innovation:** will speak to the sources of innovation and the innovators and what makes financial institutions/private sector invest (or not invest) in transformative technologies.

Dialogues' plenaries could be therefore organized along the following path:

- A brief, introductory “curtain raiser” (setting the scene), based on the pollution report and framing challenges and solutions through interventions from science, policy and private sector leading figures;
- Moderated dialogues (modelled around the scenarios provided above);
- A brief report on Conclusions and recommendations from the moderated dialogues (*Leadership Dialogues* summary).

Commitments

Collecting and registering commitments is an important basis for the *Leadership Dialogues* and for the Assembly. They reflect the growing interest of governments, private sector and citizens to be part of a collective solution in tackling global environmental challenges.

A menu of commitments/recommendations will be made available from the report “Towards a Pollution free Planet”. While these commitments are not binding, they will be made available in a public arena and will give ownership of the agenda for cleaning-up pollution to Member States and the global community.

UN Environment will give visibility to the commitments online and through social media networks to generate wider support globally. The impacts of health, financing, innovation and technology will be crosscutting in all the *Dialogue* and in the recommendations.