



**Agenda Item 5: A long term vision for the global
environmental agenda in the context of the UN 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Pamela Chasek, Ph.D.

Executive Editor, Earth Negotiations Bulletin, IISD
Professor of Political Science, Manhattan College

1972



15 September 1971 - United Nations Headquarters, New York. Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (right), shows United Nations Secretary-General U Thant a design for the official Conference poster. To the left is Mr. Keith Johnson (Jamaica), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. (Photo Credit: UN Photo/Teddy Chen)

UN Environment Programme is established after the UN's Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. First ever conference that had "environment" in the title.

Not even the UN Charter mentions environment.

The UN Environment Programme has played a significant role in:

- * raising awareness, at the global and regional levels, on the state of the environment and new and emerging environmental challenges;
- * supporting science-based policy decision-making;
- * developing international environmental conventions;
- * promoting environmental science and information;
- * and promoting policy development, developing partnerships, strengthening regional institutional capacity, and promoting a proactive engagement of non-State actors, such as environmental non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Where are we now?

- * **Institutional evolution:** Governance is now universal and there was general agreement to pursue a more sustainable development agenda. But what is the UN Environment Programme's role vis-à-vis the SDGs?
- * **Normative components:** What do we do with environmental principles? Global Pact for the Environment?
- * **Is it all about governments** – What about businesses and citizens? What new partnerships should be created?
- * **Science:** The UN Environment Programme was created as an organization with science at its core. Is it well equipped for this function?

What's next?

1. How can we use the occasion of the 50-year anniversary of the UN Environment Programme to raise awareness about global environmental challenges, and consider a new vision for the global environment?
2. How should the role of the UN Environment Assembly and the UN Environment Programme evolve in the era of the UN 2030 Agenda and UN reform, to ensure that the environment is fully integrated into the implementation process?
3. How can the UN Environment Assembly and the UN Environment Programme support the process and implementation of new environmental targets beyond 2020, such as the biodiversity strategic framework and its targets, targets adopted under the new Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and a possible Pact for the Environment?
4. How can we best commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the UN Environment Programme in 2022?

Thinking about the future

- * What are the strengths of the UN Environment Programme?
- * What are the weaknesses?
- * What opportunities exist for 2022 and beyond?
- * What threats will the future bring?