



Distr.: General
25 September 2019

English only



**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme**

Sixth meeting

Nairobi, 7-11 October 2019

Conference Room 1

Note on the UN Development System Reforms

Under agenda item 3: Programme performance review 2018-2019, including relevant UN Environment Assembly Resolutions, the Committee will consider an update on the UN Development System Reform as it pertains to the UN Environment Programme, as mandated in UN Environment Assembly Decision 4/1 entitled “Programme of work and budget for 2020–2021”.

Translating our

“Roadmap for Mainstreaming UNDS Reforms”

into action and results

1. Introduction

The roadmap presented to the 146th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 20 June 2019 outlined the key steps which the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) had been taking to respond to the repositioning of the UN development system.

As requested by United Nations Environment Assembly’s (UNEA) resolution 4/1, the roadmap provided an assessment of internal policies, guidelines and regulations that needed to be adjusted in order to implement the provisions in General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279.

This report outlines steps taken since June 2019 to implement that vision.

2. Background

- UNEP sees the reform of the UN Development System (UNDS) as enabling it to better deliver on our environmental mandate both within, and as part of, the UNDS.
- UNEP is committed to working together with other UN entities to drive UNDS reforms forward. Our primary objective is to deliver better collective sustainable development results for the people and planet we serve.
- In July, as an outcome of the [2019 Operational Activities for Development \(OAS\) Segment](#), ECOSOC adopted [resolution 2019/15 on ‘Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development \(QCPR\)’](#). It welcomed the Secretary-General’s ongoing efforts on, and acknowledged progress achieved in advancing all reform mandates of General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#).

3. Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System

- We are increasingly engaged in outreach to the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) system.
- Most recently this involved an extensive Dialogue (2-4 September) with the full set of UNRCs deployed in Africa. The dialogue provided a platform for UNEP and the UNRCs to discuss ways they can work together for joint actions on cooperation and strengthening of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. We will seek opportunities to brief our partners on the lessons this engagement yielded. We plan to replicate this exercise in other regions.
- In the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, we used a virtual connection to contribute to the ECA regional RC meeting (September 2019).

- In West Asia region, we made it possible for each Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) to call upon UNEP’s technical expertise, advice, and environmental advisory support to RCs/UNCTs and to the preparation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks). In Asia Pacific, we have piloted a UNCT Focal Point system to ensure that all regional Subprogramme and Development Coordinators represent UNEP in at least one UNCT with back stopping support provided by the Regional Development Coordinator and a JPO. This UNCT focal point system is ensuring that UNEP is represented in all UNCTs in the region. In addition, UNEP participates in the regional UN Peer Support Group (PSG) that supports RCs in Cooperation Frameworks development.

Strengthening Mutual Accountability in UN Country Teams and UNDS at regional & global levels

- **Management Accountability Framework (MAF):** We have continued our engagement on measures to ensure country-level alignment with the MAF.

Funding the Resident Coordinator System

- **Funding Compact for the RC system:** UNEP is conducting a full review of all relevant commitments and associated indicators for UN entities under the Funding Compact and will initiate measures to ensure alignment/track compliance (N.B. para. 73b: “Entity-specific tracking and reporting on commitments and indicators, in the appropriate manner, through entity-specific reporting mechanisms to respective governing bodies”) including full compliance with international reporting and transparency standards (IATI).
- **1% Levy:** In coordination with UN-Habitat and UNON, and in close consultation with the Development Coordination Office (DCO), we continue to provide information and guidance to the organization on the parameters of the levy and its inclusion in the funding agreements with donors. We have also put in place measures to collect and transfer the levy and has provided the first quarterly report to DCO on the collection. We are continuing to refine and streamline the related guidance and processes.
- **15% of non-core resources to joint UN activities:** We are assessing the percentage of current resources dedicated to joint UN activities. Our aim is to ensure that we meet or exceed the required allocation. This matter falls under Funding Compact commitments. It is a new QCPR indicator on which reporting will be required. UNEP will therefore review the methodology for capturing joint activities to ensure that we are able to report on the many joint efforts that are ongoing, including, but not limited to, pooled funding expenditures.

Supporting the pool of Resident Coordinators

- We are undertaking measures to put forward candidates who have passed the UNRC assessment to deploy as RCs.

- **Reporting to the RC:** UNEP’s in-country representatives and regional offices will report to Resident Coordinators on our contribution to collective results on the ground. Our country-level activities will be communicated to the UN Country Teams, and will provide accurate data and indicators.

4. New Generation of Cooperation Frameworks and UNCTs in support of the 2030 Agenda

- We are undertaking a review of regional and country presence strategies – in line with the principles/provisions in the Management Accountability Framework (MAF), Regional and Multi-Country Office (MCO) Reviews and new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN-Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN-SDCF) guidelines.
- Pending the outcomes of this review, actions are being undertaken to strengthen our engagement with UNCTs as indicated above.
- UNEP will be accountable for system-wide mandates and collective results in the context of support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Actions to strengthen our capacity to integrate our work into a wider UN agenda will include: the addition of ‘UN coordination and partnership’ as a result in annual work plans; expansion of internal knowledge about the UN Sustainable Development Group; and the development of umbrella projects with key UN partners.
- We actively engaged in developing the new [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidelines](#), which provide an operational framework for the roll-out of UNDS Reform. We have also been heavily engaged in the preparation of the 6 Cooperation Framework companion pieces that will provide guidance to UNCTs on how to design and develop the UN Cooperation Frameworks to better support member states implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their national priorities. This process is being finalized under the direct leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General and is currently being rolled-out in pilot countries.
- UNEP will strengthen its engagement in Cooperation Frameworks processes. Actions will include:
 - Increased engagement of UNEP’s Offices in the field, Regional Sub-programme and Development Coordinators with UN Country Teams (drawing on on-going feedback provided by RCs/UNCTs on the most effective modality for engagement by UNEP staff).
 - Continued engagement with regional interagency Programme Support Groups that are responsible for the quality assurance of Cooperation Frameworks related products, provision of advice to UNCTs in this process, and provision of technical support for capacity building, facilitation of strategic retreats, among others.
 - Participating in country level UN SDG Funds e.g. an MOU to join the Vietnam UN SDG Fund was recently signed and funding is being accessed, a similar MOU is being discussed in Myanmar.

- Strengthened partnerships with other UN agencies at the ground level and other relevant stakeholders.
- Increased alignment to priorities agreed in the Cooperation Frameworks when planning projects and deciding on the deployment of our expertise.
- Developing a Menu of Services to share with Governments and UN Resident Coordinators / UN Country Teams – and proactively seeking out those countries entering their CCAs/developing their Cooperation Frameworks in 2020 to pilot our engagement approach. The Menu of Services will familiarize UNCTs with services that UNEP can deliver, directly or through our partners, and how they can draw on our expertise and assets.

Strengthening staff capacities on SDGs/Cooperation Frameworks processes

- Two staff members were selected to participate in a Training of Trainers workshop on the Cooperation Framework guidance, organized by the Development Coordination Office (DCO). The purpose of the workshop is to create a cohort of qualified UN resource persons and lead facilitators that can be deployed at the request of UN Country Teams for in-country Cooperation Framework design support. These qualified UN resource persons will help UN teams at country level to gain mastery on the use of the new Cooperation Frameworks guidance document and help ensure that these Frameworks fully incorporate the environmental dimension of sustainable development. These staff members can also play a key role in strengthening UNEP staff capacities and awareness on Cooperation Framework processes.

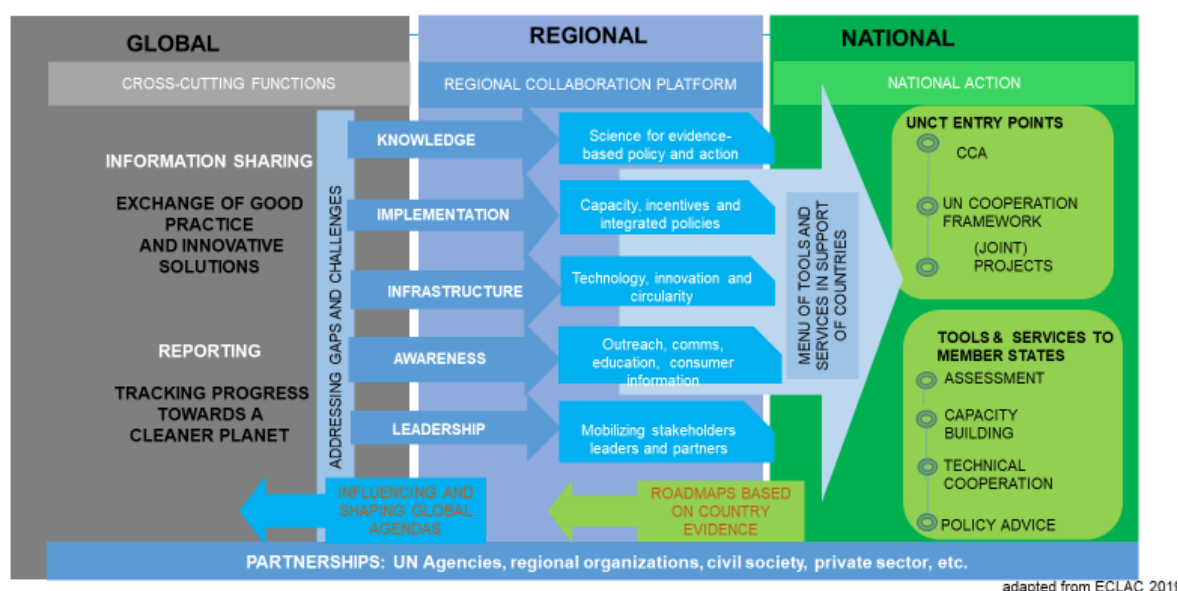
Improving SDG data/data collection and monitoring

- Providing the freshest and most accurate data into the Common Country Analysis (CCA) process will be central to our value proposition. The World Environment Situation Room will be our lead product. It will focus on spatial and statistical environmental data / knowledge visualized to be easily digestible. It will be complemented by a country-by-country analysis of “environmental” SDGs status by indicator (currently nearing finalization by Science Division), and by our Voluntary National Review Dashboard (with Policy Division).
- Additionally, in order to support a better integration of the normative work of the UN, UNEP will strengthen the link between the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the CCA/Cooperation Framework process by providing information on country advances and gaps in this regard and supporting the linkage with the Secretariats of these agreements if needed.
- Many of the SDGs on which slowest progress is being achieved include those under UNEP’s mandate, namely SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, 13 on climate change, 14 on life under the sea and 15 on terrestrial ecosystems. The UN Development System needs to respond more effectively to gaps in “environmental” SDG coverage and UNEP can help fill this gap.
- In regard to CCA engagement, the World Environment Situation Room will be a key product. It will focus on spatial and statistical environmental data / knowledge visualized to be easily

digestible. It will be complemented by a country-by-country analysis of “environmental” SDGs status by indicator (currently nearing finalization) by our Voluntary National Review Dashboard and by other expertise at the regional, subregional and country offices levels that will contribute to a systemic perspective of environmental change and its relationship with the social and economic dimensions in each country.

- UNEP will build the capacity of other UN Agencies so that they are more able to access UNEP data and tools and to use them for the integration of the environmental dimension in their work, making it possible for the UN to ensure a wide inter agency integration of Environment and climate action at country and regional level.
- Meanwhile, the diagram below provides an example of how opportunities provided by the UN Reform are being used in the Implementation plan “Towards a Pollution- free Planet”.

Leveraging UN reform to deliver the Implementation Plan



5. Reviewing the profile and structure of country and regional assets

- **Regional Commissions and Regional UN Sustainable Development Groups (R-UNSDGs):** We will further strengthen our partnership with the different Regional Commissions and R-UNSDGs to promote policies and good practices at regional level to be translated into concrete action at the country level. We are currently active members of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms and the regional UNSDG and are leading several Issue Based Coalitions to advance interagency and multi-partners specific results at regional level. For example, the West Asia Regional Director participated in the first meeting on 25 July 2019 called by the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to discuss the five dimensions as outlined by the Secretary General in his report to the ECOSOC (A/74/73-E/2019/14) on enhancing the regional structures to respond to Agenda 2030. We will continue to actively engage in discussions on the regional UN Reform process, which includes an option to establish UN Regional Collaboration Platforms that would merge the Regional Coordination Mechanism and R-UNSDG mechanisms into

one.

- In line with the new Cooperation Framework guidelines, we will also support the identification of regional and sub-regional priority issues to be addressed collectively at the regional level and/or to be included as part of the UNSDCF's and UNCT's work. In this regard, UNEP will ensure the priorities and agreements of the regional Forums of Ministers of Environment as well as the UNEA resolutions are considered when identifying priority issues in the framework of UN work at regional and national levels.

Multi-Country Office Review

- We remain actively engaged in discussions with the broader UNSDG membership on the Regional and Multi-Country Office (MCO) Reviews and stand ready to implement recommendations once agreed by Member States. For the MCO review, this particularly focuses actions to ensure more coherent, effective and efficient coverage and collaboration for results vis-à-vis MCO settings.

6. Business Innovations and Efficiencies

- The Secretary-General and 14 executive heads signed the “Mutual Recognition” statement in direct response to GA Resolution 71/243. This statement is an enabler of the management reform removing barriers to greater consolidation of shared services. UNEP will advance in its internal application of this agreement especially with regard to implementing and executing projects in the field as the statement formalizes the commitment to use and rely on another entity's policies, procedures, system contracts and related operations mechanism without further evaluation checks or approvals.
- As part of UN Country Teams, UNEP will – where feasible – participate in the provision of common business services and back-office functions. All UN Country Teams are expected to achieve common back offices by 2022.
- UNEP will also participate in discussions on the development of common regional UN business services at the regional level as part of the regional UN Reform discussions.

7. Conclusion

- The UN Reform process has opened a new opportunity for UNEP to strengthen coordination of environmental policies and strategies at global, regional and national levels, as well as to create a more engaged partnership with national governments and partner organizations.
- UNEP remains steadfast in its commitment to implementing the UNDS reforms – pursuing innovation, internal efficiencies, and partnerships to optimally serve Member States.
- UNEP looks forward to a continued open and constructive engagement with our CPR to help deliver better.