

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 4 June 2020
09:00 – 12:00 and 13:30 – 16:30
Online Meeting

**Background Document for Agenda Item 3: Consultation on the development
of a new UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-25**

This note, entitled “Informal Discovery Sessions organised in May 2020 for Member States on the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025: Ten take-home messages”, serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 3: Consultation on the development of a new UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-25.

The note provides presents an analysis of the outcome of several informal online “Discovery Sessions” with member States that were organized by the Secretariat in May 2020.

Member States and Stakeholders are invited to provide further guidance on the development of a new Mid-Term Strategy for UNEP, on the basis of their participation in the Discovery Sessions and the key messages in the note.

INFORMAL ‘DISCOVERY’ SESSIONS ORGANISED IN MAY 2020 FOR MEMBER STATES ON THE UNEP MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2022-2025: TEN TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

A. Background and purpose¹

- **Throughout May 2020, UNEP organised a series of informal ‘discovery’ sessions with Member States to brainstorm about aspirations for UNEP and its next medium-term strategy (MTS).** These sessions are to inform the drafting of the MTS 2022-2025 which is to be adopted at the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), expected to take place on 22-26 February 2021. The MTS development roadmap includes the endorsement for UNEA-5 by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in November 2020 of the MTS 2022-2025 itself, as well as the Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023.
- **The 5 virtual ‘discovery’ sessions, designed to promote informal and open dialogue, accommodated various time zones and were offered in a ‘standard’ three-hour format (5, 11 and 13 May) as well as a ‘condensed’ ninety minute format (26 and 28 May).** In total, the sessions convened 106 participants invited in their individual capacity, from 57 Member States and Observers, including 9 ambassadors and 5 ministers.
- **The development of UNEP’s next medium-term strategy provides an opportunity to deliver breakthrough societal change against a refreshed global vision and a reinforced narrative for the organization.** In this context, UNEP Executive Director highlighted the UN response to COVID-19 and reflected on a refreshed vision of priority elements for a UNEP strategy for 2022-2025 based, in particular, on the mandate provided by Paragraph 88 of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcome document, “The future we want”^{2,3}.
- **Participants were asked to reflect on this vision and this is captured in the ‘take-home’ messages below (see Box 1).** As the sessions were organized under the Chatham House Rule⁴, none of the comments are attributed nor does the document provide a list of participants. Moreover, the messages listed here should not be considered as consensus views but, rather, contributions towards crystallising the thinking around key themes that will inform the development of the MTS 2022-2025.

Box 1. Take-home messages from the ‘discovery’ sessions

- (1) *The proposed vision steers the UNEP narrative in the right direction – one which is anchored in existing mandates, such as Paragraph 88 of ‘The future we want’ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*
- (2) *The MTS 2022-2025 needs to be relevant to the realities of a post-pandemic world, whilst continuing to address dimensions of the environmental crises which do not fit within a ‘COVID-19 lens’.*
- (3) *The MTS provides an opportunity to focus on what matters most and demonstrate impact.*

¹ See Annex 1 for additional details.

² “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly, ‘The Future We Want’, A/RES/66/288 (27 July 2012)” (United Nations, 2012), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E.

³ The opening sentence of Paragraph 88 reads: “We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment”.

⁴ “When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed” (<https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>).

- (4) *The MTS needs to enable UNEP to develop, deliver and digest scientific knowledge for impact as well as recognise and manage data as a strategic asset.*
- (5) *UNEP needs to sharpen its communications, to enhance its reach beyond the ‘environmental bubble’.*
- (6) *The MTS needs to articulate how UNEP can effectively contribute to UN system wide coherence and leverage the UN reform.*
- (7) *The MTS needs to demonstrate a clear line of sight between local to regional to global implementation.*
- (8) *The MTS should position UNEP as the ‘docking station’ for Multilateral Environmental Agreements and spell out its role in accelerating MEA implementation.*
- (9) *UNEP needs to engage non-environmental actors, including business, through partnerships that deliver impact.*
- (10) *Whilst the MTS needs to be sharp and focused, it needs to continue to accelerate shifts on key neglected dimensions of sustainability, including gender.*

Beyond substantive aspects, the sessions also delivered two ‘proofs of concept’:

- Participants showed appreciation for ‘engaging differently’ – in an informal and genuine dialogue. Participants confirmed the value of ‘discovery’ dialogues as a complement to formal settings.
- The sessions proved that virtual meetings work and can allow for broader participation – the 5 ‘discovery’ sessions were well attended, both by Nairobi-based missions as well as capitals. Participants noted that the IT platform worked well allowing for plenary and breakout sessions.

B. Main take-home messages

Message 1:

The proposed vision steers the UNEP narrative in the right direction – one which is anchored in existing mandates, such as Paragraph 88 of ‘The future we want’ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- **The proposed vision provides a compelling and timely narrative.** Transformation is required and the organisation needs to adapt to remain relevant and respond to global and country needs (vision is “strong and bang on”, “pertinent and spot on”, “comprehensive”, “inspiring” in the words of some participants).
- **UNEP’s work must be understood within the framework of sustainable development.** In particular, it is important to understand UNEP’s place in the architecture of the 3 pillars of sustainable development. Accordingly, a clear understanding of the reference to Rio+20 and Paragraph 88 of ‘The future we want’ outcome document which emphasises that UNEP’s work is focused on the “environmental dimension of sustainable development”. In a similar vein, attention should be given to a focus on environmental policy with a focus on people (in terms of green and decent jobs, health, *etc.*). Nature, climate change, pollution are “useful frames” which need to be considered “within the broader context of poverty and inequality and overall wellbeing of people”.
- **It is important not to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and build on what we have.** An important consideration in this regard is the need to implement Paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document. There would be value in focusing on what we have and capitalising on that, including Agenda 2030, where environment is mainstreamed across poverty, hunger, infrastructure, *etc.* The emphasis should be on consolidating existing achievements. At the same time, “UNEP needs to be more aggressive” in order to reach planetary sustainability and “bring the environment to the centre of decision making”. There is a need, for instance, to “push for a recognition of ecosystems as a building block for development strategies at the national and international level”.

- **The umbrella of ‘unsustainable consumption and production’ is a useful framing in the context of the many crises the world faces.** This should build on progress achieved under the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), including in such areas as consumer information, sustainable lifestyle, sustainable procurement, building and construction and ecotourism. Resource use efficiency in agriculture is also “critical in the way we are affecting ecosystems and biodiversity”. Opportunities exist to leverage existing initiatives that are already delivering the ground.

Message 2:

The MTS 2022-2025 needs to be relevant to the realities of a post-pandemic world, whilst continuing to address dimensions of the environmental crises which do not fit within a ‘COVID-19 lens’.

- **The UNEP response to COVID-19 is timely and necessary and the post-pandemic context will have a significant bearing on UNEP’s ability to deliver its MTS.** “COVID 19 is the challenge of the day but also the opportunity of the day”; it is “a unique opportunity to be blunt and innovative”; “it is called COVID-19 today but perhaps climate change tomorrow or something else” – UNEP needs to play a role in the recovery which is currently mostly examined from an economic perspective; stressing the environmental direction post-COVID-19 is of utmost importance. UNEP is facing an unknown future and UNEP needs to build the bridge between COVID-19, climate change and rebuilding the economy through green growth strategies. There is currently a lack of science, leadership, support to policies, *etc.* The coming years are likely to prove particularly challenging due to many pressure points, trade-offs and “a stream going against multilateralism and focusing more on national issues”. This will require careful narratives and a need to address the false dichotomy of nature *vs.* people & economy.
- **COVID-19 is a reminder of the dangers of working in silos: the next MTS needs to bring coherence and break not entertain silos.** We must look at the challenges in integrated manner, not in silos. COVID is a prime example of that – we must also look at issues of equity especially as the pandemic affects the poorest whose livelihoods are compromised. We must look at waste management in addition to the wildlife angle. The environment-health nexus is critical and must take a central role in the MTS, including elements of trade in illegal wildlife, to combat the spread of future zoonotic diseases. Likewise, the MTS should carry a more ambitious and systemic vision on climate change – stronger links between nature and climate as well as biodiversity and health.
- **Whilst the MTS will need to find relevance in a post-pandemic context, many environmental challenges go beyond this lens.** The MTS will have to find the right balance so as to also address critical environmental issues which are not directly related to COVID-19.

Message 3:

The MTS provides an opportunity to focus on what matters most and demonstrate impact.

- **UNEP must become better at delivering impactful programmes that are truly transformative and ‘shift the needle’.** UNEP can be the global guiding force driving the required shift in sustainable development but for that it needs focus and “define success from the point of view of outcomes”. Many of the current UNEP interventions are not transformative and are not making significant change at scale; there is “a need to move beyond demonstration”. The new MTS is an opportunity to steer UNEP towards a limited number of fronts where it can truly make a difference and shift the needle whilst also paying due attention to emerging issues.

Implementation is also very important and UNEP needs to prioritise and “not try to do everything”. In this context, UNEP must consider lessons learned and challenges of the current MTS as well as other relevant strategic documents.

- **There is a need to address the paradox of ‘good performance’ by UNEP vs. a globally deteriorating environmental situation over the last 50 years.** Whilst there is a clear demonstration of UNEP success stories, these remain mostly anecdotal as the environment is globally deteriorating. Something is therefore wrong in the design of the monitoring & evaluation framework, in the design of indicators. The new MTS should address this to ensure that the impact of UNEP’s work is more clearly demonstrated. The MTS should elaborate a better monitoring framework to avoid a “mish-mash of activities” which do not correspond to set targets.
- **There is a need to clarify how the existing sub-programmes are to be articulated in the new MTS.** Questions in this regard include the following: How does UNEP focus on priorities? What should UNEP drop? Do the 3 proposed primary action areas – pollution, chemicals and waste; living in harmony with nature; climate change and resilience – become the way UNEP goes forward? How are the existing 7 sub-programmes to be articulated in the context of the proposed 3 action areas? Are some of the existing sub-programmes overlapping? There is also a need for better linkages between resolutions and sub-programmes as well as better reporting.

Message 4:

The MTS needs to enable UNEP to develop, deliver and digest scientific knowledge for impact as well as recognise and manage data as a strategic asset.

- **Science is at the core of UNEP and scientific analysis needs to play a central role in the next MTS.** The next strategy “needs to be nested in science”. One of the implementations of the vision presented by the ED is that UNEP will need to be even more evidence-based, with issues being better and more systematically documented.
- **UNEP should, however, improve access to scientific knowledge and better respond to the needs of non-environmental audiences.** Whilst UNEP products are viewed as important, they should be more accessible and ‘user-friendly’. UNEP products are not always easily digestible for non-environment experts, meaning that the reach of UNEP-generated knowledge is often limited. UNEP should design products that can be used by non-technical audiences. Science reports sent to Member States are often too technical, meaning that information is not easily absorbed. The return on investment of flagship reports, such as the Global Environmental Outlook series, often remains unclear.
- **More effort should be given to the uptake of scientific knowledge for the effective translation of science into policy and action, including in UNEP’s own interventions.** UNEP’s scientific reports are viewed as not effective in influencing policy. UNEP is lacking the platforms to engage with other stakeholders *e.g.* from different sectors. UNEP lags behind in its ability to convert the knowledge it produces into actions, including with respect to design and implementation of its own interventions.
- **More effort should be given at enhancing and institutionalising data management.** It is important to ensure adequate digital ecosystems and measurement systems, in particular for measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, quality and interoperability will prove determinant. More generally, there is a need to bring coherence to the production of scientific reports (such as aforementioned GEO), the World Environment Situation Room (WESR), organisation-wide data strategies, assessment processes and the work on SDG indicators.

Message 5:

UNEP needs to sharpen its communications, to enhance its reach beyond the ‘environmental bubble’.

- **UNEP needs to enhance its communications on science, including by better infusing scientific knowledge to the rest of the UN system.** UNEP needs to review how it disseminates its scientific analysis beyond publications – with a focus on more modern and more impactful platforms. In particular, efforts should go into better informing other UN agencies on important research findings.
- **UNEP needs to strengthen its communications in particular as it targets communities beyond the environment.** UNEP needs to “speak and talk loudly”. It needs to highlight more impact stories to demonstrate UNEP’s capabilities to leverage systems and deliver at scale. The organisation needs to begin communicating issues effectively, making it “relatable to one’s own experience”, “shy away from to do lists”, go beyond “the very small circle of people who think professionally about the environment”. UNEP will have to fight the perception that “we now can’t afford the luxury of the environment”, develop strong and evidence-based narratives on the number of jobs that are connected to the circular economy, bring clarity on how “the environment benefits country development and prosperity”. Specific nexus approaches, such as the environment-health nexus would also benefit from strong communication by UNEP. The 50th anniversary of UNEP provides a unique opportunity for reaching out beyond environmental circles.
- **UNEP needs to raise the profile of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), including in between sessions.** It is important to raise the profile of UNEA and strengthen communication between its sessions as UNEA needs to be brought “closer to the average citizen”. There is a need to consider the metrics of UNEA success beyond the number of resolutions.

Message 6:

The MTS needs to articulate how UNEP can effectively contribute to UN system wide coherence and leverage the UN reform.

- **UNEP needs to look at the broader changes within the UN system – i.e. UN reform – as an opportunity for UNEP to amplify support to Member States on the environment.** There is a need to reflect on how UNEP will work regionally and thematically and capitalise on existing opportunities, in particular through better interaction with the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) / UN Country Team (UNCT) system and the contribution to broader interventions that deliver results at scale. “Coordination is the name of the game” and UNEP “must work more strongly on that”. In order to compensate for its small size and limited resources, UNEP needs to work more effectively with the UNRC/UNCT system and, through the UNRCs, in a spirit of UN reform. UNEP should aim at making the UNRC system “the best advocate for the environment”. As we move to a resource constrained environment, there is a need to change perceptions – UNEP can improve implementation and look towards enhancing UNEP’s role at the country level by leveraging the UN reform and the UN RC system.
- **UNEP can learn and emulate from other agencies in the UN system on how to better navigate and contribute to UN reform.** With a focus on bigger and more impactful action, there is an opportunity to build momentum on the environment and leverage the rest of UN-system, create a “positive attitude”. UNEP should also enhance its engagement with relevant UN agencies. UNEP should consider how UN Women has managed to integrate gender equality throughout the UN system.
- **The profile and impact of the Environmental Management Group (EMG), chaired by UNEP, need to be enhanced so that the voice of the environment is better heard in the UN system.** Whilst EMG is a very useful tool for mainstreaming the environment into the UN system

and coordinating messaging, “many Member States do not know about it”. In particular, more communication about its function and impact is needed.

Message 7:

The MTS needs to demonstrate a clear line of sight between local to regional to global implementation.

- **UNEP need not necessarily work at a country or project basis but needs to “think big and be an influencer through science”.** UNEP is well positioned to provide the required global view and guidance.
- **There needs to be more results-oriented analysis on country and regional interventions so as to better understand the local to regional to global impact narrative.** UNEP can enhance its support to governments by improving how it works with the rest of the UN system, including Regional Commissions, with a view to enhancing efficiency and finding synergies. In this context, regional action is very important and a number of regional environmental priorities (*e.g.* air quality issues, chemicals and waste management, climate change) are emerging. Regional cooperation will lead to better results and this must be a clear focus of the next MTS. More efficient cooperation between Member States, countries and Regional Offices is needed. “Regional implementation is critical to get the work done”. In this context also, challenges the UNEP Regional Offices face in working with Country Teams need to be addressed. For instance, how does UNEP ensure follow-up once it has provided input and expertise into country plans or individual initiatives?
- **The work of UNEP at the regional level must be prioritised.** UNEP must work within UN Country Frameworks and must leverage its expertise but must “resist from becoming field oriented” and identify “key strategic entry points to deliver”. Capacity building remains a challenge in many regions and UNEP can lift its ambition by working with the rest of the UN system. In terms of capacity building, UNEP also has a unique role to play in some issues, for instance Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Message 8:

The MTS should position UNEP as the ‘docking station’ for Multilateral Environmental Agreements and spell out its role in accelerating MEA implementation.

- **Opportunities exist to further engage with Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and break silos.** UNEP has a role to play to encourage stronger coherence, in particular on cross-cutting issues such as oceans. The MTS should identify major targets/objectives directly related to MEA implementation.
- **UNEP should profile the work and experience of MEAs to its governance bodies (Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and UNEA).** There are opportunities for stronger synergies with MEAs and for stronger profiling and integration of MEAs at UNEA.
- **The work of UNEP-administered MEAs is highly relevant to business engagement.** Many Conventions cover topics relevant to non-environmental agencies, *e.g.* mining under the Minamata Convention. Working more closely with MEAs can encourage the uptake of guidelines and commitments by non-environmental agencies.

Message 9:

UNEP needs to engage non-environmental actors, including business, through partnerships that deliver impact.

- **The MTS needs to reflect the need for UNEP to engage more forcibly with business and examine how to better leverage the work with the business community for impact.** In order to implement the SDGs, it is important to enhance dialogue with all actors including the non-environment sectors – including civil society, academia and business. There seems to be some very good thinking going on in UNEP and this will have to come through in the MTS. Particular entry points include: supply chains, green economy (making sure that this benefits SMEs and not just multinationals). Opportunities exist to strengthen existing UNEP-convened platforms and “take partnerships with the business world to the next level”.

Message 10:

Whilst the MTS needs to be sharp and focused, it needs to continue to accelerate shifts on key neglected dimensions of sustainability, including gender.

- **Participants highlighted a number of areas which would warrant particular attention in the new MTS.** These included: agriculture and food security, environmental education and how “young people can contribute to change”, health. It was noted, in particular, that “education has a vital role to play in changing social behaviour”.
- **Gender needs to come out much more strongly and coherently in the next MTS.** Whilst it is part of the narrative of the current MTS, there is a need to measure how gender comes out in the sub-programmes. UNEP needs to be more specific in measuring on gender.

Annex 1. Purpose and organisation of the discovery sessions (detailed overview)

- Throughout May 2020, UNEP organised a series of informal ‘discovery’ sessions with Member States to brainstorm about aspirations for UNEP and its next medium-term strategy. These sessions are to inform the drafting of the MTS 2022-2025 which is to be adopted at the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), expected to take place on 22-26 February 2021. The MTS development roadmap includes the endorsement for UNEA-5 by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in November 2020 of the MTS 2022-2025 itself, as well as the Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023.
- The 5 virtual ‘discovery’ sessions were designed to promote informal and open dialogue. They were premised on the idea that the development of UNEP’s next medium-term strategy is more than just a process but represents an opportunity to deliver breakthrough societal changes against a refreshed global vision and reinforced narrative for the organization. The sessions accommodated various time zones and were offered in a ‘standard’ three hour format (5, 11 and 13 May) as well as a ‘condensed’ ninety minute format (26 and 28 May). In total, the sessions convened 106 participants invited in their individual capacity, from 57 Member States and Observers, including 9 ambassadors and 5 ministers.
- In the standard format, a ‘check-in’ segment asked participants to identify one word they associated with UNEP⁵; in a second segment UNEP Executive Director highlighted the UN response to COVID-19 as well as outlined a refreshed vision of priority elements for a UNEP strategy for 2022-2025 based on, in particular, the clear and strong mandate provided to UNEP by Paragraph 88 of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcome document, “The future we want”^{6,7}; in a third segment – organised in smaller breakout groups – participants reflected on impressions on and implications of the vision presented by the Executive Director; in a fourth segment – organised in a plenary setting – participants were invited to report back on the deliberations of each breakout out group; and in a fifth segment both the Deputy Executive Director and the Executive Director offered parting comments and conclusions. Plenary segments were facilitated by UNEP staff as well as outside management consultants. For the breakout segments, UNEP staff were available to answer questions and clarify any issues as well as kick-start conversations and take notes of the main points of discussion. In the condensed format, which was conducted exclusively in a plenary setting, participants were invited to react to Executive Director’s presentation.
- In her presentation, UNEP Executive Director reflected on the coordinated UN response to COVID-19, highlighting in particular the issuance of the Secretary General’s report on *Shared responsibility, global solidarity*⁸; the framework for the immediate socio-economic response⁹; as well as various policy briefs – and highlighted UNEP’s contribution to this effort. She noted, in particular, that the SG’s report mentions “this is much more than a health crisis. It is a human crisis. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is attacking societies at their core”. In this context,

⁵ See annex 2 for a listing.

⁶ “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly, ‘The Future We Want’, A/RES/66/288 (27 July 2012)” (United Nations, 2012), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E.

⁷ The opening sentence of Paragraph 88 reads: “We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment”.

⁸ United Nations, “Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19” (United Nations, March 2020), https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf.

⁹ United Nations, “A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19” (United Nations, April 2020), <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>.

she highlighted the issuance of the UNEP response to COVID-19 entitled “Working with Environment to protect People”¹⁰. The three-pronged response is organised around (1) The medical & humanitarian emergency phase; (2) A transformational change for nature and people; and (3) Investing to build back better. A fourth area is to consider options for modernizing global environmental governance.

- In outlining her vision of priority elements for a UNEP strategy for 2020-2025, UNEP Executive Director emphasized, in particular, (1) a growing understanding of the role of the environment in underpinning progress on sustainable development (including by recognizing that 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have nature’s elements as critical to their delivery); (2) the essential role of science in focusing and informing action to deliver planetary sustainability for people, prosperity and equity; (3) the clear and strong mandate provided to UNEP by Paragraph 88 of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcome document, “The future we want”^{11,12}; (5) using science to catalyse action – meaning policy shifts, systematic shifts and scaled action aligned with regional and national specificities – through support to Multilateral Environment Agreements (“UNEP as the docking station”), interventions informed by science, stronger coordination with the UN system, and through relevant networks, platforms and initiatives; (6) opportunities to work on pressure points to address current patterns of unsustainable consumption and production – namely (i) pollution, chemicals and waste, (ii) living in harmony with nature, (iii) climate change and resilience; (7) recognising the enablers of impact at scale, such as (i) environmental governance, law and institutions, (ii) financial services sector, (iii) harnessing the power of the digital ecosystem, (iv) business; (8) opportunities for UNEP to better respond to the needs of Member States, via UN Country Teams, including through Development Cooperation Frameworks, Common Country Analyses, Voluntary National Reviews and, in turn, more clearly contributing to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the delivery of the SDGs. The Executive Director mentioned that indicators of success in implementing such a vision would include: (i) UNEP science is intelligible, (ii) UNEP platforms shape global agenda setting, (iii) UNEP interventions “shift the global needle”, (iv) UNEP has leveraged the UN system (as per paragraph 88 of the future we want, UN reform). In closing, she indicated that implementing such a vision required hard choices and focus but, as a corollary, offered the possibility of delivering real, tangible and sustainable results.
- Participants were asked to reflect on their impressions of the vision presented by the Executive Director as well as consider implications which emerge on how to proceed – this document seeks to capture this feedback in a series of take-home messages. As the sessions were organized under the Chatham House Rule¹³, none of the comments are attributed nor does the document provide a list of participants. Moreover, the messages listed here should not be considered as consensus views but, rather, contributions towards crystallising the thinking around key themes that will inform the development of the MTS 2022-2025 and what enablers and tools will allow UNEP to deliver this – for the same reason, messages and especially sub-messages may not be entirely consistent.

¹⁰ United Nations Environment Programme, “Working with the Environment to Protect People: UNEP’s Covid-19 Response” (UNEP, May 2020), <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/working-environment-protect-people-uneps-covid-19-response>.

¹¹ “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly, ‘The Future We Want’, A/RES/66/288 (27 July 2012)” (United Nations, 2012), https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E.

¹² The opening sentence of Paragraph 88 reads: “We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment”.

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Annex 2. ‘One word to describe UNEP’ (with number of responses)¹⁴

Word	Number of mentions
Hope	17
Possibility	10
Leadership	6
Solution(s); environmental solutions	5
Vision, visionary	5
Opportunity	4
Synergy	4
Champion (of the Earth)	3
Implementation	3
Inspiration	3
Sustainable Development	3
Action; action and transformation	2
Ambitious; high ambition	2
Authority; environmental authority	2
Change	2
Future	2
Impact	2
Influence for transformation; influential	2
Integration; integrated activities and cooperation	2
Prioritisation	2
Relevance	2
Resilience	2
Responsible; responsibility	2
Science and policy; science-policy interface	2
Sustainability	2
Transformation; transformative	2
Adequacy	1
Agenda 2030	1
Agile	1
Alert	1
Alliance	1
Challenge	1
Coherence	1
Collaborate	1
Collective response	1
Collective responsibility	1
Compromise	1
Cooperation	1
Data	1

¹⁴ Number of responses does not equal number of participants because (1) not all participants were able to respond and (2) senior management was invited to respond.

Dedication	1
Delivery	1
Driving change	1
Effective communication	1
Effective transformation	1
Environmental information and international environmental agenda	1
Focus	1
Green	1
Innovation	1
Interconnected	1
Lighthouse	1
Narrative	1
New relationship with nature	1
Outreach	1
Participation	1
Pioneer	1
Platform for change	1
Respond	1
Solidarity	1
Start	1
Support for environmental stability	1
Sustainable recovery	1
Systemic change	1
Timely and responsive	1
Together	1
Vision 2030	1
Work	1