

**Committee of Permanent Representatives Subcommittee meeting  
(Online meeting, 4 June 2020)  
Agenda Item 2: Programme Performance Report 2018-2019**

*Comments by the European Union and its Member States*

The EU and its MS wish to congratulate the ED and the UNEP staff on the progress achieved in the last biennium, not only through accomplished results, but also by improving how the organisation works.

The EU and its MS congratulate UNEP on good results and notes with appreciation that most targets have been fully or partially met; where targets have not been met, we would like to understand better the main reasons and obstacles.

With regard to the format, we welcome the annex with the performance indicators for each sub-programme, which gives a clear overview and makes the information provided in the report easier to understand.

In some areas, UNEP has exceeded its targets well beyond the set indicator. This is to be regarded as a success, but should also motivate to set ambitions higher for the future MTS and POWs as well as to rethink some of the performance indicators, in view of the ambition to enhance the relevance and impact of UNEPs work. In practice, it should be thought through carefully what the overachievement in several areas would mean for the target setting in 2020-2021 in several areas, in light of the priorities for the coming period, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19, and the role UNEP could/should play to support countries to 'build back better'. Does it mean the bar should be lifted higher in terms of numbers, or should the attention shift towards other activities, in light of the results achieved so far?

On the climate change SP, for instance, with regard to NDCs, UNEP points out the need for stronger NDCs. In several countries, UNEP has effectively supported the NDCs planning process. However, in this planning process, there needs to be a strong link with implementation. Could UNEP do more to include actors that are involved in implementation in the planning process inside and outside the UN system (i.e. through partnerships, such as the NDC partnership?)? What is the reason for the below expectancy progress on one of the REDD+ indicators?

In the disasters and resilience SP, we wish to highlight UNEP's role in the progress made on greening the UN peacekeeping missions. As part of the UN system, UNEP has a clear impact. We see scope for further progress on this in future work. We welcome that UNEP is currently reviewing how to optimize its support to disaster and conflict-affected contexts. We recommend to distil criteria for future engagement, as well as to specify UNEP's ambition/activities, taking into account UNEP's mandate and the activities undertaken so far.

Science is key! The PPR provides a good overview of the science-policy work, work on data and data tools under the "Environment under review" SP, but through other SPs UNEP also delivers on its role as a "science-policy-broker". What could UNEP do more to increase the uptake and use of these tools through its other SPs by

stakeholders inside and outside the UN system (including the private sector)? Could this be facilitated by designing the next MTS differently?

With regard to available funding, the POW as a whole seems to be in good shape. We do regret the availability of core funding, since we recognize that this would lead to more flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness and its pivotal role in UNEP fulfilling its mandate, as set out in the PPR.

The PPR is an important source of information to shape MS thinking when considering future plans and programmes. The reporting could be further improved, by indicating the proportion of multi-year funding that is to be spent beyond the reporting period. The sections on opportunities and challenges under each sub-programme are, in our view, an important part of the PPR in this regard. However, not all of them are equally enlightening and concrete – this is something we ask UNEP to be improved further upon in the future. E.g. by indicating how the results of the POW period contribute to the overall objectives/results for the programme, in order to draw lessons and identify priorities for the coming period, which would be useful additions for MS to consider.

Lessons we want to reiterate for future planning, some of which we already underlined during the last annual subcommittee:

- Despite UNEP's efforts and success in strengthening science policy, providing tools, building capacity, developing legal frameworks and catalysing action, implementation is still lagging behind: around the world, a healthy environment for all is still under threat. Tackling this gap and moving from policy to implementation and enforcement is a responsibility of a wide set of actors, including, of course, international organisations and governments as well as businesses and civil society.
- The EU and its MS is convinced that the ongoing UNDS reform provides an opportunity to address this implementation gap by improving coherence and synergy with the work of others. The UN reform can also be instrumental in improving the access and use of scientific data and the tools UNEP provides, firstly within the UN system and secondly by a broader range of actors.
- It is also important to address the implementation gap within the organisation, connecting the dots between the different SPs, particularly between the work for "environment under review" and other SPs. In developing the next MTS UNEP, with the support and input of MS and stakeholders, needs to identify the approaches that will lead to ambitious, transformative action at scale.
- We are convinced that, by setting a new management tone, UNEP will also continue to improve its focus on achieving results. We have seen from a previous lessons learned analysis and also in this PPR the importance of project design. Evaluations point out that there is still room for improvement in this critical phase. The areas requiring attention, which emerged from evaluations in the past biennium, were public awareness, quality of project design, monitoring, efficiency, sustainability and responsiveness to human rights and gender. Addressing these areas of attention is pivotal in our quest for more impact of what UNEP is doing. UNEP is achieving all of its targets, but if this is based on projects that are not particularly well designed or not sustainable enough, then the POW as a whole will not contribute to long term change.

- We welcome UNEP's ambition to focus on results and impact. A results-oriented strategy and planning go hand in hand with a results-based resource allocation process. Not surprisingly, we underline the importance of sufficient funding through the Environment Fund to facilitate this. The EU and its MS are aware of the challenges involved, but as we expressed before, the EU and its MS expect important improvements in all of these aspects of results based management, not only in the next MTS period, but also for the implementation of the next POW. A results-based resource allocation is only possible if resource mobilization efforts are also conducted with a needs/results-based approach and do not depend solely on "supply". We recognize UNEP's recent efforts in this regard.
- Furthermore, we have to look at the wide range of partnerships and initiatives UNEP is engaged in and how effective they are in catalysing action. UNEP works with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders, who each have their own role to play in the development, implementation and enforcement of policies. We support UNEP and urge it to take a close look, during further development of the medium term strategy, at these partnerships and make strategic choices based on what works well, where improvement is needed and which efforts need to be discontinued to focus resources elsewhere
- When planning for new policy or normative work, sufficient attention and resources should be given to the communication and dissemination strategy and how to connect the deliverables with actors that have a greater role to play in policy implementation.
- Considering the performance indicators for the new POW, the level of ambition needs to be set higher and, where possible, allow for a reflection on impacts.
- The funding of UNEP's core activities, which are critical for fulfilling its mandate and that perhaps do not attract easily earmarked funding should be financed from the core budget (EF and RB).

This PPR gives a good overview of the past biennium. To be able to have further guidance for the consultations on the MTS, the EU would like to have a more "historical" perspective for this review (what are the trends?): UNEP has been working for years on a number of the topics addressed in the review. We would appreciate more information on the longer-term perspective and how the progress made affects future work. We would welcome a briefing on these longer-term trends in the coming months to guide the development of the MTS.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate our support to UNEP's management and all staff to move forward, after the changes that were made in the past biennium. The EU and its MS remain committed to the organisation and we look forward to further consultations on the next MTS, in the context of these new challenges and opportunities of global crises that we have to tackle together.