

**Subcommittee meeting of the CPR to the UNEP
(Nairobi, 4 June 2020)**

Agenda Item 3. Consultation on the development of new UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-25

Comments by the European Union and its Member States

The EU and its MS would like to thank UNEP for the opportunity to participate in these virtual discovery sessions, which allowed both representatives in the CPR as well as the capital-based experts to contribute to the consultations on the MTS.

The EU and its MS valued the refreshed vision of the ED, and we encourage UNEP to develop the strategy further along these lines.

This vision points towards three main crises: climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems under threat, pollution through chemicals and waste and the means to tackle them: sustainable consumption and production, including enhancing green investments, underpinned by sound scientific advice.

The MTS and the related to be approved POW/B need to be ready by UNEA-5: we need to move from "brainstorming" to a deepened dialogue. It is time to place ideas into a clear and comprehensive results framework based on an ambitious set of strategic objectives, focused on the role UNEP should play. This results framework deserves all of our focus and attention, since we collectively want UNEP to have more impact and to address the paradox between UNEP's good performance and the deteriorating global environment. When can we expect a draft results framework for the MTS from UNEP?

The EU and its MS hope that all MS will take the opportunity to participate in consultations and provide guidance to UNEP. The MTS and POWs are our common tools for steering UNEP and translating mandate into action. Ideas for resolutions, for instance, can also find their way in expected accomplishments for UNEP.

UNEP should use its role within the UN system to raise its impact. We therefore have to ensure that the MTS is compatible with the UN management reform and avoid duplication (e.g. ensure that the results framework is compatible with GA requirements). What kind of consultations will UNEP have with other UN entities, to influence their strategies and programmes (and vice versa), to avoid working in silos and strengthen its environmental impact? In order to take advantage of the Annual Subcommittee Meeting of the CPR in October, it will be crucial to have a draft results framework and MTS draft available early on. It will be important to ensure a transparent and inclusive process leading to the next MTS, despite the challenges deriving from COVID-19 and the MTS should be built on lessons learned and past achievements and use current crises as an opportunity to leapfrog.

With its new MTS, UNEP needs to strike a balance between ensuring continuity in the fulfilment of its core mandates and strategic elements of past MTS that would require long-term action spanning several MTS, while at the same time allowing for a rejuvenation that enables a stronger focus on areas that have delivered results and impact.

The current crisis will inevitably greatly influence the dialogue on the next MTS and UNEP plays a pivotal role in the response and recovery:

- Immediate response to the health crisis has absolute priority today, but it is also important to shape the economic recovery. This must be done quickly but in a well thought out manner, with an eye to the long term.
- However, a return to pre-crisis “business as usual” consumption and production patterns is not an option. We need a broader vision and a long-term strategy that will tackle socio-economic and environmental challenges together and make both society and the economy more resilient, sustainable and fair after the crisis.
- In order to prevent a next crisis of this scale, we need systemic changes that benefit both the environment, human health, our wellbeing and our economy. Only then can we achieve circular economy, climate neutrality, sustainable conservation and restoration of biodiversity (and the essential ecosystem services it provides) as well as the improvement of air, water and soil quality.
- Particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable and hardest hit in our societies, in order to make these necessary changes inclusive and leave no one behind.
- The immense investments and incentives necessary to help the economy recover from the current crisis provide a unique opportunity to catalyse ecological transition and substantial investment needed to achieve it. To enable such a win-win situation, ecological transition must continue unabated and any measure envisaged under the post-Covid-19 recovery policy, including budget support and other support mechanisms, must be viewed in the light of its positive or negative impact on the ecological and social transition and be attuned to it.
- Another important change that the current crisis has brought about is the increased recognition of science as a basis for policy. The scientific world has for a number of years given us unanimous signals on the need for ecological transition. The recovery policy should be based on both natural sciences (e.g. for monitoring and monitoring of environmental parameters) as well as human sciences (e.g. for monitoring social parameters and including criteria for wellbeing and strategies to influence human behaviour, education).
- A very important and hopeful lesson we have learned from this crisis is that there can be broad public support for quite drastic measures if there is consensus on the need for them. It is important that this support also continues to exist during recovery and the approach to our social, environmental and health challenges. It is therefore essential to establish a broad and in-depth dialogue aimed at including citizens and all social actors in all phases of the recovery and transition policy and to continue to communicate transparently about that policy. UNEP also has an important role to play in this regard by aiming its communications on challenges and solutions at different types of audiences.

UNEP possesses a wealth of knowledge, experience, science, data and tools that can be offered to the UN-system, governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders in order to contribute to this effort on a global scale. In addition, it has the convening power to leverage the inputs of other environmental actors.

The MTS should clearly identify how to strengthen cooperation with the UN system, including with the UN Resident Coordinator system in order to achieve this.

We also recognize the important role of the private sector in addressing key environmental challenges. The new MTS provides an excellent opportunity to revisit

4 June 2020

UNEP's engagement with the private sector in a more strategic and results- oriented way in order to achieve the overall objectives.

UNEP should continue to work operatively as well as normatively, since both aspects are essential for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.
