

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
2 July 2020
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting
United Nations Office at Nairobi

**Note from the Secretariat for the consultation meeting on the CPR-based review:
Enhancing cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the MEAs/COPs**

This note is developed in support of the process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its subsidiary bodies, as mandated by paragraphs 9 –13 of [UNEA decision 4/2](#).

Following consideration of the [Secretariat note entitled “Enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the multilateral environmental agreements \(MEAs\)”](#) at a meeting on [27 February 2020](#), and at the request of the co-facilitators for the process for review and some Member States, the Secretariat has reached out to the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to request inputs on how to enhance cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the MEAs/COPs. The proposals have been compiled by UNEP based on the inputs provided by the MEAs secretariats, in full recognition of the fact that all MEAs are legally autonomous with their own governing bodies.

The proposals seek to promote cooperation, coherence and synergies between UNEP and MEAs, enabling UNEP to fulfil its mandate as the leading global environmental authority as well as facilitating the work of the governing bodies and secretariats of MEAs to enhance cooperation and collaboration among themselves within the scope of their respective mandates, as well as between themselves and the UNEP and UNEA, building on work already done.

Member States are invited to further consider concrete the options outlined in this document, with a view to identify proposals that may be included in the co-facilitator’s document “Converging elements of consensus”, paragraph 6, which currently reads:

6. *Under the guidance of the UNEA Bureau and with the support from the Secretariat and in close cooperation with the MEA Secretariats, strengthen the contributions and active participation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to UNEA to promote coherence between the UNEA resolutions and the MEAs governing bodies’ decisions, by:*
 - a) *Organizing a “MEA segment” in conjunction or back-to-back with the UNEA high level segment, and*
 - b) *Inviting MEA Secretariats to provide inputs on draft UNEA resolutions, where relevant.*

Enhancing cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the MEAs/COPs¹

Introduction

At the 4th session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in March 2019, member States adopted decision 4/2 “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the 5th session of UNEA”, which mandated a process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the UNEP governing bodies – i.e. UNEA and its intersessional subsidiary body, CPR. One of the focus areas identified by member States and stakeholders during the review process include increasing cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and MEAs.²

The purpose of this paper³ is to present concrete ideas that could be further discussed to meaningfully promote cooperation, coherence and synergies between UNEP and MEAs, enabling UNEP to fulfil its mandate as the leading global environmental authority as well as facilitating the work of the governing bodies and secretariats of MEAs to enhance cooperation and collaboration among themselves within the scope of their respective mandates, as well as between themselves and the UNEP and UNEA, building on work already done.

There is long standing programmatic cooperation between the UNEP secretariat and the secretariats of MEAs, as mandated by decisions/resolutions of their respective governing bodies. This programmatic cooperation can serve as the basis for exploring further cooperative options.

The following options have been compiled by UNEP based on the inputs provided by the MEAs secretariats, in full recognition of the fact that all MEAs are legally autonomous with their own governing bodies.⁴

¹ For the purposes of this paper, “MEAs” refer to those the MEAs whose Secretariat functions are carried out by UNEP. “COPs” refer to the governing bodies of the MEAs.

² Specific options put forth during the CPR review process include:

- a) Foster closer dialogue and collaboration between UNEA and MEAs and their governing bodies. This could be done for example through their Chairs or members of their respective Bureaus by identifying mutual priorities for cooperation and for possible intergovernmental decisions that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.
- b) Mobilize MEAs participation in and contributions to UNEA, keeping in mind their respective mandates; organizing dedicated dialogue with MEAs could be explored, for example through the organization of an “MEA Day” during UNEA which would enable the MEA Chairs/Presidents or members of their respective Bureaus holding dialogue sessions on mutual priorities for cooperation that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.
- c) Both Member States and the Secretariat should consult more actively with MEAs and other international organizations with a view to foster better policy coherence and cooperation.
- d) MEAs should be encouraged to share ideas for resolutions at UNEA and contribute to the implementation process.
- e) Bring together the heads of global environmental assessments and subsidiary scientific and technology bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements to discuss emerging environmental challenges and identify synergistic solutions.

³ This discussion paper benefits from the contributions made by the secretariats of BRS, CBD, CMS, CITES, Minamata and the Vienna Convention/Montreal Protocol. The current version reflects additional comments received from the MEAs secretariats since the draft was first circulated to the CPR in February 2020.

⁴ It is important to note that the membership of these governing bodies differ from each other as well as with respect to UNEA, which has 193 UN Member States as its members. Some MEAs such as the CBD and the Vienna Convention/Montreal Protocol also have universal membership, with 196 and 197 parties, respectively.

Concrete options/ideas for further consideration

A. Cooperation during UNEA and COP meetings

1. Member States can consider establishing an agenda item on “Cooperation with MEAs” in the sessions of UNEA. This could contribute to identifying opportunities for strengthened programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs. Where not already the case, MEAs Conferences of the Parties (COP) can consider adding an agenda item on “Cooperation with UNEP”. Discussions under this agenda item could focus on specific thematic clusters and include, for example, remarks by relevant MEA COP Presidents or Executive Secretaries in UNEA sessions, and by UNEA President or UNEP Executive Director in MEAs COPs. Supporting documents for the agenda item could be jointly drafted by UNEP and the MEA secretariats.
2. Continue to organize events on programmatic cooperation between UNEA and MEAs in the margins of UNEA sessions and the MEA COPs, highlighting, for example, their joint contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or other mutually supportive activities on a technical or policy issue.
3. Organize structured dialogue(s) between UNEP Executive Director and the Executive Secretaries of MEAs, COP Presidents and UNEA President (or their Bureau representatives) at UNEA and/or at the high-level segments of the COPs.
4. Prepare “thematic briefs” in consultation with MEA Secretariats on the theme of UNEA and/or proposed resolutions, highlighting ongoing initiatives. Respective MEAs could also consider preparing briefs in consultation with UNEP for their COPs.

B. Enhanced programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs

5. Explore modalities for MEAs to participate in the UNEA-5 process towards preparing a political declaration for a UN high-level meeting, in the context of the commemoration of the creation of UNEP by the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972, as mandated by [General Assembly resolution 73/333](#).
6. Provide opportunities for engagement by MEAs in the intersessional period between the two UNEA sessions by, for example, organizing regular MEA briefings to the CPR, including at the annual subcommittee meeting. This could include a discussion on national level implementation on key outcomes of COPs.
7. Make better use of the Executive Director’s quarterly reports to the CPR to present key policy developments from COP decisions or intergovernmental processes involving MEAs.
8. UNEP and MEAs to identify potential areas for future cooperative initiatives based on the respective governing bodies’ decisions/resolutions and on the latest scientific information, such as the Global Environment Outlook, the Frontiers Report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern, and other relevant scientific assessments and studies, including those conducted by the MEAs.
 - Collaborative work between MEA secretariats and UNEP secretariat needs to start with identification of issues of common interest and priorities and designing activities that could

address those issues/priorities. Once activities are identified, MEA secretariats and UNEP secretariat would need to take things forward with the approval of their respective governing bodies.

9. Increase the involvement of MEAs in the preparation and implementation of UNEP programme of work and medium-term strategy as well as in the actual implementation of relevant resolutions, where appropriate. Concurrently increase the involvement of UNEP in the preparation and implementation of the MEAs programmes of work to strengthen programmatic coherence and cooperation between UNEP and MEAs.
 - Create effective means by which UNEP secretariat and MEAs secretariats could mutually inform the development and implementation of each other's programme of work through e.g. discussions on areas of mutual interest, development of memorandum of understanding, which provides modalities for enhancing programmatic relationship, etc.
 - Further steps could be taken to integrate the MEA Secretariats into the planning process of UNEP's activities and management.
10. The meetings and cooperation in the context of the "MEAs Focal Points Network" – composed of focal points from each of the UNEP-hosted global MEAs and UNEP Secretariat – offer useful avenues for further actualizing the cooperation on technical level.

C. Joint UNEP/UNEA and MEAs/COPs contributions to wide global processes

11. Convene regular meetings or teleconferences of the chairs of the scientific advisory bodies or implementation committees by thematic clusters, including with a view to providing a strong, joint science-policy input to UNEA and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.⁵ These meetings could help identify policy areas of common interest among UNEP and MEAs for advancing the implementation of SDGs.
12. Strengthen UNEA's imprint during the regional forums of ministers of environment and/or the regional forums on sustainable development. This would also provide an opportunity for stronger collaboration with MEA secretariats with the support of relevant regional coordinators based in UNEP's regional offices.
13. Explore opportunities for leveraging the role of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) in mobilizing all MEAs and other EMG members in the implementation of the post-2020 frameworks for biodiversity and chemicals/waste. The ongoing [EMG Consultative Process on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) could be utilized to this effect.

⁵ See for example, the last two meetings of the chairs of the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-06> and <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-05>.