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## Switzerland

### Comments on the Draft Mid-term Strategy 2022-2025, dated 27 August 2020

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#### GENERAL COMMENTS

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- First of all, Switzerland wants to congratulate UNEP on the transparent, open and inclusive process towards developing the MTS and Budget. Starting with a (high-level) scoping consultations (i.e. discovery sessions), we are now gradually progressing towards a document that will serve UNEP to guide its daily business.
- Most importantly, Switzerland wants to express its support for the approach taken by the Secretariat on shaping its new MTS: the three action areas, with SCP considered to be the crosscutting theme, and science-policy & governance to form the foundation for the three action areas.
- We do have some overall (here) and specific concerns (below) to address:
  - We support the understanding that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are considered to be the underlying threat of environmental protection. SCP is to some extent included in the “Finance and Economic Chapter” of the MTS. While the production angle of SCP is embedded well in the chapter, the topic would merit a more explicit placing of the consumption angle on SCP into the strategy.
  - Overall, the document is written with an **anthropogenic** perspective. UNEP’s mandate is to work on environmental protection in a true sense of the meaning. It should less be the argument for the humans to live in “harmony with nature” but to use the approach for environmental protection *per se*, with the global environment at the starting point for action.
  - With respect to **water related work**: UNEP is the custodian agency for the indicator 6.5.1. on water quality, with GEMS and the recent UNEA 4 resolution it has a strong mandate to work on water quality, including the World Water Quality Assessment. With the focus on pollution action, UNEP’s work on water is largely reduced to “waste water”, completely leaving out the important work of UNEP and the role UNEP it has been playing in the UN on water-related issues, particularly freshwater.
- We are also awaiting the prospective discussions on the budget considerations and the details related to the PoW.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS

### 2 Background

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**UNEP was established in 1972 against the background of a series of scientific reports on the degrading state of the world environment.** The Stockholm Conference gave science a platform that enabled world leaders to converge on the need to cooperate to tackle the most pressing environmental problems of their time. As a result, UNEP was tasked **to address environmental emerging issues of concern by** with coordinating global responses ~~for the environment~~, within and outside the United Nations, while keeping the state of the world environment in check, linking science to policymaking.

**Nevertheless, the importance of linking science to policy and decision-making remains stronger than ever, but science alone is not enough.** Science underpins solutions and actions that can chart a transformational path in the way we live, work and relate to nature. Yet only **when assessing scientific evidence and translating it into policy-relevant information it is** sustained by strong environmental governance, ~~so can~~ science **can** be the foundation of a catalytic response to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. [...]

### 3 Situation Analysis

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**2. Human consumption is set to increase further as population and per-capita income also continue to increase.** Per capita consumption in developed countries generally far exceeds that of developing countries. Land, ~~watereourses~~ **bodies**, and the oceans are increasingly being exploited for food production, infrastructure, industry and human settlements. Ever more living material, minerals and, water, are extracted for consumption. Up to 400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge, and other industrial wastes are released annually into the world's waters.

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**2. The trajectory of global environmental change is out of line with international goals.** While the world is on course to restore the Earth's protective upper ozone layer, the global community is failing to meet international **agreed** environmental goals on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. [...]

**3. Environmental degradation can be halted with an integrated focus on climate, biodiversity, chemicals, natural resources and pollution.** It is still technically possible to limit global mean temperature increase to well below 2°C if immediate and more ambitious actions to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases are taken by all countries. Measures adapting to and mitigating climate change are synergistic: the lower the degree of warming the less the need to adapt. **A sound assesment of potential benefits and risks is fundamental for further political action.** The more efficient use of natural resources becomes, the less greenhouse gases are emitted across the entire economy. Biodiversity can only be conserved and restored by addressing the underlying indirect and direct drivers of change. [...]

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**4. Establishing more sustainable consumption and production patterns, at local, national, regional and global levels supported by a framework anchored in the UN is key to reducing inequality and protecting the environment.** Resource extraction and processing create more than 50 per cent of global climate change impacts, and over 90 per cent of global biodiversity loss. [...]

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[...] greater opportunity to of working with our UN partners to enhance environmental sustainability through cutting edge scientific analysis in support of Member States and creating the enabling conditions

to fulfil **meet those requests** aspirations of Paragraph 88 of “The future we want” **that have not been met.** [...]

**2. High-quality, credible, open and shared, and relevant environmental data, information, statistics, assessments and expertise are critical to support integration efforts across the UN system as well as at national and regional levels.** In addition to contributing to the delivery of the Secretary-General’s Data Strategy for 2020-2022,<sup>57</sup> options for ensuring stronger integration of environmental data and analysis include: 1) engaging in the One UN development and better use of statistics and accounting, including those generated under multilateral environmental agreements, to promote sustainable development; 2) enhancing, through the Environmental Management Group, multilateral environmental agreements and multi-agency collaboration, **implementation of the System-wide Strategies on the Environment**, environmental indicators and monitoring and scaling-up actions informed by environmental statistics and science, including integrated analyses across the three pillars of sustainable development; [...]. **5) ensuring that UNEP through the World Environment Situation Room provides the prime global digital platform that can allow governments and the public at large to visualize the state and performance of the world environment and draw an analysis of the efficacy of existing environmental policies.**

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[...] To that end, UNEP will upgrade and improve its standards for internal controls and management, providing oversight, **securing due diligence processes with respect to collaborating with external partners**, identifying opportunities for greater efficiency, and ensuring compliance with UN Regulations and Rules, including on Enterprise Risk Management.

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**Securing contributions to the Environment Fund, or funding that is only softly earmarked is indispensable for UNEP to be equipped to deliver on the priorities agreed by Member States, while demonstrating tangible results.** Efforts by UNEP to widen and secure the resource base for the execution of this Strategy, both by UNEP directly and by its partners, need to be sustained **in order to fulfill the mandate under para 88 of the “Future we want.”** UNEP needs to define its comparative advantage and funding needs strategically, for both core and earmarked funding, and to comprehensively look at the landscape for potential funding sources, but also engage in strategic and innovative approaches to resource mobilization. **Further, UNEP is leveraging all possibilities to have member states paying their fair share to the Environment Fund, in accordance with the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions.** [...]. UNEP will also revise its Partnership Strategy, **and by accounting for a rigorous due diligence and speaking to all stakeholders alike**, to ensure a stronger pursuit of its comparative advantage that matches an increased resource ambition vis-à-vis the delivery of its strategic priorities.

#### **4 A MTS for a Decade of Action**

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**Based on credible science and good governance, net zero carbon emissions and resilience towards climate change are achieved, humanity prospers in harmony with nature and pollution is prevented and controlled, while ensuring good environmental quality and improved health and well-being for all.**

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**3. UNEP will deliver transformational results.** UNEP will align its planning and action with the 2030 Agenda **and in accordance with the internationally agreed environment goals**, and aspire to deliver long-term, transformational impacts beyond the four-years covered by this strategy.

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**4. UNEP will provide a clear “line-of-sight” for its delivery of Agenda 2030 from the global internationally agreed environmental goals to regional and national action. [...]**

## **5 UNEP’s Focus: Thematic, Foundational and Enablinn programmes**

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### **I) Thematic Suprogrammes Climate Action**

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**In collaboration with its networks and partners, including the GEF, UNEP will help countries meet their transparency obligations under the UNFCCC and operationalize the Enhanced Transparency Framework established under the Paris Agreement. (...)** The enhancement of existing national arrangements and sharpening of related regulatory frameworks will be central to these actions. Synergies will be pursued with global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, including **the work conducted under the UNFCCC to support the transition towards the Enhanced Transparency Framework**, the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, to facilitate coordination and complementarity between the respective reporting obligations and contribute to greater coherence in tracking progress on implementing their decisions.

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**UNEP will facilitate interinstitutional collection, sharing and validation of climate-related knowledge at the national and subnational level.** UNEP will contribute to building trust amongst the sectoral Ministries that hold stakes in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions while also securing greater involvement of subnational authorities in knowledge and data sharing and related decision-making, to facilitate synergies and harmonize efforts. **UNEP will further assess the potentials, risks and gaps in relation to measures tackling climate change. It will increase transparency, accountability and foster knowledge generation.**

**UNEP will promote environmentally and socially sustainable approaches to natural resource management.** UNEP will promote transformations in land use management and planning and natural resource-based value chains. Alternative and resilient food systems, agriculture, and fisheries will be promoted to reverse unsustainable land use and habitat conversion, freshwater ~~extraction~~ **pollution and abstraction**, and ~~misuse~~ **unsustainable management** of ocean resources. Safe, equitably distributed, and environmentally sustainable food systems must be based on the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. UNEP will continue to assist Member States to strengthen the environmental performance of sustainable and restorative agriculture models through promotion of nature-positive practices, such as agroecology in collaboration with its partners. UNEP will continue to support integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. UNEP will also continue to provide guidance for increased knowledge

### **Chemical and Pollution Action**

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Promote sound science-information and knowledge sharing and management. **UNEP will foster and facilitate sound science and its use by decision makers.** [..]

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Accelerate policy shifts towards the sound management of chemicals and waste. [...] of major public health concern. **UNEP will support and promote the C&W MEAs their further strengthening and development, including through cooperation and synergies among the secretariats of the MEAs.** [...]

## II) Foundational Subprogrammes

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**This subprogramme collects scientifically credible data, information and knowledge and provides policy-relevant analysis that can catalyse and accelerate solutions and actions for the environment.** It underpins all actions under UNEP's other subprogrammes by informing policies, in particular UNEA, and [...].

**UNEP's core mandate is to keep the world environment situation under review and strengthen the interface between science and policymaking across sustainable development.** In response, this Foundational subprogramme will bring the latest scientific evidence and analysis on the state of the world environment to the attention of policy and decision makers and all other relevant stakeholders the public at large. [...]

**Authoritative science that is delivered with greater coherence and integration.** UNEP will continue to be an authoritative voice in the global scientific community, collecting, analysing and synthesizing scientific data, assessing potentials and risks of new & emerging technologies, that speaks to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and beyond. [...]

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**Closing the gap on the availability of environmental data is key to assess and review progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the internationally agreed environmental goals.** UNEP will continue to measure and monitor country progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the internally agreed environmental goals, providing timely data analysis and early warnings for policy and decision makers.

As part of the horizon-scanning and foresight process, the World Environment Situation Room will also contribute to surveilling emerging risks to the environment and human health, bringing these issues to the attention of governments for prioritizing research, analysis and for taking political action at UNEAs and beyond.

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**UNEP will contribute to Climate Stability by providing scientific information that measures progress towards carbon neutrality and resilience, and assesses the potentials and risks associated with the measures applied.** [...].

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**This subprogramme supports coherent policymaking by strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks which underpin the internationally agreed environment goals on climate, pollution, and nature, and the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

## III) Enabling Subprogrammes

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**New: 1bis.**

**Encourage member states to contribute to the Environment Fund by paying the fair share according to the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions (VISC).** The aim of the VISC is to broaden the base of contributions and to enhance predictability in the voluntary financing of the Environment Fund.

**2. Promote business models and policies for accelerating responsible and circular patterns of consumption and production and sustainable use and management of natural resources.** UNEP and its networks and initiatives, including the 10YFP and its One Planet Network, ~~and the~~

Partnership for Action on Green Economy, **the Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership, the Lifecycle Initiative (LCi) and the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP)** will support countries and businesses in accelerating a transition to more circular and resource efficient value chains **in particular in high impact sectors such as extractives and infrastructure.** This ranges **from the extraction and use of natural resources to the** design of products and the circularity of material flows to creating the right **sustainability** incentives and enabling frameworks for [circular economy business ideas and **all stakeholders along the supply chain.** UNEP enabling tools like sustainable public procurement, sustainable lifestyles and education or consumer information to change behavior and shift consumption **and production.** [...].

**4. Support the greening of cities and creating more circular and clean economies in urban and peri-urban areas.** [...] UNEP will focus on more sustainable and resilient value chains, in the food, mobility, energy **and mining** sectors and in infrastructure. (...).

**5. Catalyze investment for a green rural transformation.** [...]. UNEP will work with its partners in government and industry **such as the extractive sector** towards the creation of green and resource-based employment; [...]