

Terms of Reference of the Environmental Management Group

Background

The General Assembly in its resolution 53/242, paragraph 5, supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an environmental management group for the purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements.

Mandate

Taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements (A/53/463), and also taking into account the mandates of the relevant United Nations system organizations and bodies, as well as the views expressed by ACC (see ACC/1999/4) and IACSD at its thirteenth and fourteenth meetings, the Environmental Management Group is entrusted with the following responsibilities:

- To provide an effective, coordinated and flexible United Nations system response to and to facilitate joint action aimed at finding solutions to important and newly emerging specific issues of environmental and human settlements concern, through an issue management approach as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform” (A/51/950);
- To promote inter-linkages, encourage timely and relevant exchange of data and information on specific issues and compatibility of different approaches to finding solutions to those common problems, contribute to the synergy and complementarity among and between activities of its members in the fields of environment and human settlements, and hence act in a complementary manner and add value to the existing United Nations system-wide inter-agency cooperation.

Objectives

In fulfilling its mandate, the Group shall aim at attaining the following objectives:

To identify, address and resolve collectively specific problems, issues and tasks on the environmental and human settlements agenda requiring enhanced inter-agency cooperation in a given time-frame through securing effective and collaborative involvement of the relevant United Nations system agencies, programmes and organs and of other potential partners, as appropriate;

To provide a forum for an early discussion and sharing of information on emerging problems and issues in the

field of environment and human settlements geared at finding collectively the most effective coordinated approach to the solution of the new tasks;

To assist UNEP and Habitat in carrying out their functions related to the promotion of coordinated approaches to environmental and human settlements issues in the United Nations system and to enhance the environmental and human settlement perspectives, in particular their normative and analytic aspects, in the work of other United Nations system organizations;

To facilitate, in this vein, the work of UNEP and Habitat in carrying out their responsibilities as IACSD task managers for a number of environment and human settlements-related chapters of Agenda 21 with a view to enhancing their contributions to the work of IACSD, its subcommittees and the task managers system and other related inter-agency mechanisms, as well as the Commission on Sustainable Development, as appropriate.

Membership

In line with the mandate and objectives of the Group set out above, making it an instrument to enhance further inter-agency cooperation and coordination across the United Nations system on specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements, members of the Group shall be the specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the United Nations system, including the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

Modus operandi

The Group will function in a results-driven, flexible and cost-effective manner, using modern telecommunication technologies whenever possible and appropriate. It will take into account work in progress under the aegis of the Ecosystem Conservation Group and utilize that Group, to the extent possible, to facilitate its own work on ecosystem management and conservation.

UNEP will be providing the secretariat for the Environmental Management Group.

The Group will have a two-tiered structure:

- A senior-level decision-making body, entitled the Environmental Management Group, chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and consisting of senior-level officials from member organizations of the Group;
- Time-bound ad hoc issues-management groups set up by the Group. They will cease to exist after completion of their tasks.

The members of the Group will meet at least once a year on the invitation of its Chairman, after appropriate consultations. They will, in particular:

- Identify the specific issues to be addressed by the Group;
- Establish, as appropriate, an ad hoc issue management group for each specific issue identified;
- Decide on the mandate and time-frame of each ad hoc issue management group;
- Adopt the reports of the ad hoc issue management groups.

In cases where an issue is of an urgent nature and demands prompt action, the Chairman of the Group will immediately inform the members of the necessity to form an ad hoc issue management group and invite members to participate in the task. While all Group members have the right to accept or decline participation in any given ad hoc issue management group, any such group should benefit as much as possible from the participation of those organizations of the United Nations system which are most concerned with the issue at hand.

Each ad hoc issue management group is responsible to fulfil its mandate within the given time-frame. In case a group is not able to meet the deadline, it will submit a proposal on how and when to accomplish the task to the secretariat of the Group at least six weeks before expiration of the deadline. The Group will decide on the proposal.

UNEP will normally be the lead agency and chair the ad hoc issue management groups, the work of which will be organized and supported by the secretariat of the Group. However, an ad hoc issue management group may nominate by consensus a lead agency other than UNEP if this is found appropriate in light of the specific task. The lead agency will then prepare the documents, organize and chair the meetings, and prepare the report on the results of the group's deliberations.

Participation of non-members

Representatives of relevant sectors of the civil society and of international non-governmental organizations with a potential and specific expertise related to issues being deliberated by the Group may participate upon the request of Group members in meetings of the Group by invitation of the Chairman of the Group, taking due account of respective United Nations rules and procedures. They may also participate in the work of an ad hoc issue management group if required by the specific issue under discussion and so decided by the group. Accordingly, the lead agency of

the ad hoc issue management group will invite the respective additional participants.

Reporting

The lead agency of each ad hoc issue management group will submit the report on the results of the group's work to the Chairman of the Group through its secretariat.

The secretariat in turn will submit copies of the report for comments and adoption to the representatives of those organizations-members of the Group who have participated in the respective work. In order to enhance efficiency the deadline for comments should not exceed four weeks. Immediately after the report has been adopted, the secretariat will distribute copies of the report for information to Group members.

When appropriate and in the case of an ad hoc issue management group having been chaired by an organization other than UNEP, after having consulted this lead agency, the Chairman of the Group may bring the report to the attention of the Secretary-General.

In the event that the results of the meetings of the Group and/or its ad hoc group's work have a bearing on United Nations system work in sustainable development, the Chairman of the Group will inform ACC and the secretariat of the Group will communicate the relevant report to the secretariat of IACSD.