



OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENT PILLAR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Compilation of Civil Society Proposals on the
Institutional Framework for the
United Nations' Environmental Activities**

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Liaison Service
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CIVIL SOCIETY VIEWS ON THE CO-CHAIRS OPTIONS PAPER ON THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNITED NATIONS' ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

In June 2007 the co-chairs of the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework of the UN's Environmental Activities released an 'Options Paper'¹ detailing various proposals for UN reform.

In response to the Options Paper, Stakeholder Forum for A Sustainable Future (SF), the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development (FBOMS), the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN NGLS) initiated a process to compile civil society views and opinions on the 'Options Paper', and on the issue of international environmental governance more generally. This compilation paper, released to coincide with the upcoming round of informal consultations in September 2007, represents the inputs from that process, as well as other relevant inputs made by civil society over the past years.

The paper contains two sections; Section I identifies the key **elements in strengthening the environment pillar of sustainable development**, and outlines civil society views regarding: **a strengthened UNEP; the UN's role in setting norms and standards for the environment; and trade and environment.**

Section II contains civil society views on the **Co-Chairs Options Paper on the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities.**

The paper is not a consensus paper and does not represent the views of the facilitating organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

As the leading environmental authority within the United Nations (UN), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has been instrumental in the development of a wide range of international agreements and conventions on advancing protection of the world's biological diversity and the ozone layer, as well as the sound management of chemicals and persistent organic pollutants. However, for over 30 years, government and independent analysis of the UNEP's impact have regularly identified issues that beleaguer the current system. Regarding the UN system these concerns general focus on: incoherence, inefficiency, information inadequacy, inequity, and insufficient funding.

Areas identified as key weaknesses in the existing arrangements on international environment governance (IEG), include: inadequate level of integration of environmental considerations into the mainstream of decision-making; inadequate approaches to global environmental management; impacts of globalisation; fragmented machinery; institutional mandates and environmental agreements predominantly follow a sectoral approach to environmental management, weak international dispute mechanisms; and lack of holistic approach to international environmental governance. At the political level, areas most signalled out for further attention include: the discrepancy between commitments and action; and the lack of a strong political base has contributed to a failure to effectively mainstream and integrate environment into the wider macro-economic arena, and particularly within the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The 2002 Civil Society Statement on IEG to UNEP's Seventh Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) noted that "the international environmental regime is dogged by the lack of political will to resolve environmental problems and to follow a policy for the sustainable use of the earth's resources. This has led to fragmentation, limited financial resources, poor enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as an imbalance between international environmental governance and other international trade and financial regimes."²

The World Summit 2005 identified a number of issues that need to be addressed for the implementation of more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, including: enhanced coordination; improved policy advice and guidance; strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation; better treaty compliance, while respecting the legal autonomy of the treaties; and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building. Based on these issues, the Summit agreed to "explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework to address this need, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as the treaty bodies and the specialised agencies."³

The current UNEP programme of work on IEG should be continued and implementation of the agreement expedited such as strengthening UNEP's financial base, implementing the Bali Plan, and adopting the proposed Environment Watch system. While the General Assembly, and other processes such as the Cartagena Package, will be addressing pertinent issues, the previous explorations of IEG have tended to focus on strengthening UNEP often at the expense of efforts to address the strengthening of the environment pillar in relation to the economic and social pillars. Similarly, the reform debates have tended to only focus on UNEP's normative tasks at the global level, without due consideration of the important operational activities of the UN and how UNEP can contribute to the country-level dimension of development.

However, despite some progress, since the 2002 Cartagena Decision and the 2005 World Summit member states have avoided specific discussions on issues that now require further consideration by the international community. This completion of civil society views on IEG aims to highlight these areas and to articulate the proposals from civil society.

SECTION I:

KEY ELEMENTS IN STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENT PILLAR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A STRENGTHENED UNEP

Civil society discussions on the complexity of the IEG process **have clearly favoured strengthening UNEP in Nairobi as the lead UN body responsible for all environmental programmes and activities within the UN system.** These discussions have also noted that the achievement of progressive decisions on environmental and sustainable development issues sometimes requires more political will than is available to all governments.⁴

There is an urgent need for a stronger international authority on environment to safeguard the environmental pillar of sustainable development. UNEP's present mandate and resources prevent it from achieving this. If UNEP's current insufficiencies are not remedied, serious consideration should be given to whether UNEP should provide the primary focus for the reform of IEG. An upgraded UNEP should have a new mandate. Such a mandate should build greater coherence between environmental and social agendas, making the concept of 'environment for development' a reality. It would act as a platform for both standard setting and other interaction with national, international and UN bodies. The principles of cooperation and of common but differentiated responsibilities should be reflected in the implementation of this revised mandate.⁵

A number of principles should be adopted for a strengthened UNEP, namely: broad societal consensus on a long term vision for UNEP; reliable analysis of the present situation and future scenarios for UNEP; integrated planning comprising all dimensions of sustainable development; building on existing strategies and processes; increasing links between national and local level strategies; integration into financial and budget planning; early monitoring to steer processes and track progress; and effective participation mechanisms. **In strengthening UNEP consideration must be given to the specific needs of developing countries and respect of the fundamental principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities'.** Developed countries should promote technology transfer, new and additional financial resources, and capacity building for meaningful participation of developing countries in IEG. Strengthening of IEG should also occur in the context of sustainable development and should involve civil society as important stakeholder and agent of transformation.⁶

UNEP's mandate is too narrow, as it only covers a few aspects of the environment. Its mandate should be expanded to, for example, include sustainable agriculture and fisheries and sustainable energy. UNEP's role in liaising with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) should also be strengthened to give it a more coordinating role⁷.

The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) should become a forum concentrating on dealing with serious threats to the environment and a platform for Ministers of Environment to speak out forcefully on these environmental challenges.⁸

Any new UN body or agency working within a reformed UN system should focus on elements such as capacity-building, assistance, consistent funding, and technical information to enable nations to fully implement all relevant existing UN treaties and agreements⁹.”

The Trade Unions recognize and appreciate the role that UNEP plays in the protection of environment and believe that **this role must be strengthened to allow it to contribute to coherent global sustainable development.**¹⁰

Business and Industry groups have followed with interest the ongoing building of capacity within UNEP in technical and scientific capacities, and would support its continuation. We have also been aware of UNEP’s efforts to expand their role into areas outside of the environment. This appears to create redundancies with other organizations as well as to divert resources from UNEP’s core mandate. We would also observe that existing environmental treaties already encompass the most influential and authoritative sources of policy for the areas which they cover. In our view the mandate of UNEP should explicitly include the understanding that UNEP would work in concert with these independent and authoritative legal frameworks.¹¹

An upgraded UNEP must be adequately and predictably funded in order to be able to implement its mandate. The current financial situation for UNEP is unacceptable and must be addressed. In comparison, for example, several large environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have significantly greater budgets than UNEP.¹²

There is a need to: improve coordination and dissemination of measurable information about UNEP assistance; define a more secure and permanent place for UNEP in the context of a poverty focused development agenda; integrate UNEP concerns more effectively into development strategies; encourage the increased participation of a range of government institutions in providing UNEP assistance; and support opportunities for direct NGO execution of publicly funded programmes.¹³

Regarding **UNEP’s location**, there is a need for an in-depth analysis and so formulate recommendations to the UN General Assembly with the regards to the situation of current locations of UNEP’s central divisions (such as the Division on Technology, Industry and Economics), branches and offices outside Nairobi – the headquarters – and its financial, programmatic and operational implications to the UN system and the performance of UNEP, particularly in environmental procurement field.¹⁴

The Civil Society Statement from the 2006 UNEP Global Civil Society Forum urged government to **consider the following issues in strengthening UNEP:**

- i. strengthening cooperation, cohesion and harmonization between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other UN bodies;
- ii. clustering conventions and multilateral environmental agreement, avoiding duplication and maximizing their effectiveness;
- iii. strengthening the process of the Environmental Management Group and implementation of its partnership forum;
- iv. using legitimate powers for compliance, enforcement and implementation;
- v. making economic decisions and trade regimes environmentally sensitive and restructuring in international financial institutions, WTO and other economic processes to comply with this approach;
- vi. developing a mechanism or instrument for the implementation of international environmental decisions and legislation by national governments; and
- vii. incorporating all the Rio Principles agreed to at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.¹⁵

THE UN'S ROLE IN SETTING NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The UN must renew its commitment to the primacy of standard-setting and enforcement at the national level for implementing policies and measures. The current trends at the UN of voluntary measures must be placed within a standard-setting framework. Environmental, social and labor international standards must be promoted as the key to coherence in this regard, and must form the basis for national rules for all issues. Moreover current programmes for promotion and ratification of UN Instruments through technical cooperation and financial assistance need to be given higher priority.¹⁶

One of the major functions of the UN is global standard setting. Work must be done to: ensure the realization of the Rio principles, and pay special attention to the Precautionary Principle; ensure gender issues are fully integrated and understood; create incentives for increasing cooperation around and between MEAs; develop increased coherence among UN bodies on cross-cutting environmental issues; develop MEAs for areas where there are no international agreements; and develop a strong norm and policy setting UN body for the environment, which can effectively coordinate the full spectrum of UN environmental work.¹⁷

There is a need to ensure that the normative and standard setting bodies and standards developed by the UN are not used as a ceiling reducing environmental demands and standards, nor subjecting them to trade regulations as promoted at the WTO, as well as in regional and bilateral bodies.¹⁸

By 2015, UN member States must ensure the creation of a strong norm and policy setting UN body for the environment, which can effectively coordinate the full spectrum of UN environmental normative and policy work and direct its implementation. By 2015, UN member States must have in place a UN system for integrating environment and development that is responsive to country needs for achieving sustainable development and includes a function of a monitoring and review mechanism to assist, monitor, review, follow-up and report on progress of the implementation and renewal of UN environmental norms, agreements and policies on sustainable development.¹⁹

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

There is a need to expand UNEP's mandate to the level of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Environmental policies and programs are often trumped by trade priorities that have the legal and political backing of the WTO. In order to have equivalent clout, environmental priorities need to be backed by a global institution with a comparable level of influence. Governments must provide sufficient funding to ensure UNEP's mandate is expanded.²⁰

There is also a need to strengthening MEAs in the face of the WTO regime. Developed countries, instead of fulfilling their commitments made under the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and other MEAs, have prioritized the agenda of the WTO that promotes a regime of rules that are counter-running the Rio spirit and principles. The unilateral rejection of MEAs, such as the Kyoto Protocol, by some countries is another fact that puts at risk the common and binding efforts needed to advance towards sustainable development.²¹

It should fall to an independent forum outside the WTO to examine the WTO-MEA relationship, as part of a coherent approach to addressing global challenges. In our view, the International Court of Justice and the UN's International Law Commission are the most suitable existing fora for clarifying the WTO/MEA relationship because of their broad expertise, the transparency of their process and their independence from particular interests. The WTO agreements contain review clauses that should be used to analyze whether existing rules

support and promote the development of sustainable societies, and conform with existing international law and obligations. National independent sustainability impact assessments are crucial in this regard. A complete review of the social and environmental consequences of the trade policies implemented so far is urgently required. To ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the future governance model to be built through the process of UN reform, a clear picture of the true impacts of the multilateral trade regime is needed. The rush to further trade liberalization without first considering the complete impacts must be halted.²²

It is critical that the WTO does not have a mandate to set rules or criteria that might restrict the use or national implementation of any trade measures agreed to in MEAs. Governments must grant UNEP and the Secretariats of MEAs with trade-related provisions, objectives, or obligations permanent observer status in all relevant bodies of the WTO. The UN Conference on Trade and Development must be preserved and strengthened in the process of UN reform and given a critical role in ensuring sustainability and equity in global trade.²³

The policies of UN bodies, international financial institutions (IFIs), international trade organs and others must undergo significant appraisals as to whether they address the environmental challenges that the earth faces today and will face in the near future. Many of these institutions currently contribute to the problems, and this situation cannot continue. There is a need to harmonize the goals and aspirations of multilateral environment and sustainable development policies with the Bretton Woods and International Financial Institutions.²⁴

Given the increasingly important role of international trade, a more direct linkage between UN agencies and the activities of the WTO has become imperative. Its policies must be consistent with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and broader sustainable development goals.²⁵

The WTO is one of the stronger proponents of globalization and is increasingly acting as a global governance organization for international trade. Under its far-reaching rules, the WTO is increasingly deciding upon issues relating to areas such as the environment and human health, thereby frustrating bodies that possess more appropriate expertise, including the MEAs. The development and enforcement of existing and new environmental legislation relating to MEAs should not be hindered by subordinating these policies to free trade and competition rules. It is critical that legislation to ensure sustainable development including environment is not overruled by trade experts, international trade panels and standard-setting bodies working in isolation from other concerns. In line with the principle of mutual supportiveness between environment and trade rules, governments must make it clear that the WTO does not have a mandate to set rules or criteria that may in any way define or restrict the national implementation of any trade measures agreed to in MEAs, independent of the WTO Members' participation in the MEA. An independent forum outside the WTO to examine the WTO-MEA relationship, as part of a coherent approach to addressing global challenges should be established. The WTO and other multilateral bodies, such as UNEP, should assess the impact of WTO rules on the promotion of sustainable development. National independent sustainability and environment impact assessments are also crucial.²⁶

SECTION II:

Civil Society Views on the Co-Chairs Options Paper on the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities

BUILDING BLOCK 1: STRENGTHENING UNEP'S SCIENCE BASE

Over the last few years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of strengthening science-based decision-making, complemented by the application of the precautionary principle, to inform policy making. Many conventions have developed their own scientific and technical committees and in many cases there are overlapping issues relating to environmental governance. However good science does not necessarily lead to good decision making by governments, as they do not always take notice of it. If even a little bit of uncertainty exists then politicians can hide behind that to avoid making difficult decisions.

In *Global Environment Governance: A Reform Agenda* (IISD, 2007), Najam *et al*, proposed that "science should be the authoritative basis of sound environmental policy. The GEG system should be seen as a knowledge-based and knowledge-producing system."²⁷

Under both the UNEP Cartagena Package on IEG (2002) and the environment component of the World Summit Outcome Document (2005), UN member states placed an important emphasis on the need to strengthen UNEP's and the UN's science-based decision making architecture. Discussions on strengthening UNEP' science base, in particular reaching agreement on the 'Environment Watch' proposal have not met with much success. New proposals to deal with science based decision making have also emerged, such as the French proposal for an International Mechanism for Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity²⁸; the EU proposal for an international panel on natural resources; and the UNEP initiative to establish an International Panel on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (Resource Panel)²⁹.

While these new ideas have yet to find traction within the intergovernmental system, they do indeed reflect a new urgency to increase the value of science-based decision making for the benefit of environmental governance. However, the mere duplication of international and/or intergovernmental initiatives is potentially leading to more duplication and fragmentation in the system.

The proposals in the co-chairs paper are welcome additions to the ongoing debates on science-based decision making. In particular, the proposal to conclude discussions on the **Environment Watch strategy** is a timely and important recommendation. Should this go ahead it will need sufficient staffing and additional funding. The co-chairs recommendation to create the position of a **UNEP Chief Scientist** is also welcomed but requires further consideration as to how the specific role and function can be included within UNEP's existing organizational structure and how such a role will be funded. Consideration is also needed as to the specific terms of reference for a Chief Scientist and how this position would collaborate with existing scientific process and organizations. Civil society has long argued that scientific decision – making committees, such as those that have been suggested in the chair's paper, must be granted their total independence.

Regarding the **Environment Watch proposal and UNEP's Global Environment Outlook process**, the Civil Society Statement from the 2006 UNEP Global Civil Society Forum called on governments to the considerable scientific experience and rigour that civil society has

to offer and urge them to give civil society scrutiny of and a greater role in the development of the conceptual framework and value base of the assessment component.³⁰

There is need for UNEP to integrate early warning system into their scientific-based programme of work. The need for the development by UNEP of their early warning system for environmental disasters through coordination from the different information bases of each convention would be an important aspect of the way forward. This will enable there to be appropriate discussion on prioritization of issues within the GC/GMEF.³¹

UNEP is well positioned to convene national governments, international organizations including the World Bank, and NGOs to build educational awareness and develop an implementation strategy in response to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. To ensure success, this strategy must embrace economic growth and good governance as central components.³²

The International Council for Science (ICSU) has proposed that strengthening the scientific base of UNEP must rely on strengthening the links between scientific research, environmental monitoring, assessment and policy. For the proposed UNEP led Environment Watch System to make use of the best available science, it will be necessary for UNEP to establish strong conceptual and operational links with relevant major international research undertakings (several of them led by ICSU), as well as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). In this respect, we note the proposals in the co-chairs paper encouraging “UNEP to partner systematically with research institutions, academies of science and scientific societies to access research and in-depth expertise” and to “connect UNEP’s scientific capacities to GEOSS”. However, it is essential to build links to internationally planned and coordinated research programmes on relevant issues, such as global change, biodiversity and hazards rather than solely rely on cooperation with specific national institutions. It should be understood that UNEP requires scientific input from natural, social, engineering and health sciences. What is needed is both strong disciplinary science and interdisciplinary scientific knowledge. There is a particularly large gap in interdisciplinary research, although some new initiatives such as the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP), developed under the auspices of ICSU, are very promising.

In addition to the proposed creation of the position of a UNEP Chief Scientist, **ICSU considers it important that the UNEP Executive Director set up a Scientific Advisory Committee**, with the Chief Scientist being an *ex-officio* member. Membership in the Committee should include a strong presence of scientists affiliated with global observing systems, international global change research programmes and past and current assessments. Moreover, the Committee should also have representatives of the public policy domain among its members. Membership of the group must have a certain regional balance. Setting up an Advisory Committee in this way will contribute enormously to creating a coalition of communities and strong links between scientific research, monitoring, assessment and policy in support of UNEP and its member states.

Proposal in the co-chairs paper for UNEP “to encourage user-friendly presentations of environmental assessments and policy responses:” While ICSU welcomes this proposal as it relates to individual assessment reports, we also think that there is a need to synthesize assessment reports in order to address interlinkages between different topical assessments (e.g. IPCC, MA, STAP reports, etc.). It is important to describe the international landscape of assessments to ensure consistency in overlaps and identify major gaps in scientific assessments for policy making. This will make it easier for governments to develop integrated policy responses.

BUILDING BLOCK 2: INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

At the UNEP GC/GMEF in 2007, stakeholders proposed that UN system-wide coherence in the area of the environment be considered within the broader context of sustainable development, in which all three pillars of sustainable development are addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner, safeguarding the environment and promoting social equity.³³ Civil society has also regularly supported the need for better cooperation and coordination should be established between different UN agencies, programmes, and multilateral environmental agreements.³⁴

The UN should provide leadership and guidance on environmental issues and that a designated UN entity is given real authority and funding over environment policy. We recognize that there are currently many UN entities with an environment mandate. We recommend that this policy body of the UN strongly coordinates its work program with these entities so as to avoid overlap. The simplification of entry points into the UN and strong coordinating units at the UN (for example on water), greater integration of UN standard-setting and operational activities and coherence among UN entities, Bretton Woods institutions other intergovernmental bodies including the various MEA secretariats is supported.³⁵

Ensuring **coherence within the environmental pillar of sustainable development** across the UN System should remain the responsibility of UNEP's GC/GMEF, while specific inter-agency matters could be dealt with by a greatly enhanced (financial, operationally, and functionally) Environment Management Group (EMG).³⁶

Consideration should be given to mandating the GC/GMEF to **undertake a tri-annual assessment of the UN's systems' activities in relation to the environment pillar of sustainable development**³⁷ (in conjunction with similar assessments). Such a triennial review would assist UNEP to assess the state of, and, and monitor the effectiveness of the entire UN system's work, as well as enable the GC/GMEF to address coordination and cooperation as part of the UNEP programme of work.³⁸ The establishment of joint units by UNEP and other Agencies have been tried before and failed when they have not been underpinned by the required financial support.

A new role and mandate for the EMG is needed. The 2006 review of the progress of the EMG concluded that: "while recognizing that some modest progress had been made in certain programme areas over the last five years, there is general consensus that EMG had not lived up to expectations. Most UN partner's feel that the real issues hampering progress has yet to be comprehensively addressed. There is also a broad agreement that an effective EMG is particularly crucial at this juncture, with member states and UN reform initiatives squarely focusing attention on inefficiencies arising due to lack of coordination and the value added of enhanced system-wide coherence in the field of environment --a serious challenge at a time when the UN is faced with decreasing resources to expend on such coordinating arrangements.³⁹ An additional challenge for the EMG is the consideration of its role in relation to other interagency groups such as UN Water, UN Oceans and UN Energy, all of which at present report to the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination, and what role EMG might have directly to the CEB for identifying environmental priorities.⁴⁰

For the EMG to be effective it would need to assume a responsibility akin to that of the UNDG in order to ensure system-wide coherence on the UN's environment activities. While efforts are underway to strengthen the EMG in light of the World Summit 2005, such as the EMG High-level Forum⁴¹, Member States should revisit the EMG's decision-making

mandate in relationship to other UN entities, including how the UN's environmental work at the operational level can be strengthened.⁴²

There is a need to ensure that UNEP plays a leading role in the UN Development Group (UNDG), in UN country teams directed by UNDP, and in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). At the global level, the EMG has been sidelined and ineffective in moving the poverty-environment agenda forward. Instead, UNEP should play a leading role in the UNGD. At the country level, UNEP should collaborate closely with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and provide technical and normative expertise as part of UN country teams and through UNDAF.⁴³

In the long-term, merging the **EMG and the UNGD into a UN Sustainable Development Group**, should be considered. In the short-to-medium term, the options presented in the co-chairs paper that UNEP be tasked with co-chairing a UNGD group of environment, is a positive step forward. However, the key element in a strengthened system wide process is to ensure that either this UNGD group on environment or the EMG is given a more decisive mandate to provide advice to the entire UN system.

In coordination with the General Assembly discussion on the report of the High-Level Panel on System Wide Coherence, the 169 process should consider measures for supporting the UN's sustainable development work at the country and regional levels, particularly in relation to **strengthening the environment pillar of the sustainable development**. In particular, the 169 process should consider how the 'one country' approach can provide institutional support for implementing MEA obligations in developing countries. This could include support to national focal points, technical support for the development of national sustainable development strategies and other MEA-related action plans, assisting with the processing and implementation of GEF projects, including small grants, and supporting national institutions and participatory decision making, such as national committees.

A renewed political commitment to **sustainable development and environment at the country-level** should also stress support for country-led multi-stakeholder bodies, such as UNEP National Committees and National Councils for Sustainable Development in all countries, both industrialized and developing.

As the lead development organization at the country-level **UNDP needs to play a more proactive role in the implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development at the country level**, and further consideration of the three pillars approach to sustainable development within the resident coordinators system, UNDAF and country cooperation agreements would also need to be addressed. Civil society, generally, believes that the UNEP/UNDP MoU and other such processes, such as the Poverty and Environment Programme, provide a good starting base for further collaboration between the two programmes at the country-level. However, there is a general concern that implementation has been slow and civil society actively encourages UNEP/UNDP to accelerate these programmes. Civil society also believes that consideration should be given as to how the resident coordinators system (either the current arrangement or new ones) can support institutional strengthening for the implementation of Agenda 21, the JPOI and multilateral environmental agreements.

There is a significant lack of environmental management capacity in many local authorities in the developing world. **The Resident Coordinators Offices need to ensure sufficient in-house environmental expertise to advise and provide support for working with national and regional local government associations** so that they can directly to help strengthen their individual local authority members and work towards scaling-up local environmental good practice.⁴⁴

ENVIRONMENT AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

At the country level, there is very weak capacity of UN system on environment and development and in supporting the work of environment NGOs and that support the rights of local communities. The country level work of the UN should accord much greater priority to environment and sustainable development.⁴⁵

There is a need to ensure that UN country programmes incorporate robust measures on environmental sustainability. UN country programmes should be assessed regularly against environmental sustainability mandates and indicators, and adapted accordingly. UNEP should have the authority to assess the environmental sustainability of trade-driven development initiatives. To facilitate a shift toward implementing environmental policies in developing countries, more emphasis should be placed on building policy development and implementation capacities, rather than building negotiating capacities.⁴⁶

On the basis the 'One UN at the Country level' vision there is a need to establish UN's desks for environmental and sustainable development affairs, without necessarily establishing formal country level offices of representation of such a UN Environment Organization. At our understanding, the vision 'One UN at Country Level' should be like a single mechanism for registering new business proposals, in which interested entrepreneurs may have at the same time and with time/cost-effectiveness the legal registering, classification, official publishing and finally the authorization by the concerned authorities to start operations.⁴⁷

The UN should have one streamlined programme for each country and that those programmes include experts on environment and development issues and that work on setting strong norms and policy setting with a UN body for the environment has direct links to national level operational activities.⁴⁸

There is a need to establish a single national UN umbrella organization within each country to bring together the activities of separate UN agencies and programmes in a coherent fashion. This body should engage with local government actors as standard practice through consultation and partnership with national and regional local government associations, as well as individual authorities.⁴⁹

By 2010, UN member States and UN country offices must have the capacity to access sufficient expertise from MEAs, and those with environment and development specialization. UN member States should create direct channels of communication with minimal layers between the UN environmental norm and policy setting body and operational activities to facilitate implementation, and establish a swift, direct and effective reporting mechanism to review progress in implementation of environmental policies through operational activities. By 2010, member States must create direct and effective channels of communication between environment-related norm and policy setting and operational activities to monitor environment and development trends and to facilitate implementation of norms and policies on the ground and establish sufficient regulatory incentives, both nationally and internationally, to correct market shortcomings and to recognize and account for environmental services in development policy.⁵⁰

A key challenge to a coherent role for the UN at the country level is to link implementation of international and national sustainable development goals with the activities at the local level, as linked to local production and consumption patterns. There can be no coherence without concrete linkage to the workplace. Workplace approaches to environmental protection, for example, can improve the use of resources, deal with environmental pollution and improve the quality of life for communities, by linking occupational and public health.⁵¹

The UN should continue to promote sound and predictable long-term enabling frameworks through good governance, transparency, impartiality and arbitration at country-level. It should assist governments to set local strategies and economic, environmental and poverty reduction priorities, coherent with agreed international objectives. Finally it should encourage voluntary approaches and partnerships as helpful supplements to governmental commitments and actions. UN reform should strengthen national resources and capacity building for implementation, taking into account the necessary flexibility needed to reflect different country circumstances and priorities. The UN should ensure that greater coordination of UN programmes and activities takes place at the national level and help governments implementing strong national development agendas.⁵²

The recommendation that the UN should deliver as one at country level as it should strengthen national resources and capacity building for implementation, taking into account the necessary flexibility needed to reflect different country circumstances and priorities is welcomed.⁵³

BUILDING BLOCK 3: COORDINATION AND CLUSTERING OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

The co-chair's options paper includes a number of options for increasing the effectiveness and complementarity among MEAs. One of the key options is to launch a process under the guidance of the General Assembly to look in more detail at the specific avenues for clustering MEAs. While this is a welcome proposal, and while the General Assembly should and must pronounce itself on the issue, the overall guidance on the process should come from, and be led, under the auspices of the UNEP GC/GMEF as per UNEP's mandate in General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII). Such a process under the GMEF is consistent with the recommendation made in the Report of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance, which proposed that "coordination could be fostered by having the GC/GMEF review the progress made by the conference of the parties of multilateral environmental agreements, with due regard to their respective mandates, in developing synergies in areas where common issues arise."⁵⁴

There is the need for effective coordination of major MEAs in order to help achieve better results.⁵⁵ **The UNEP GC/GMEF must initiate a coordination process between all MEAs, to identify priority areas for synergies.**⁵⁶

The MEAs should be strengthened individually, and should collaborate together among themselves and with UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Some of the MEAs deal with key issues like biodiversity, biosafety and climate but meet too seldom and make progress too slowly. There should be a more frequent tempo of negotiations. Then there are many areas of the environment where action is needed but lacking. The General Assembly process should list the issues where there is this absence of action and advocate new MEAs to be established (examples include energy, sustainable consumption, sustainable production, sustainable agriculture, corporate accountability following from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) that mandated an international framework for the same, comprehensive agreement on chemicals and heavy metals including radioactive substances and to address the shifting of toxic industries from North to South).⁵⁷

By 2008, **UN member States could create incentives for increasing cooperation among MEAs and the scheduling of back-to-back MEA meetings on related issues.** Any new UN sustainable development system must act as a facilitator by bringing together focal points and expertise in MEAs at the national level. By 2010, UN member States should ensure:

the clustering of MEA Secretariats where there is considerable overlap in expertise and mandate which in turn has hindered implementation; increased coherence among UN entities on cross-cutting issues concerning, among others, trade, and transnational environment-related crime; and the adoption of MEAs in areas where there are presently no international agreements, such as on protecting important biomes including the deep sea and the global commons.⁵⁸

There is a need for an umbrella structure for MEAs. Discussions on a centralized umbrella structure for MEAs should address: the same geographical location of programme secretaries such as UNEP and UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya, is an interesting option. The parallel organization of various Conferences of the Parties may save travel costs and promote synergy in discussions and decision-making. However, with more financial and human resources in the North, there is a risk that centralization will be dominated by the stronger Northern countries.⁵⁹

The opportunity called for by the reform process must be used to shed new light on **the need to develop enforcement of compliance and dispute settlement and liability mechanisms under the MEAs** as well as to re-introduce voting mechanisms on environmental decisions so as not allow non-parties and non-complying state parties to inhibit progress, as well as further explore and develop the IEG process.⁶⁰

An upgraded UNEP needs to play a role in building capacity to implement MEAs. There is a need for an upgraded UNEP to promote coherence and address gaps and inadequacies in the current convention regime. The case of World Health Organization and DDT in conflict with Stockholm Convention, and the case of Canada and Kazakhstan undermining Rotterdam Annex 3 in the case of asbestos are good examples of the lack of coherence in the system.⁶¹

Among the **specific approaches to clustering MEAs**, the General Assembly could consider the following approaches:

- i. **Joint secretariat functions.** There are considerable financial savings to be made from each cluster having one centre of administrative staff to organize meetings and service the programme staff.
- ii. **Joint meetings of the Bureaus within a cluster.** Bureau meetings might be backed on to a meeting of the Environmental Ministers Forum to ensure that a joint line is presented to the Ministers to enable action taken by the Ministers when they meet.
- iii. **Joint meetings of the heads of the scientific and technical committees within a cluster and where relevant between clusters.** The need to share knowledge between the different scientific and technical bodies is an area that is often over looked. A meeting on a bi-annual basis would enable there to be a greater understanding of overlaps, gaps and actions required. The use of the Internet to integrate the information provision of the committees would also help.
- iv. **Overall head of each cluster.** Each cluster would benefit from an overall head to ensure that the conventions within the cluster are being coordinated. The overall Head of all the clusters should be the Executive Director of UNEP. UNEP should be seen as the facilitator of the clusters to ensure joined up thinking between them and within them.
- v. **Introduction of knowledge management (KM) within clusters and between clusters.** KM offers a great way of sharing knowledge and experience both vertically and horizontally. Many of the clusters will experience similar issues which do not have to be learnt six times but can be learnt once and the information shared into a knowledge bank to the benefit of the others.

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- vi. **Agreement of a methodological framework for indicators to enable measuring of enforcement and compliance.** The discussion on indicators has focused more recently on the need to focus down on a series of key global indicators. This has not been a particularly good idea. What is required is a methodological framework that indicator packages can operate within. For example it would outline the process of their development, application (monitoring, assessment and revision of plans). The decision on what is the most appropriate set of indicators in national and sub national in nature as they will differ depending on the particular context and level at which they are going to be utilized.⁶²

BUILDING BLOCK 4: REGIONAL LEVEL ACTIVITIES

The World Summit on Sustainable Development emphasised the regional dimension of sustainable development. Paragraphs 158-161 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) address a range of measures for **strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the regional level**, and called for *inter alia*, the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit to be effectively pursued at the regional and sub-regional levels, through the regional commissions and other regional and sub-regional institutions and bodies. The JPOI also called for improving intraregional coordination and cooperation among regional commissions, the UN system, regional development banks and other regional bodies and institutions. The JPOI further called for the Regional Commissions to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into their work in a balanced way; facilitate and promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Within the framework of a strengthened **regional environment pillar**, UNEP's Regional Offices should be further strengthened to support the growing number of regional-based intergovernmental plans of actions, such as the example of UNEP's support to the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. A particularly important element of the regional pillar is the further implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. UNEP's relationship with the regional components of MEAs, such as the Basel Convention Regional Centres, and the proposed regional centres under the CCD should be further explored as an avenue for strengthening the regional dimension of sustainable development. This will require additional funding and staff.

The 2003 Civil Society Statement from the UNEP Fourth Global Civil Society Forum recommended **increased funding and support for the UNEP Regional Offices** to develop and maintain regional and sub-regional outreach and partnerships with civil society organizations; and to enhance civil society's involvement in the development and implementation of UNEP's activities in the region.⁶³

South-south cooperation for IEG is crucial so as to share resources, exchange technologies and defend the specific needs and interests of developing countries, based on strong alliances experienced in other multilateral negotiations processes such as the WTO. The UN regional commissions have to be strengthened so as to support the discussions and organize regional preparation meetings, such as the Regional Implementation Meetings for CSD.⁶⁴

BUILDING BLOCK 5: BALI STRATEGIC PLAN, CAPACITY BUILDING, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Civil Society Organizations concur with the emphasis on the need to support effective implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (Bali Plan). Among the issues that need to be addressed in the implementation of the Plan include⁶⁵:

Approaches: Capacity-building and technology support should be demand-driven stimulated by a self conducted needs assessment involving all stakeholders. A systematic and long-term approach should be adopted towards sustainable capacity building, ensuring dynamic and positive impact-oriented outcomes based on the concept of the learning organization. Civil society groups are stakeholders of capacity-building and technology support efforts at local, national, regional and international levels, and as such they should be involved in all elements and stages of capacity-building programmes including assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Building the capacity of civil society and governments to meaningfully engage each other in policy, decision-making and implementation activities is emphasized. The role of south-south and south-north capacity-building should be recognized; the development of centers of excellence and networks between those should be explored; the Bali Plan should examine financial implications and requirements right from the outset, exploring efficient resource allocation, avoiding the diversion of resources away from implementation activities; ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of capacity-building and technology support activities was critical, including the setting of targets and performance-related indicators.

Providers & Receivers: Capacity-building and technology support should be a two-way process both between governments and civil society, but also between the North and the South. Civil society should be recognized as a source of experience and knowledge regarding the development and implementation of local and regional strategies for sustainable development. Capacity-building and technology support is required by a broad range of stakeholders including international organizations, NGOs, Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples and other local communities.

Monitoring & Evaluation: Capacity-building and technology support programmes need to undergo ongoing monitoring and review, with the support of civil society, through the setting of targets and the use of performance indicators based on the achievement of learning and the change this achieves.

Resources: Due consideration should be given to the costing and allocation of financial, human and institutional resources for implementing the Bali Plan. It is particularly important to ensure the plan is effectively implemented through the commitment of long-term funding without directing resources away from other programmes. Implementation of the Bali Plan should seek to address the efficient, equitable and transparent resource allocation between implementers, including governments, United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations.

BUILDING BLOCK 6: IT, PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND MAJOR GROUPS

Civil society offers a wealth of expertise, knowledge and implementation experience. Stakeholders at all levels have a **critical role to play in strengthening international sustainable development governance**. Measures should be taken to ensure the full and effective participation of civil society in environmental governance at all levels, and in the

decision making processes that leads to its reform. Agenda 21 has nine chapters dealing with the role of Major Groups (women, youth, indigenous peoples, NGOs, business & industry, workers & trade unions, science & technology, farmers, local authorities). This increased role of stakeholders has also been reflected in the Conventions of the Parties. Each convention has developed a set of norms and standards on how it interfaces with the different stakeholders. To ensure the meaningful participation and involvement of stakeholders in environmental governance it is suggested that a review is undertaken on what each of the conventions norms are for engaging major groups. A review of this would help set a standard or set of principles for guiding stakeholder participation. The present work being undertaken by UNEP and their Civil Society Steering Committee is to be welcomed and supported.

The 2004 *Jeju Statement* from UNEP's Fifth Global Civil Society Forum drew attention **to the need for building the capacity and expertise of civil society, especially those from the South, in relation to UNEP's work.** The Statement also identified the need to strengthen UNEP's own capacity to deal with civil society, both at headquarters and regional/national levels.⁶⁶

Although the need for and principles of partnership between governments and civil society and other stakeholder groups are now well accepted, mechanisms of engagement are yet to be clearly defined. Civil society and other stakeholder participation remain largely in the form of pre- GC session consultations, reading of statements, side events at major meetings and *ad hoc* participation in conferences. **There is need for UNEP to design a clear strategy on how to engage with civil society and major stakeholders.** Governments should empower UNEP to take concrete steps and measures including affirmatives actions to bring on board both men and women from all Major Groups in decision-making processes, with a special attention to under-represented groups such as indigenous peoples.⁶⁷

Civil society organizations have regularly called for Rule 69 of the UNEP GC/GMEF Rules of Procedure to be revised to allow for direct civil society participation.⁶⁸

It is important to **recognize the experiences at the meetings between civil society and UNEP**, and it is time to strengthen the sustainable development objectives that promote policies and mechanisms to support the work of UNEP and its member governments.⁶⁹

As a central component of IEG, **the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration should be promoted and fully put in place at all levels** in order to ensure public participation, access to information and to environmental justice. This has been repeatedly requested by the Global Civil Society Forum hosted by UNEP.⁷⁰

This is giving a serious opportunity to look seriously at the **design of stakeholder involvement in the intergovernmental machinery, and in the implementation of agreements.** It is recommended that a toolkit be development of ensure effective stakeholder engagement at all levels. Any such mechanisms should be founded on clearly defined principles (transparency, accountability, collaboration, learning, equity, flexibility), ground rules (for communication, procedures, agenda and issues of process, facilitation, reporting) and objectives (outputs such as report, actions plans, impact on "official" governmental processes). Effective participation at any level requires the active support from the facilitating body, including ensuring equitable access to: information (including policy-based, technical and scientific data); justice; funds; capacity building and training, in addition to creating the space for participation in decision-making and implementing.

In the area of **taking funding from industry**, UNEP must do so only in a fully transparent manner and under clear policies that avoid conflicts of interest and encourage corporate accountability.⁷¹ UNEP should develop a code on principles that would guide their decision making concerning who they take money from.

In the area of **developing partnerships**, it would be worthwhile reviewing the approaches taken by CSD and other UN bodies to ensure that the same mistakes are not made. There should be clear criteria, monitoring and reporting of any partnerships UNEP is engaged in. There should be the possibility of the partnership being registered with an independent office within UNEP. The criteria and monitoring approach to partnerships should be developed through a multi-stakeholder approach.

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

Civil society organizations have regularly emphasized the importance of ensuring that **gender equality and youth involvement are recognized as overarching issues of importance for the successful implementation of the UNEP programme of work**. The 2007 Civil Society Statement from UNEP's Eighth Global Civil Society Forum,⁷² recommended the following actions for addressing gender and environment, namely:

- i. mainstream the gender plan of action into UNEP activities, including at the regional and subregional levels. Request donors to commit adequate resources dedicated to the implementation of the gender plan of action, including sufficient funds in a non-discretionary, fixed line of the UNEP budget, so that implementation of the plan of action is not dependent on the existence of extra-budgetary resources. Consideration should be given to the creation of a gender and environment trust fund for civil society to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender and environment in the implementation of environmental programmes.
- ii. involve civil society fully in the implementation of the plan of action, including the Network of Women Ministers of the Environment and civil society organizations working at the nexus of gender equality and the environment and United Nations "sister" entities with expertise on gender equality and human rights and alliances with women's environmental citizens' networks. UNEP should facilitate the establishment of women's environment networks in regions where they do not yet exist (particularly Africa).
- iii. implement the four main outcomes resulting from the UNEP WAVE conference of 2004, ensuring resources and broad support for regional WAVE conferences to be organized in cooperation with civil society partners. Ensure that special attention is given to traditional knowledge and the wisdom of women from indigenous peoples and in rural communities on the contribution of such knowledge and wisdom to environmental conservation.
- iv. broaden gender perspectives in multilateral environmental agreements.

BUILDING BLOCK 7: FINANCE

Although financing has consistently been the highest developing country priority in international negotiations, the resources delivered via the MEA process have been disappointing. Although many intergovernmental agreements recognize the need for "new and additional funding," no specific funding levels have been identified and there are no legal requirements on countries to provide funding. The inescapable bottom line is that much more funding is needed for environmental governance. Current commitments are clearly inadequate when compared to the needs of developing countries. Funding made available to the key UN institutions on environment- UNEP and the MEAs- is substantially weak and many bodies find it increasingly difficult to operate on zero-growth budgets.

Within UNEP itself, the **practice of earmarking** has created a substantial shortfalls of funds needed for the Environment Fund and the General Assembly should place greater emphasis on the need to eliminate this practice.

Civil society organizations have also called for the establishment of **grants within the UNEP budget or line budget allocation for programmes to be implemented by civil society**.⁷³

The prioritization of the finance building block in the co-chairs paper is welcomed; however, many of the options proposed will not drastically remedy the dwindling financial resources provided to UNEP or the MEAs. Ultimately, the issue of funding is a political one- in the absence of global political will to empower the UN's environmental architecture, no one solution will remedy this on its own. We believe that many of the options in the paper should and must be implemented. But ultimately, **the area where financial reform is most needed is within the Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, as the only multi-convention source of finance.

Developing countries, in particular, are growing increasingly concerned over the donor-controlled domination of the GEF decision making process, and the low levels of finance being committed to the instrument. **The need to address the current GEF 'governance deficit' is highlighted by a number of concerns voiced by developing countries**, such as: limited and restrictive participation in Council decisions and replenishment negotiations; unbalanced voting procedures; limited political or legal leverage under the Conference of Parties to ensure compliance by the GEF Council and involvement in replenishment decisions; over politicization of the GEF decision making process by certain countries; burdensome procedures for accessing GEF money; and the unbalanced and inequitable nature of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF). Concerns have been raised that while successful MEA funding arrangements exist, such as the Multilateral Fund, which include democratic replenishment negotiations, donor countries favor of the centralized control-model of the GEF which places decision making authority in hands of financing countries has over-shadowed debates on innovative financing mechanisms for MEAs and sustainable development in general. Under the UNFCCC parties are currently preparing for the third review of the financial mechanism, while under the CBD parties are addressing the fourth review. Under the CCD and GEF Council, discussions are underway to elevate the status of the CCD and to address the overlap and/or redundancy of the Global Mechanism. In 2008, the GEF Council will conduct the first assessment of the RAF and discuss the possibility of extending the pilot phase to all GEF focal Areas. Current negotiations under the Kyoto protocol on nominating an operating entity for the Adaptation Fund highlight an increasing concern and growing dislike of the GEF by developing countries.

The 169 process must provide direct political guidance to the World Bank and donor countries that will lead to a radical overhaul of the GEF, including its governance and resource levels.

Financial Mechanism: A sustainable funding mechanism is needed to provide increased, stable and predictable long-term funding to UN bodies dealing with the environment⁷⁴.

By 2008, UN Member States must establish a sustainable funding mechanism providing increased, stable and predictable long-term funding to UN bodies dealing with the environment, and expand the work of UN regional offices in facilitating capacity building, technology transfer, information exchange, assessment and monitoring.⁷⁵

National implementation of MEA is weak in many cases because of highly inadequate financial resources. OECD countries should finally designate 0.7% of GDP for ODA. All

developed countries and developing countries within the realm of their possibilities should increase financial contribution for environment and sustainable development programmes.⁷⁶

The UN should provide leadership and guidance on environmental issues and that a designated UN entity is given real authority and funding over environment policy.⁷⁷

Resource Levels: The GEF should be really strengthened as the major financial mechanism for the global environment. It really needs to have a significant increase in resources to address the challenge posed by environmental issues, which go a long way to affect social, health, and economic status of people.⁷⁸

GEF needs an additional funding base that is not negotiated each year and that is sufficient for meeting the programme goals defined by the targets and objectives of the international commitments and UN agreements. This would require that GEF funding be increased by several orders of magnitude, thus specific means and mechanisms of new and innovative financing are needed in addition to the present means of funding. However, it must first be determined just how much funding is required in order to achieve full sustainability, to fully implement the environmental conventions, and to provide sufficient resources for access to basic services for all peoples. Then specific means must be developed and agreed to in order to fully meet these goals.⁷⁹

Accountability & Governance: The GEF must be politically set up and validated by the UN General Assembly as the UN's central multi-year financing mechanism for the implementation of UN's environment agenda at global, regional and national levels. We only support such a move since its overall governance, modalities and operations are clearly re-defined, agreed upon by UN General Assembly, particularly in giving its General Assembly the power and political authority it should have so far.⁸⁰

The High-Level Panel recommended that the GEF be strengthened as the major financial mechanism for the global environment. Significant reforms of the GEF are necessary before it can take on this role. Civil society access to funding must be improved, as must representation of developing countries in the GEF's decision-making processes. A review of GEF governance must be undertaken by a multi-stakeholder network that includes governments, civil society, and intergovernmental organizations.⁸¹

System-wide Coherence: There is a need to further investigating the role of the GEF in relation to strengthening and/or creating a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance. Similarly consideration of the relationship between the GEF and the Implementing Agencies, as part of the broader General Assembly process on system-wide coherence and UN structures at the country level, is required. A reformed IEG system would need to have greater authority to address issues related to the financing of sustainable development, including the role and relationship of the GEF. Further consideration is required to address how the GEF can be used as the fund beyond the conventions and cover the needs identified for addressing sustainable development, particularly those identified by the CSD.⁸²

Accessibility to Local Government and Civil Society: The GEF needs to be made more accessible to local government and other local actors in order to target strengthening of local capacity and expertise in the environmental sphere. This could include specific funds targeting build-up national local government associations' in-house environmental capacity, e.g. to support national/ regional training activities, peer-to-peer learning and mentoring programmes which are aimed at local government and other local stakeholders.⁸³ The GEF process must be empowered, but with an approach of more flexibility for civil society activities.⁸⁴ The Cape Town Declaration of the GEF NGO Network specifically called for a new GEF policy to address the full participation of indigenous peoples in the GEF.⁸⁵

THE BROADER TRANSFORMATION OF THE IEG SYSTEM

UNEP is the key cornerstone of the IEG structure. However, strengthening UNEP must occur while simultaneously enhancing the economic, social and development components in other UN institutions. The role of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), for instance, has to be improved so that it can better play its integrative function. An enhanced UNEP will make the environmental dimension of the CSD stronger. Other relevant organizations and agencies dealing with IEG have also to be strengthened, together with the institutions dealing with economic and social affairs, and the institutions working with the integration of environment and development.⁸⁶

In the final section of the Co-chair's paper, issues regarding the establishment of a UN specialized agency for the environment and other decision making bodies are discussed. In a notably similar position to that of governments, **there is no consensus among civil society organizations regarding a specialized agency for the environment. Many feel the proposals for a specialized agency are underdeveloped and not clear, and feel in that context it is premature to announce views on the proposal until many issues have been clarified. However, some regional civil society groupings have articulated their views on the specialized agency proposal**, for example, the statement from the 2006 European Regional Consultation Meeting for the eighth UNEP Global Civil Society Forum notes: "use the ongoing reform process pertaining to environment, the System Wide Coherence Panel Outcome document when it is finalized and the reform process on UNEP to promote and keep the demands for a strong environmental agency, at a minimum on agency level, possibly as a UNEO or WEO alive and active."⁸⁷ Similarly, the statement from the West Asia Civil society consultation noted the need for the UNEP GC to "reconsider the status of UNEP and upgrade it to the level of organization instead of a programme."⁸⁸

ACRONYMS

ANPED	Northern Alliance for Sustainability
Bali Plan	Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
EMG	Environmental Management Group
ESSP	Earth System Science Partnership
FBOMS	Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development
GC/GMEF	Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (UNEP)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
ICSU	International Council for Science
IEG	International Environment Governance
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
KM	Knowledge Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
SF	Stakeholder Forum for A Sustainable Future
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Frameworks
UNDG	UN Development Group
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEO	UN Environment Organization (proposal)
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UN-HABITAT	UN Human Settlements Programme
UN NGLS	UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service
WAVE	Network of Women Ministers of the Environment
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

ABOUT THE FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONS

STAKEHOLDER FORUM FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



STAKEHOLDER
FORUM

Stakeholder Forum for A Sustainable Future is an international multi-stakeholder organization working on sustainable development; supporting the increased involvement of stakeholders in international and national governance processes. The organization played a key role in the preparations for and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and has been active in civil society issues concerning UN reform and UNEP.

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BRAZILIAN FORUM OF NGOS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT



FBOMS
Fórum Brasileiro de ONGs
e Movimentos Sociais
para o Meio Ambiente
e o Desenvolvimento

The Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for the Environment and the Development (FBOMS) was created in 1990 in order to facilitate the participation of civil society in the process of the United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development (UNCED). FBOMS has participated in international events concerning the implementation of multilateral environment agreements and in meetings of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). FBOMS networks with several alliances and regional or global networks and is one of the coordinators of the Latin American and Caribbean Platform of Environmental Organizations created during the Regional Civil Society Forum organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In 2006, FBOMS was elected a member of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee within UNEP.

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ANPED, THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



ANPED Northern Alliance
for Sustainability

ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability works to empower Northern civil society in creating and protecting sustainable communities and societies world-wide. ANPED's main focus is on Sustainable Production and Consumption (SPAC), the use of goods

and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations. ANPED has Special Consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). They are among the organizing partners responsible for providing the NGO Major Group input into the official meetings of the UN CSD.

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THE UNITED NATIONS NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON SERVICE

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) promotes dynamic partnerships between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. By providing information, advice, expertise and consulting and support service, NGLS is part of the United Nations effort to strengthen dialogue and win support for economic and social development. Core activities of UN-NGLS include: information and communication outreach to the international community and to global civil society; supporting the UN system in developing productive relationships and partnerships with NGOs and civil society; and supporting the work of NGOs/civil society that seek to constructively engage with the UN system. Since 2000, UN-NGLS has accelerated its pace in providing services for both the UN system and its civil society constituents by providing substantial input to all of the major UN events involving NGOs and civil society organizations. During these processes UN-NGLS has organized and conducted briefing and orientation sessions and workshops and has co-hosted NGO consultations with a number of UN agencies, programme and funds to raise awareness around substantive themes under discussion, and to provide an exchange of views.

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- ²⁷ Najam, A., Papa, M., Taiyab, N.2006. Global Environment Governance: A Reform Agenda, International Institute for Sustainable Development,; internet: <http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2006/geg.pdf>
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- ³¹ Stakeholder Forum, 2002
- ³² North American Civil Society Statement to the 24th UNEP Governing Council/GMEF , 22 November 2006 ; internet: http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF8/contributions/RONA.statement.pdf
- ³³ Reforming International Environmental Governance: Statement representing views expressed at two meetings of stakeholders held at 24th session of the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF 2007. The statement does not represent a consensus view.
- ³⁴ Sixth UNEP Global Civil Society Statement to the 23rd UNEP Governing Council/GME, Nairobi, Kenya, 20 February 2005; internet: http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/6thGCSF_Global_CS_Statement.pdf
- ³⁵ Submission from the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (January 2007)
- ³⁶ Stakeholder Forum, 2006
- ³⁷ UNEP's mandate and ability to perform such an assessment should be based on General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII) which, *inter alia*, called on the Governing Council to provide general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system" (1.2 (b)). The Resolution called on the UNEP Secretariat to "co-ordinate, under the guidance of the Governing Council, environmental programmes within the United Nations system, to keep their implementation under review and to assess their effectiveness (II. 2(b)). In relation to the former Environment Coordination Board the Resolution invited the organizations of the United Nations system to adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and coordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems, taking into account existing procedures for prior consultation, particularly on programme and budgetary matters (IV.3) The 1997 Nairobi Declaration declared that "the role of the UNEP is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment." The Declaration also called for "strengthen its role in the coordination of environmental activities in the United Nations system in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise."
- ³⁸ Ivanova *et al* (2005) proposed that UNEP "Initiate an assessment of global environmental governance to clarify the mandates of the numerous existing organizations, elaborate a substantive vision, identify priority issues to be addressed, and outline ways for implementation. Such an assessment could provide a replicable template for similar evaluations of lead institutions in other global public goods domains and lay a solid foundation for UN reform.
- ³⁹ In 2004 the UNEP Executive Director/EMG Chair commissioned an independent evaluation of the work of the EMG. Key concerns addressed in the evaluation included: EMG's Secretariat and work has developed much more slowly than desired; EMG is largely perceived as a support body for UNEP. Its meetings have not been very focused and have been dominated by a UNEP-specific agenda; EMG's relationship to other inter-agency bodies is unclear and risks duplication. It has even supplanted other useful bodies such as the Ecosystem Conservation Group (ECG); EMG attendance has been poor with representation at a lower level than originally designed; EMG needs to provide more value-added with specific benefits for its members to ensure their full commitment and participation; EMG has had a very limited impact on information exchange; and EMG now needs to refocus more on integrating environmental concerns in the work of all relevant bodies, including at the regional level.
- ⁴⁰ Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future. UNEP: Changing Times; internet: <http://www.unedforum.org/policy/governance/unepreportfinal.pdf>
- ⁴¹ See Chair's Summary of the EMG High-level Forum; internet: http://www.unemg.org/download_pdf/EMGHLP/EMGHLPChairsSummaryandConclusions.pdf

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- ⁴² Stakeholder Forum, 2006
- ⁴³ Submission from the Womens Environment and Development Organization (January 2007)
- ⁴⁴ Submission from Local Government International Bureau (January 2007)
- ⁴⁵ Statement by Meena Raman , Third World Network to the Panel Consultation with Civil Society (June 2006); http://www.stakeholderforum.org/policy/ieg/Statements/third_world_network.pdf
- ⁴⁶ Draft submission from the Womens Environment and Development Organization (January 2007)
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- ⁴⁹ Submission by Local Government International Bureau to the Panel Consultation with Civil Society (June 2006); http://www.stakeholderforum.org/policy/ieg/SubmissionsToThePanel/LGIB_submission_UN_reform.pdf
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