

COMMENTS PROVIDED BY



JEA – THE ECOLOGICAL YOUTH OF ANGOLA

*(A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION ACCREDITED TO UNEP GC/GMEF;
UNFCCC COP; UNCCD COP; GEF GC; UN-ECOSOC)*

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LUANDA – ANGOLA

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Juventude Ecológica Angolana (JEA), or JEA – The Ecological Youth of Angola, is the largest environmental Non-Governmental Organisation in Angola, founded in 1991, aimed at promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development in the country, by facilitating and enhancing young people participation in environmental education, research, policy development and decision-making processes. JEA's 10.000 conservation volunteers are strongly committed to contribute to the Angolan Government's efforts for the protection of the environment and implementation of the sustainable development in the country, taking into account the critical environmental issues affecting young people and their communities.

2. In June 2002, JEA was internationally recognised by the United Nations by receiving the [UNEP Global 500](#) Youth Environmental Award. JEA is a NGO accredited to the Global Environment Facility ([GEF](#)) Council, UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) and UN Convention to Combat Desertification ([UNCCD](#)), as well as of the UN Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)).

3. JEA is a member of the UNEP African Civil Society Forum's Steering Committee and the New Partnership for Africa's Development ([NEPAD](#))'s Civil Society Organisations Think Tank.

4. Between 1992 and 2006, JEA has participated actively in the following major UN conference and summits on environment and sustainable development issues:
 - *UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit 1992, Rio de Janeiro);*
 - *UN World Youth Forum (Havana, 1994);*
 - *UN World Youth Forum (Lisbon, 1998);*
 - *World Festival of Youth and Students (Algiers, 2001);*

- *UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10 Summit, 2002, Johannesburg);*
- *22nd UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi, 2003)*
- *FAO XV World Forestry Congress (Quebec, 2003);*
- *23rd UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi, 2005);*
- *UN General Assembly Hearings with Civil Society on the UN Reform (New York, 2005)*
- *NEPAD-SADC Experts Workshop on the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD (Gaborone, 2005);*
- *UN International Conference on Partnerships for Sustainable Development (Marrakech, 2005);*
- *1st UN International Conference on Chemicals Management (Dubai, 2006);*
- *9th Special Session of UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Dubai, 2006);*
- *XI African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (Brazzaville, 2006)*
- *UNECA/UNDESD International Workshop on Youth Development in Africa (Addis Ababa, 2006)*
- *UNCCD International Youth and Desertification Conference (Bamako, September 2006)*
- *UNFCCC-COP 12 / Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP-2 (Nairobi, 2006);*
- *UNECA's African Development Forum (Nairobi, 2006).*

5. JEA welcomes the opportunity for providing inputs and comments on the United Nations Secretary-General's Panel Report on the UN System-wide Coherence in the fields of Humanitarian Affairs, Environment and Development.

6. It is to note that JEA has participated, through invitation and sponsorship from the UN Secretariat at New York, the first-ever UN General Assembly's Hearings with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Private Sector held on 22-23 June 2005, in New York, United States of America (USA), aimed at collecting views from both major groups on issues related to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the on-going UN reform process. JEA representative had the opportunity to

interact directly with UN Staff, UN Member States, as well as other civil society and private sector delegates. It particularly provided most of the inputs and comments JEA going to provide throughout this paper.

7. Further, JEA contributed, without physically participate in, to the final proceedings of the second UN General Assembly Hearings with CSOs and Private Sector held on 22 June 2006, in New York, USA, which collected views from these two major groups on the Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPA) for the Least Developed Countries for 2001-2010.
8. Generally, JEA has been an active advocate on the need for taking full opportunity and advantage of the on-going reform process within the UN System-wide in order to strengthen the Environment pillar of the global multilateral organization, taking into consideration the internationally-agreed Sustainable Development framework in major UN conferences and summits, including the 2000 Millennium Summit, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the UN 2005 World Summit.
9. We, therefore, look forward to continue to collaborate with UN System-wide and relevant stakeholders, such as the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) on the subjects being commented by JEA (Environment and Sustainable Development). We also hope that our inputs and collaborations be taken fully into account by the Panel when finalizing its report that will inform discussions and possible decisions during the 61st regular session of the UN General Assembly.

B. CONCLUSIONS:

10. JEA is extremely concerned with the increasing **degradation of the environment base, life supporting systems and natural resources** worldwide. It is particularly concerned about the fact that **in Africa the environmental issues are intrinsically inter-linked** with political, socio-economic and cultural issues, such as social and armed conflicts, external debt, private investment, widespread poverty and associated hunger and HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, including severe droughts, forest fires and floods, etc..

11. We share some of the ideas, opinions and concerns emanated from the Panel, as they are realistic and are of global concern that need to be properly addressed by the world community, through the UN System-wide. However, we express our profound concerns with regards to the **insignificant scope and position** that the **Panel directed to the Environment component** of its study and recommendations. While it was successful in concluding with all clarity most of issues and determining concrete, straight-forward recommendations with the regards to Development and Humanitarian affairs, it was less “agressive”, or just “most careful” in addressing issues arising with the Environment. For our understanding those recommendations were not enough to determine or to influence the realization of a **new UN System-wide coherent agenda for the Environment for this 21st century and beyond**. Particulary the Panel had recommended to the UN Secretary-General to commission an independent assessment for improving system-wide coherence of the International Environmental Governance (IEG), so ignoring the current status of consultations and some **negotiations on IEG either at UN General Assembly and the UNEP GC/GMEF**. Our sincere understanding is that any UNEP reform should be based on the general reform and assessment of the UN system-wide and also the IEG regime.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

12. We recommend that the Panel recommends to the UN General Assembly the establishment of a **UN Environment Organization**, on the basis of current *status quo* of UNEP and with a renewed, stronger, strengthened **political authority, financial provisions, scientific, programmatic and operational** bases for enabling it to perform its mandate as the UN's global agency in caring for the Earth Planet's environment base. It is to note that our support for such a body is absolutely dependent on its central location – which should continue be at **Nairobi** –, its governance – which should continue be the **GC(GMEF)** as the highest governing body and the **Secretariat** as the executing body – and its relationship with **civil society** – which should be better defined, clearer and further strengthened;
13. Further, we recommend the Panel to make 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 DTIE), 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. We recommend that the Panel recommends the UN General Assembly to abolish the **UN Environment Management Group (EMG)**, as a separate inter-agency environmental group, and integrate its current mandate and functions into the proposed “UN Sustainable Development Board”, so that it avoids duplication of work with the so proposed “UN Environment Organization” and contributes to further integration of the Environment pillar of the Sustainable Development within the UN system-wide development activities;

15. We recommend the Panel further recommends such a UN Environment Organization be established as expeditely so that the more than 500 **Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)** be clustered according to the thematic areas they address; their governance, the synergies among and enforcement be improved and all fall under the direction and policy guidance of a single authority body – perhaps the UN General Assembly, UN Secretariat, or the Environment Organization;

16. Particularly, we recommend the Panel to recommend the UN General Assembly to call upon Member States to convene negotiations toward adoption of a **UN (Global) Convention on Water by 2015**;

17. We recommend the Panel to recommend the UN General Assembly to provide technical assistance and financial support to the **African Union (AU) Commission** in order to enable it to carry out the functions **as the Secretariat of the African Ministerial Environment Conference (AMCEN) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its Environment Initiative**, as recently decided by the African Heads of State and Governments attending the AU General Assembly in Sirte in 2004 and in Banjul in 2006;

18. We recommend the Panel to recommend that the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** 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;

19. We recommend that on the basis of the vision “One UN at the Country level” facilitate the establishment of **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 guichet 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**”...;

20. With regards to gender and development, we strongly support the ideas and recommendations of the Panel aimed at establishing a **UN single organization – agency, programme or inter-agency mechanism/joint-programme – for gender/women rights**. However, it should be clarified by the Panel.

21. We also recommend the Panel to consider making straight-forward recommendations to the UN General Assembly with regards to the **i) appointment of all top level officials for environmental bodies – which in our view should be entrusted/mandated to the UN Secretary-General only –; ii) to the implications for the Environment pillar of the ECOSOC’s reform**, as well as **iii) to build environmental capacity of the UN Central Legal Office and legal offices of different UN environmental bodies** so that they can perform their mandate effectively in the fields of the environment and sustainable development;

22. We finally recommend the Panel and the Moderators (NGLS, SF, FBOMS) to advocate within the UN System-wide on the need for UN System-wide consider and adopt, in the context of reform process, **Portuguese as its 7th Official Language**, alongside the English, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Arabic. Portuguese is the official language of 8 UN Member States, namely Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and

Timor-East, as well as is also spoken in more 2 territories, namely Macao in China (PR of) and Goa (India). Currently, and according to UN Development Programme (UNDP) more than 280 million people worldwide use Portuguese as their common means of communication and social learning and interaction. Moreover, Portuguese is spoken in most of the countries in the world, through some diapora communities of Brazilians, Portuguese, Cape Verdians and Angolans. Also, the UN General Assembly is aware of the issue and in this context had authorized the Secretariat to buil the UN Information Centre for Portuguese-speaking countries in Luanda, Angola. We recommend that in doing so, the UN General Assembly should request – and not invite – all Portuguese-speaking countries as mentioned above – without any exception – to contribute technically and financially, at a special basis, the introduction of Portuguese into the System-wide, up to three to five years consecutively, and then subsequent costs should be met in accordance with current procedures and regulations governing the official languages.

THANK YOU!

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