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**Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda  
for Sustainable Development – a concept note**

**Information note Executive Director**

*Summary*

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted A/RES/70/1, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, which all countries and stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement.

The four core principles which underpin UNEP's approach to delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda are Universality; Integration; Human rights and Innovation.

More than half of the SDGs have an environmental focus or address the sustainability of natural resources: poverty, health, food and agriculture, water and sanitation, human settlements, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems. Over 86 targets concern environmental sustainability; including at least one in each of the 17 SDGs. Integration across all SDGs means that progress on one cannot be achieved if there is no progress on the other goals.

UNEA has a crucial role to play in delivering the environmental dimension of the SDGs, through its inputs to ECOSOC in the form of outcomes and messages. The cycle of UNEP's regular assessments and reports should be reviewed in light of decisions on the SDG follow-up and review process, to support deliberations in formulating UNEA's outcomes and messages.

UNEP plays a pivotal role in providing assessments, policy-analysis, and integrated analytics and –approaches, to deliver on the environmental dimension of the SDGs, including the follow-up and review process. The Expected Accomplishments of the Programme of Work and Medium Term Strategy over the next three cycles are aligned with the expected outcomes of the SDGs in 2030.

UNEP can support member states, stakeholders and UN system entities' implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its technical expertise, knowledge systems and global partnerships and initiatives, including through joint programming at the country level.

UNEP aligns its strategic planning to the 2030 Agenda and strengthen collaboration with the rest of the UN system, through *inter alia* the UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment, to ensure coherence, knowledge sharing and capacity development, and in doing so embedding global normative frameworks and addressing emerging environmental issues.

## I. Introduction

### A. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1. On 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted the declaration on *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The 2030 Agenda (UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1) is a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, which all countries and stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement.
2. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs is effective as of 1 January 2016, and will guide decisions over the next 15 years. The SDGs, which are integrated, indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development, build on the Millennium Development Goals.
3. The Agenda aims to end poverty and hunger, combat inequalities, build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. Member states also resolved to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all.
4. The 2030 Agenda is guided by the shared principles of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit, and the commitments made at major UN conferences and summits, where the foundations for sustainable development have been laid down.
5. Sustainable development is a universal aspiration, requiring international cooperation and joint responsibility for a greater common good. Successive global declarations and policy documents since the Rio Summit in 1992 have emphasized that sustainable development is a universal agenda. The Rio+20 Outcome Document called for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be “global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development”.
6. Our societies face enormous challenges: resource scarcity, climate change, unemployment, food insecurity and inequity, among many others. These challenges call for radical changes, changes that the entire UN system and its partners must help to deliver. The UN’s role in this transformation is to assist countries to implement the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a balanced and integrated manner.

### B. The Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda

7. The 2030 Agenda represents a paradigm shift to replace today’s growth-based economic model with a new model that aims to achieve sustainable and equitable economies and societies worldwide, and ensure greater public participation in decision-making, in line with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration from 1992. It is an agenda that aims to address the root causes of unsustainable consumption and production patterns, and transform them into sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods that benefit all. A well cared-for environment is crucial for sustainability and survival of humankind.
8. Ending poverty (Goal 1) can be achieved by integrating economic development, social protection, and environmental health. Environmental poverty, derived from a lack of access to natural assets, inadequate management of resources and exposure to ecosystem degradation and pollution leads to greater vulnerability and a loss of resilience in communities. An increasing world population will make it even more challenging to provide basic services to the poor.
9. UNEP’s International Resource Panel estimates that consumption of natural resources will triple by 2050. The sustainable development pathway will need to maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits.
10. Human rights and the environment are inextricably linked through the right of every citizen to a clean, healthy and productive environment. Sustainable development implies meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations to live in dignity. In the 2030 Agenda, meeting those basic needs as referred to in many SDGs is linked to access to natural resources. For example in goal 2, access to food is linked to access to land (*environment*), which in turn is linked to poverty reduction (Goal 1), and gender equality (Goal 5). Goal 6 addresses the natural resource ‘water’ in terms of the environment (water quality, restoration of ecosystems), social (access

to safe drinking water) and economic aspects (water-use efficiency across all sectors). This emphasis on the inter-linkages between the three dimensions is present in all 17 goals, making this a truly integrated Agenda

11. While more than half of the SDGs have an environmental focus or address the sustainability of natural resources: poverty, health, food and agriculture, water and sanitation, human settlements, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems, transformative change can only be based on delivering on the 17 sustainable development goals in an integrated manner. Over 86 of the 169 targets concern the environment directly – including at least one in each of the 17 SDGs. Integration across all SDGs means that progress on one cannot be achieved if there is no progress on the others.

12. New indicators which look beyond traditional economics and development (such as Gross Domestic Product and the Human Development Index) are needed, which not only assess current progress but also the welfare of future generations. For example the Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI)<sup>1</sup> includes a full range of assets such as manufactured, human and natural capital and shows governments a more realistic state of their nation's wealth and the sustainability of its growth. For example, in 2012, 4 out of 20 countries assessed had positive IWI growth rates above 1% indicative sustainability. A multi-dimensional view expands the menu of solutions that can irreversibly eradicate poverty.

## II. Supporting the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### A. Strategic Approach

13. UNEP's 2030 vision statement captures the challenge in the 2030 Agenda to develop and enhance integrated approaches to sustainable development – approaches that will demonstrate how improving the health of the environment will bring social and economic benefits:

**Vision 2030:** UNEP aims to reduce environmental risks and increase the resilience of societies and the environment as a whole while also responding to the challenges highlighted in the situation analysis [in the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021]. This will not only foster the environmental dimension of sustainable development, but also bring socio-economic benefits. The 2018-2021 period will provide a stepping stone for UNEP to realize the 2030 vision.

14. Four core principles underpin UNEP's approach to delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda:

- a. **Universality [all peoples – beyond borders – collective action]:** The 2030 Agenda is global, applying to all peoples in all countries. It is a shared agenda that requires a collective response from the international community, governments, businesses, and citizens groups.
- b. **Integration [acting as a harmonious whole]:** The 2030 Agenda sustainable development as a harmonious whole. Past approaches treated the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development as disconnected pillars, but the new Agenda integrates and balances the three.
- c. **Human rights and equity [pathway to a fairer, just and sustainable world]:** The 2030 Agenda provides a pathway to a more just and sustainable world for all. It encourages a more even distribution of wealth and resources; equitable access to opportunities, information and rule of law, and the development new approaches that build capacities at all level of society are needed.
- d. **Innovation [invention is the master key to progress]:** The acceleration and transfer of technological innovations is key to delivering the 2030 Agenda. The world will need new innovation pathways that draw on formal science, traditional knowledge and citizen common sense.

15. UNEP will deploy the following approaches for effective delivery:

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<sup>1</sup> The IWI is a joint initiative of the United Nations University International Human Dimensions Programme (UNU-IHDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

- a. ***Strengthening the science-policy interface for evidence-based decision making:*** UNEP will continue to identify science that integrates social, economic and environmental considerations for policy and decision-making. UNEP is already feeding information from multiple stakeholders into data gathering, analysis and assessment processes at the national, regional and global levels. UNEP will evolve its public advocacy, awareness and outreach to mobilize all those who can influence the changes needed to achieve the SDGs. Through UNEP Live, UNEP will focus on:
- Developing multi-purpose indicators to track the SDGs at all levels – including creating a National Reporting System and reporting obligations database to help countries reduce the burden of reporting and build on existing data; and Building the capacities of countries to collect and analyze data, and establish communities of science that involve all levels of society.
- b. ***Providing expert knowledge and technical assistance on the environment:*** UNEP will provide technical guidance and support for environmental governance, developing coherent laws and policies and their effective implementation. This is to ensure that countries have in place frameworks for environmental laws and institutions, and that environmental considerations underpin development policy
- c. ***Convening stakeholders to agree on global environmental norms and standards:*** Inclusivity is an important part of the 2030 Agenda. UNEP recognizes that access to information is a key condition for citizen participation, transparency and accountability. Significant efforts have been made to ensure that citizens, civil society, various levels of government and the private sector are consulted on the new agenda. UNEP will continue creating and facilitating avenues for cooperation between the UN, governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, companies and civil society organizations to initiate joint commitments and actions.
- d. ***Greater integration of normative frameworks into UNEP's work:*** To deliver on the 2030 Agenda, the UN system needs to be innovative, agile, inclusive, and results-oriented. The UN system recognized the need for integrated system-wide policies and strategies in support of the SDGs – policies that link normative frameworks with operational activities and encompass all UN activities. UNEP will increase integration of these normative frameworks – such as human rights, gender equality, and peace and security – into its work.
- e. ***Promoting partnerships:*** The UN system's ability to redefine how it engages with partners and works with other stakeholders towards shared sustainable development outcomes is crucial for the SDGs. Effective sustainable development cooperation will require the formation of issue-based coalitions and platforms that integrate multiple stakeholders (governments, civil society and the private sector) to improve decision-making, strategic planning, service delivery, knowledge sharing, and collective monitoring and accountability at all levels.
- f. ***Supporting the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda:*** UNEP will contribute to the UN's efforts for system-wide coherence on sustainable development from its environmental perspective – with a focus on creating coherence in the way the UN system integrates the environmental dimension to implement normative guidance and environmental safeguards, and Delivering as One at the country level.
- Many global challenges relate to global public goods, most of which emerge from a multi-level process, requiring policy action at the national, regional and global levels. UNEP's engagement will include methods for reviewing, learning and flexible readjustment, to ensure that actions taken at the national and regional levels are linked to global targets.
- g. ***Supporting implementation and building capacity in the regions:*** A strengthened strategic regional presence will enable UNEP to work towards global consensus and policy coherence on key issues relating to the environmental dimension of sustainable development, while creatively pursuing specific opportunities and approaches available regionally. It will enable UNEP to foster effective partnerships, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation and with the wider UN system through Delivering as One.
- h. ***Addressing emerging issues:*** UNEP will continue, through its Foresight process, to produce a careful and authoritative ranking of the most important emerging issues for the global environment, including those related to the implementation of the SDGs.
- i. ***Supporting a global shift towards clean and environmentally sound technologies:*** technology cuts across all UNEP's Sub-Programmes. Moving forward UNEP will expand its

technology agenda towards pressing challenges such as water and food security, health, energy security and climate change (within the framework of the UNFCCC) by prioritizing external and internal coordination; wide-spread capacity building and strengthened efforts to make the Technology Facilitation Mechanisms, as decided in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development operational and responsive to a long-term, systemic environmental perspective.

16. The major challenge in delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda is the overall level of complexity and ambition. To address such a significant number of interrelated aspects will require a highly integrated approach to environmental policy-making, ensuring that connections are made with other development concerns, such as human rights, gender equality, economic growth, and employment.

17. Since many environmental outcomes take many years to emerge, UNEP is adopting a more results-focused, longer-term outcome planning approach, aligned to the target date for the 2030 Agenda. Using outcome maps, the MTS outlines the logical chain of results to move from the current situation to 2030. The outcome maps set the overall objectives for 2030 with a logical progression of outcomes to achieve these goals; and the outcomes to be achieved in the 2018-2021 period.

18. The 7 Sub-Programmes provide the building blocks, each of which has developed an outcome map towards a 2030 objective, in response to relevant SDGs and targets. Indicators at impact level are being aligned with relevant indicators from the SDG global Indicator Framework. This will allow the monitoring of progress made towards implementation of the environmental dimension as well as reporting to UNEA, ECOSOC and the HLPF.

19. Central to UNEP's efforts will be environmental advocacy – based on strengthened science policy linkages – aiming to create or change policies, laws, regulations, distribution of resources or other decisions that affect people's lives. Such advocacy is generally directed at policy makers as well as private sector and civil society leaders.

20. At the heart of strengthening the science-policy interface is the idea of providing timely scientific and empirical information in an accessible manner to policy makers, in order to support their informed decision-making. As part of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2015, UNEP analysed the often-long time-lags from the identification of issues and causes by scientists (“confidence in causality”), to effective policy actions, through to impacts (e.g., reduction of harm). A multitude of economic, cultural, political and legal factors has promoted and/or discouraged evidence-based policy action. In the review cycles of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), UNEP could contribute to a better understanding of these factors. UNEP will also contribute to the HLPF 2016 review crosscutting theme: “Ensuring that no one is left behind”.

## **B. Partnerships, Initiatives and Networks**

21. In implementing its MTS 2018-2021 and associated Programmes of Work UNEP will be making significant investments in knowledge, expertise and networks, to support member states, civil society organisations and the UN system in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by i) identifying emerging issues with an environmental dimension and highlighting related policy issues; ii) providing knowledge on trends and outlooks through assessments and analysis; iii) convening stakeholders and focusing action on catalytic policy goals and interventions; and by iv) identifying and communicating key messages and making these resources available as resources to decision-makers. Showing such leadership and investment on the environment dimension, provides leverage for action and enables member states, civil society organisations and UN system entities to support transformative change to sustainable development.

22. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires a significant increase in the engagement and participation of stakeholders and civil society in delivering the goals and targets. It thus provides an opportunity for UNEP to expand, enhance and forge new partnerships. Examples of UNEP's current key multi-stakeholder partnerships relevant to the SDGs include (organised along UNEP's 7 sub-programmes):

### Climate Change

- (a) *Inclusive Green Economy (IGE)* includes partners such as the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). The integrated approach can help countries maximize the benefits to human well-being that derive from a healthy environment;
- (b) *Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)* is a 100-member partnership to reduce short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs). The 16 key measures it supports can reduce global warming by 0.6°C by 2050 if they are implemented by 2030;

- (c) *Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)* is the operational arm of the UNFCCC technology mechanism and promotes the accelerated development and transfer of climate technologies for adaptation and mitigation;
- (d) *The UN\_REDD Programme* is a FAO / UNDP / UNEP initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) in developing countries, correcting market failures by including ecosystem goods and services. The expanded REDD+ includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks;

#### Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts

- (e) *Joint UNEP/OCHA Unit* is housed within OCHA's Emergency Services branch, and assists member states to prepare for and respond to environmental emergencies in an integrated manner;

#### Healthy and Productive Ecosystems

- (f) *Global Plans of Action* are coordinated by UNEP to enhance international cooperation and find solutions on marine litter, nutrient management and waste water respectively, and their associated impacts on economies, ecosystems and human health;
- (g) *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)* is hosted by UNEP and produces fast-track assessment on issues such as pollination and food production, land degradation and invasive species;

#### Environmental Governance

- (h) *UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI)* provides tailor-made and practical tools and methodologies for developing countries to catalyse major changes to government policy and budgetary priorities that sustain natural resources and end poverty;
- (i) *The International Advisory Council for the Advancement of Justice, Governance and Law for Enforcement Sustainability*: the nine-member advisory council includes Chief Justices, senior judges, auditors and legal academics. Led by UNEP, it provides strategic guidance to the international community in improving the legal foundations for achieving international environmental goals, and overcoming legal barriers to inclusive sustainable development.

#### Chemicals and Waste

- (j) *Global mercury Partnership / Interim Secretariat for the Minamata Convention on Mercury*, currently administered by UNEP, is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the toxic effects of mercury;
- (k) *Special Programme for Chemicals Waste* support country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the financing of sound management of chemicals and waste;
- (l) *Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)* has the overall objective to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle so that, by 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment;

#### Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production

- (m) *International Resource Panel* was established in 2007 to provide decision-makers and other stakeholders with scientific assessments on the sustainable use of resources and the environmental impacts over their full life cycles;
- (n) *10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP)* is a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable development;
- (o) *UNEP Finance Initiative* works on innovative financing with the private and financial sectors, contributing to the discourse on financing for climate and wider sustainability issues;
- (p) *UNEP Inquiry* is looking into the design of a sustainable financial system, including policy options in support of financing a green economy;
- (q) *The Energy Efficiency Hub of SE4All*, implemented through the Copenhagen Centre for Energy Efficiency as part of the UNEP-DTU Partnership. UNEP is also supporting countries in leapfrogging to energy efficiency with the enlighten initiative and a new partnership on appliances;

## Environment Under Review

- (r) *Global Environment Outlook (GEO)* is UNEP's flagship participatory and global assessment that builds capacity for conducting integrated environmental assessments and reporting on the state, trends and outlooks of the environment. GEO is also a series of products that facilitates the interaction between science and policy;
- (s) *Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA)* is a global initiative that aims to provide direction and coherence at the international level for research on vulnerability, impacts and adaptation (VIA); and
- (t) *Eye on Earth Alliance*, which addresses availability and importance of environmental and societal information and networking to decision-making. It offers a forum to convene thought and action leaders to collaborate towards strengthening existing initiatives and filling future gaps.



**Figure 2:** Examples of cross-cutting policies and programmes that can be expanded and enhanced to embed the principles of the 2030 Agenda and forge partnerships with stakeholders working in related sectors.

23. Furthermore, non-state actors play a role in advocacy e.g. through environmental NGOs and their inputs to international treaties. Through [www.MyUNEA.org](http://www.MyUNEA.org), a moderated interactive online-hub hosted by UNEP, stakeholders are being encouraged to participate in the preparations of UNEA-2. In the run-up to UNEA-2, the platform will provide an opportunity for the public to contribute ideas to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in preparations of the global thematic report, “Healthy Environment-Healthy People,” which will be launched at UNEA-2. This will help provide governments and policy makers with inputs from a wide spectrum of stakeholders on issues and options/solutions.

24. Participation of the Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) at UNEA provides a unique opportunity for member states to strengthen the environmental advocacy role of UNEP. By entering into a dialogue and building relationships with the MGS and civil society on key issues, partnerships and coalitions for the environment are more likely to succeed. Major Groups and Stakeholder engagement and participation in UNEA enable multi-stakeholder approaches and is an important opportunity for successful policy dialogues UNEA may wish to pursue.

### **III. Key Arrangements in the UN System**

#### **A. The Role of the Environment Management Group (EMG), the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) and its high-level Committees on Programme (HLCP) on Management (HLCM) and the UN Development Group (UNDG)**

25. UNEP works through high-level UN inter-agency coordination mechanisms to promote the integration of environment perspectives in system-wide efforts to support member states in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These mechanisms provide effective platforms to promote coherence in policies and strategies directly relating to the environment at global, regional and country levels, as well all UN-system policies reflecting an environmental perspective.

26. The Environment Management Group (EMG) is a UN system-wide coordination body on environment and human settlements, which identifies issues on the international environmental agenda that warrant cooperation, and finds ways to engage its collective capacity in coherent management responses. Optimizing EMG members' contribution to the 2030 Agenda could include drawing on their comparative advantages and specialization, working collaboratively and delivering together.

27. UNEP will intensify its efforts to integrate environmental dimension across the UN system's agenda as a common response to the 2030 Agenda, working collaboratively through Environment Management Group and other mechanisms, strategies and innovative partnerships, in order to deliver better results and impacts, create synergies, strengthen collective action and maximize the potential for environmentally sound development. UNEP will invite EMG members to contribute to the implementation of the Framework of Strategies on the Environment, upon its completion, within their mandate, resources and capacities to respond collectively to the environmental sustainability aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

28. The Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) has agreed that UN System's ability to work across substantive areas and aim to achieve synergies across the goals and also across the UN pillars is essential to delivering the 2030 Agenda. The complexity of the 2030 Agenda requires collective action – both among the UN family and in broader partnerships. Advocacy at all levels, including directed to individual UN System governing bodies, will be important to mobilizing all sectors and all actors.

29. The Secretary-General tasked the CEB high-level committees (the HLCP, the HLCM and the UNDG) to collaborate in 2016 to produce one set of principles, across policy, operational and administrative aspects of the UN's work, to guide the UN system's support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs in an integrated way.

30. The HLCP has already explored collective and flexible approaches to deliver on the 2030 Agenda through multi-stakeholder partnerships, dissemination of evidence-based policies and scaling-up of effective and innovative interventions. One such approach is the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, which was developed through an ILO-led HLCP process, where 19 UN entities, including UNEP, committed to increase the impact of youth employment policies and expand country-level action on decent jobs for young women and men.

31. Another HLCP process is to develop common UN approach to addressing inequalities and discrimination as an integral part of a human rights based approach and in line with key imperatives of "leaving no one behind" and "reaching those furthest behind first".

32. The UN discussion paper developed under the HLCP on 'Promoting Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, Preventing Conflict, and the 2030 Agenda' reiterated that preventing conflict is a shared objective and responsibility of the entire UN system, as a crosscutting thread across all 17 SDGs. This paper explained how UN support towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda will require that the UN's peace and security, human rights and development actors work together closely and coherently. The CEB also agreed on the need for urgent action in leading the UN system towards greater UN system-wide integration these pillars, to enhance collaboration pragmatically through existing mechanisms and without creating additional processes, layers or functions.

33. The High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) is responsible to CEB for coherent, efficient and cost-effective management across the UN system of organizations. HLCM is developing approaches to strategically reposition the UN system on the management and operational sides to support the 2030 Agenda. HLCM has emphasised that the UN system requires appropriate business models, responding to the need to attract and retain a multi-sectoral workforce, and developing



innovative and sustainable business solutions to deliver high-quality, efficient and cost-effective operational services.

34. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) coordinates UN operational activities at country-level to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and is now supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In response to the request by Member States for coherent and integrated support from the UN development system to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UNDG has committed to a series of strategic actions that will guide its work.

35. These include the integration of the development, humanitarian, human rights and peacebuilding agendas; providing good practice and knowledge resources on mainstreaming and accelerating effective and coherent support, encouraging evidence-based joint programming (see next paragraph); accelerating higher performing and common business practices, including through the mutual recognition of each other's best business practices, and the system-wide adoption of best practice; moving to joint programmes and joint financing and investment strategies, as well as designing and utilizing global and country-based, multi-window pooled funding platforms for the SDGs; and being accountable, at all levels, for inter-agency approaches and agreements and enable agency programming and operations at the country-level as per agreement of the UNDG and CEB.

36. Furthermore, new guidance for UN system common country programming, or UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), that support national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda is being developed, to translate these UNDG commitments into effective country-level interventions by UN Country Teams (UNCTs). The overarching drive behind the guidance is the need to adopt integrated approaches to programming that respond to the imperatives of the new Agenda and effectively address the complex and interconnected nature of the SDGs, based on the following characteristics:

- a. **Relevance:** UNDAFs must support national sustainable development priorities and contribute to the implementation of internationally, regionally and nationally agreed normative frameworks for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and human rights.
- b. **Strategic focus:** UNDAFs need to be strategic, recognizing that the UN cannot do everything and focus efforts and resources on interventions that leverage the unique comparative advantage of the UN system, accelerating progress and ensuring sustainability, and focus actions and resources on interventions that will have a catalytic effect across a broad range of areas.
- c. **Substantive engagement:** UNDAFs need to build on substantive engagement with national partners, including the government and other segments of society, to identify the priorities and mobilize an integrated, in-depth and comprehensive country analysis, providing national partners and stakeholders with a perspective relative to the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.
- d. **UN coherence and effectiveness:** UNDAFs must be built on strong UN coherence, drawing upon the complementarity and coordination of UN country-level operations, giving due consideration to joint programming approaches and exploring opportunities for harmonized business practices.
- e. **Technical soundness:** UNDAF programming has to be evidence-based and apply results-focused management approaches, with an underlying theory of change and the use of SMART indicators (including baselines and targets). It also needs to provide for transparency and accountability of results and lead to cost-effective interventions that ensure 'value for money'.
- f. **Enabling support:** UNCTs must use UNDAFs as an enabling framework for UNCTs' country-level work, including as a platform for partnership development and innovation. UNCTs should ensure that UNDAF outcomes are commensurate with available resources.

37. Underlying this set of core features of the ideal UNDAF is the imperative to 'leave no one behind'. This pledge provides the overarching principle for the new generation of UNDAFs and embodies the UN Development System's commitment to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, finding further application through three programming principles - human rights, with a focus on addressing inequalities related to and leaving no one behind; ensuring environmental health and stewardship and building resilience; and accountability, to capture better the main tenets of the 2030 Agenda, while ensuring the core norms and mandates of the United Nations continue to drive its country-level work (this includes data and capacity development).

38. UNEP, through its MTS 2018-2021, will signal its investment strategy in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNEP's regional offices are central to programmatic delivery as one UN system at the country level, and coordination with other funds, programmes and agencies in the regions and at the national level. Eventual full implementation of the UN Development System's Standard Operating Procedures will enable UNEP's activities at the country level to be incorporated as part of the UN Country Team's Joint Annual Work Plan(s).

39. As UNEP continues to advance the integration of the environment in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it can also be anticipated that UNEP will be able to leverage the norms, standards and datasets of other UN system entities – with regard to human rights, inequality and discrimination in particular – to effectively address the linkages and nexus issues central to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

40. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for establishing a Technology Facilitation Mechanism based on collaboration between Member States, civil society, private sector, scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders. The TFM was approved in September 2015 and consists of: i) a UN Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, ii) a collaborative annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on STI for the SDGs, and iii) an online platform as a gateway for information on STI initiatives, mechanisms and programmes. UNEP has been active in the development of the TFM, co-chairing (with UN-DESA) the UN Inter-Agency Working Group that became the UN IATT.

## B. The Role of Regional Economic Commissions

41. The regional dimension provides a vital bridge between global frameworks and national development agendas in relation to the integration, implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Regional efforts could inform both global and national policymaking and normative agenda-setting through the collation of regional experiences and perspectives; promote partnerships and policy coherence, including at the sub-regional level and in support of countries in special situations, such as least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing States (SIDS) and countries in conflict; and build and increase resilience to crises through greater capacity to innovate, share common interests, pool resources, coordinate and build on synergies and complementarities.

42. The Regional Economic Commissions are collectively articulating new strategies and action plans to prioritize support to Member States (see next section on intergovernmental arrangements) in cooperation with the UN system. The following key areas provide the shared emphasis and harmonized approach of the five Regional Economic Commissions:

- (a) Integrating SDGs into national development planning and fiscal frameworks;
- (b) Promoting policy coherence, consistency and coordination at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, and supporting Regional Forums for Sustainable Development;
- (c) Enhancing data and statistical capacities of member States for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
- (d) Identifying and promoting alternative and innovative sources of financing for development;
- (e) Leveraging science, technology and innovation;
- (f) Tapping South-South and regional partnerships; and
- (g) Translating regional models into global public goods.

43. By engaging in the regional interagency mechanisms UNEP can play a key role in *bridging the gap between environmental dimension of global frameworks and regional development agendas and horizontally across regional forums* in the context of the integration, implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Engagement in regional fora, including UN coordination mechanisms, such as the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM-UNDG), can also be used to promote and scale up implementation of UNEP's PoW activities. Specific objectives of this engagement will be to:

- a. Tailor the 2030 agenda around common regional environmental priorities and promoting a common understanding of the regions' environmental priorities, and ensuring that they are brought to the attention of regional and sub-regional intergovernmental fora and other regionally relevant mechanisms.

- b. Mobilise partners and harmonise resources around common regional environmental priorities to promote regional environmental policy coherence for SDG implementation and reduce transaction costs for member states engaging in UN system meetings and processes on environment, including addressing institutional capacity related to knowledge sharing, implementation and reporting.
- c. Track progress and identify environmental achievements, challenges and critical factors in implementing the environment dimension of the 2030 agenda to promote a common understanding of regional environmental priorities - drawing on data- in context of 2030 agenda – and to reduce overlap and costs of multiple and disconnected knowledge products on environment prepared by individual stakeholders, advancing the use of UNEP assessments and data, including in regional SDG reports.

44. UNEP could support the *mapping, review and consolidation, coordination of existing data sources (including scaling-up UNEPLive) and reporting mechanisms* of the regional and sub-regional intergovernmental forums and of development partners to ensure coordinated and coherent approach to collecting and synthesising national level SDG data and to undertake analysis to inform agendas of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development and contribute to preparation of the SDG reports.

### C. The Role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

\*The draft text is currently being reviewed by the relevant UN entities.

## IV. UNEA's Potential Contribution to the Strengthened Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

45. At the Rio +20 conference, world leaders decided on a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development, which would focus on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner and enhancing its implementation. Coherence, coordination, inclusiveness, transparency and effectiveness were identified as some of the conditions for this framework to "find common solutions related to global challenges to sustainable development", leading to, *inter alia*, the establishment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and the strengthening and upgrading of UNEP, including establishing the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

46. Each of these aspects were envisioned from an inclusive perspective, which entailed other essential pieces of the institutional framework for sustainable development institutional landscape such as: the authority of the General Assembly on global matters of concern to the international community and its central position as its chief deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ of the United Nations; the coordination role of ECOSOC in the coherent implementation of intergovernmental outcomes by the UN system; role of international financial institutions; and the operational work of the UN development system. It is, therefore, important to identify the distinctive background of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the HLPF and UNEA, in the context of the reforms within the Rio +20 institutional framework for sustainable development, in order to appreciate the scope of their synergies.

### A. Linkages between UNEA and the General Assembly

47. Taking into account the relationship of subsidiarity, linkages between UNEA and the GA are mainly framed within the authority of the General Assembly on UN programmatic and budgetary matters, through decisions by its Fifth Committee and the work of related organs; as well as within the consideration of the report of the governing body of UNEP by the Second Committee of the GA, in accordance to resolution 2997 (XXVII). The latter is of particular relevance to this Note.

#### (a) Consideration of UNEA reports by the General Assembly

48. By General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) on the Institutional and Financial Arrangements for International Environmental Cooperation stipulates, the General Assembly decided that the Governing Council of UNEP (currently UNEA) shall report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

## **B. Linkages between UNEA and the Economic and Social Council**

49. Existing and potential linkages between UNEA and ECOSOC respond to various legislative sources, and procedural and substantive purposes such as the need to fulfil reporting obligations and to support, not only the realization of the respective mandates of ECOSOC and UNEA, but also the correlated mandates for the effective integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the implementation of outcomes of UN conferences and summits, in particular Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Rio+20. The following subsections outline some of those legislative sources and purposes, including formal and substantive reporting.

### **(a) Formal reporting**

50. According to General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), which also established UNEP, the UNEA shall report to the Assembly through ECOSOC. By virtue of this mandate—which has not been superseded by any subsequent legislation, including Assembly resolutions 66/288, 67/213 and 67/251—ECOSOC also has the legal prerogative to "transmit to the Assembly such comments on the report as it may deem necessary, particularly with regard to questions of co-ordination and to the relationship of environmental policies and programmes within the United Nations system to overall economic and social policies and priorities".

### **(b) Substantive contributions and reporting**

\*The draft text is currently being reviewed by the relevant UN entities.

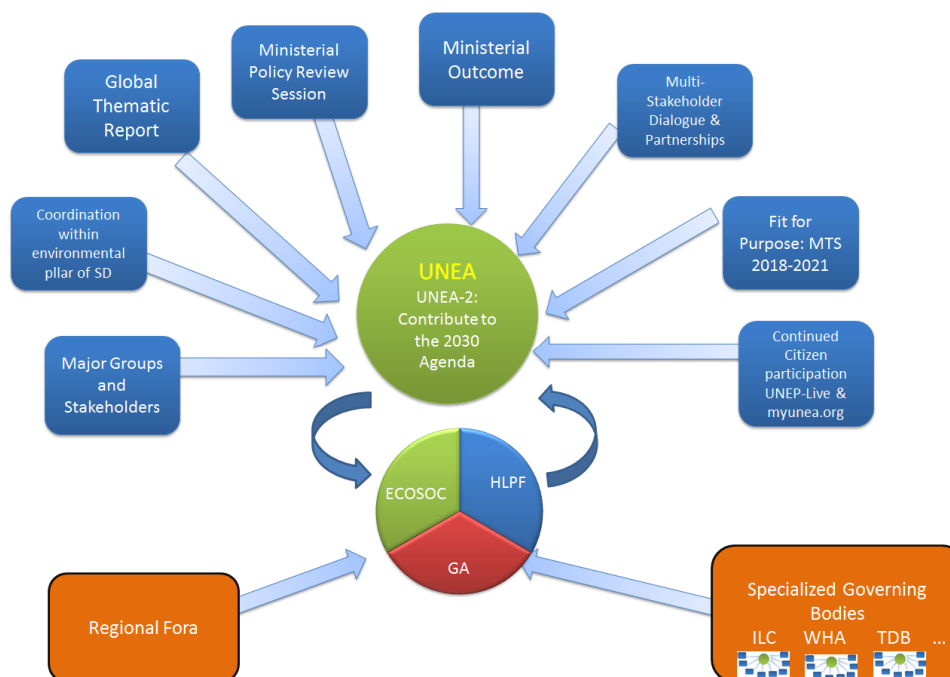
## **C. Linkages between UNEA and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**

51. Both the establishment of the HLPF and universal membership of UNEA are provided for in section IV of the "The future we want", as building blocks of the institutional framework for sustainable development. This common origin also indicates that the distinctive mandates and roles of HLPF and UNEA share common purposes related to the objectives of the institutional umbrella they represent—namely, the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and its enhanced implementation, supported by strengthened coherence, coordination, effectiveness, inclusiveness and transparency, among other factors.

52. Furthermore, General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development outlined some aspects that reaffirm the relevance of mutual support and collaboration between the HLPF and other intergovernmental bodies, such as UNEA, and allow for their contributions to the HLPF work. Some examples are:

- a. In paragraph 17 the General Assembly invited organizations of the UN system within their respective mandates to contribute the discussions of the forum.
- b. In paragraph 19 the General Assembly invited the forum to take into account the contributions and work of relevant UN intergovernmental bodies in the social, economic and environmental fields.
- c. In paragraph 20 the General Assembly decided, among other measures, that the forum shall strengthen the science-policy interface by examining documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report. In relation to this area it should be noted that in accordance with "The future we want", Assembly resolution 67/213 and the decision 27/2 of its first universal Governing Council, UNEP has a mandate to "promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making". In this regard, options for concrete collaboration between the HLPF and UNEA on the science-policy interface could be considered and recommended by UNEA to the General Assembly.
- d. GA resolution 68/215 on the Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its first universal session and implementation of section IV.C, entitled "Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development", provided for UNEP to contribute inputs, as the leading global environmental authority, on the environmental dimension of sustainable development, including in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as in discussions on the scope and modalities of a global sustainable development report. The report is produced under HLPF.

53. The section on follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides the legislative umbrella and guidance for UNEA to contribute to the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.



54. The HLPF is responsible for addressing the new and emerging issues so that the 2030 Agenda remains relevant. UNEP/UNEA, as member states and other stakeholders, should contribute by drawing the attention of the ECOSOC President to such new and emerging issues in advance of the HLPF. UNEA, along with various intergovernmental UN bodies, is also expected to support the HLPF Thematic Reviews of progress in achieving the SDGs, although this does not imply establishment of a new formal reporting link to the HLPF. UNEA will be invited to decide on whether to contribute, if so in what format, to such review. In this regard, paragraph 48 of the *‘Report of the Secretary-General on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’* (A/70/XXX) recommends three important steps to intergovernmental forums:

- Reflect on the implications of the 2030 Agenda for the intergovernmental bodies’ respective areas of work, bearing in mind the integrated nature of the Agenda;
- Examine the agenda and methods of work to ensure that the respective intergovernmental bodies are able to respond to request for voluntary inputs by HLPF as needed within the scope of their regular meetings; and
- Reflect on the ability to convene and engage the critical actors relevant to its contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

**D. Linkages between UNEA and the Regional Intergovernmental Fora**

55. Paragraphs 80 and 81 of Transforming Our World – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises follow-up and review at the regional and sub-regional levels as valuable opportunities for peer learning, including voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. It also encourages member states to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, building on existing mechanisms at the regional level and allowing adequate policy space.

56. The UN Regional Commissions have been called upon to support the review of regional progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focusing in the first instance on existing regional fora. These include.

- (a) The African Forum on Sustainable Development, approved by the ECA Joint Conference of Ministers and the Africa Union in 2015, will undertake thematic reviews with the inputs provided by the ECA Statutory Committees, the joint meetings of the ECA Conference of ministers of planning, finance, economy and the AU specialized technical committee on

finance, monetary affairs, economic planning and integration. The environmental dimension is currently covered by the AU specialized technical bodies including *inter alia* the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), and the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST);

- (b) The Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD), inaugurated in 2014, is an inclusive regional platform; currently the outcomes of the APFSD feed into the HLPF, and into the annual commission sessions of ESCAP. At its 2nd meeting in 2015, the APFSD agreed to initiate a regional road map for implementing the post-2015 development agenda at its 2016 session. The subsidiary bodies of ESCAP, such as the sectoral committees (e.g. Asia-Pacific Gender Conference), would provide inputs for specific SDGs with the environmental dimension is covered by the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific;
- (c) The UNECE Environment for Europe (EIE) process. Based on the outcome of sustainable development discussions at the 66th session of the Commission in April 2015, the UNECE Secretariat initiated a consultative process with Member States, the regional UN system, other international and regional organizations and civil society, with a view to determine the most effective modalities for regional follow-up and review of the SDGs. This would integrate other regional and sub-regional bodies (e.g., EU, OECD, Eurasian Economic Union, regional offices of UN entities, SPECA, regional development banks), existing review mechanisms, comprising both mechanisms that are carried out within UNECE, including its Sectoral Committees, governing bodies of legal instruments and policy reviews (Environmental Performance Reviews, Innovation Performance Reviews, Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade, Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management), as well as mechanisms by other actors within and outside the UN;
- (d) The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development was inaugurated in 2014 and convened annually by ESCWA. The Forum is coordinated with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the League of Arab States. Inputs from ESCWA's ten inter-governmental subsidiary bodies and other technical committees feed into the Forum, including their inputs on sectoral or thematic reviews with a focus on regional priorities and emerging issues with an integrated/nexus approach. The Arab Sustainable Development Report will be the regional flagship for the Agenda 2030 achievements and trends;
- (e) The Latin America and Caribbean Regional forum, its modalities and scope, and composition is to be considered through a broad regional consultation, open to member states, UN regional agencies, academia and civil society representatives, and to be adopted by the member states on 27 May 2016. A final proposal will be submitted for consideration and approval during ECLAC's Biennial Session in Mexico (May 2016). The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean will be a key body in this process.

57. To ensure high-level policy and institutional coherence on sustainable development, to reduce transaction costs for member states (and other groups) engaging in regional fora and to ensure ***common understanding of and approach to regional SDG priorities, challenges, implementation and reporting***, UNEP could increase its engagement in Regional Commissions' Fora on Sustainable Development and work closely with the Regional Commission secretariats to identify options to coordinate and input into these mechanisms, including convening major UNEP-led environment-related meetings back-to-back to the Regional Sustainable Development Forums, and also collaborate to increase the participation and profile of Ministries of Environment / Natural Resources in these regional forums.

- a. UNEP may also wish to consider offering to formally second UNEP-staff to the Regional Commission Sustainable Development Forum Secretariat in the lead up and during the meeting to more effectively and practically collaborate on the agenda and outcome documents.

58. UNEP, in collaboration with other UN system entities<sup>2</sup>, could also bridge the gap between *major groups and stakeholders on environment and regional intergovernmental platforms and interagency mechanisms* on the 2030 agenda, by organizing MGS meetings back to back with key regional forums and supporting MGS participation as these regional mechanisms.

59. UNEP's Regional Offices could routinely review and synthesise environmental outcomes and priorities of *sub-regional and regional intergovernmental outcome documents* to inform the agenda and discussions of Regional Ministers of Environment meetings and share with partners to forge a common understanding and voice on sub-regional and regional environmental priorities.

60. In order to strengthen *linkages between annual Regional Commission Sessions and Environment Committees and the UNEA*, UNEP could provide briefings on UNEA priorities at the relevant Regional Commission Environment Committees (for example the Environment and Development Committee of ESCAP, or the Committee on Environmental Policy of UNECE) and solicit guidance on future UNEA agendas.

61. UNEP could *tailor and scale up the voluntary Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) model* used by UN Regional Commissions in Europe and West Asia regions to focus on the monitoring, reporting and implementation of environmental SDGs at the country level and facilitate comparisons and exchange of lessons learned at regional forums. The SDG EPRs would support countries in their reporting to HLPF, regional HLPF meetings, and regional Ministers of Environment meetings, and promote knowledge sharing and lessons learned between countries as well as strengthen capacity of governments to implement the SDGs.

## V. Options for Consideration

62. At the global level, UNEA has an important role in providing guidance on global norms and standards for keeping the environment under review. This necessitates the development and use of adequate tools, follow-up on the link between science and policy, to alert and prompt action on emerging issues, and bringing together thematic follow-up and review processes. Sustainable development requires strengthened capacities and building effective institutions, and UNEA can help to frame UNEP's role in this, as well as define UNEP's contribution for systemic change, in particular as catalyst for policy and institutional coherence, effective partnerships and accountability.

63. UNEA will need to translate this guidance toward the environmental dimension, by ensuring effective linkages are made with the follow-up and review arrangements, including MEA-relevant United Nations conferences and processes. While the HLPF should focus on integrating the multiple outcomes related to these processes, ensuring a multidimensional and global perspective, UNEA could guide its own processes on the integration of the environmental dimension in accordance to preparations and outcomes of the HLPF—including the potential cross-cutting themes that are likely to inform its annual SDGs review and follow-up.

64. The HLPF on the other hand will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up. It should ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious and should focus on the assessment of progress, achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries as well as new and emerging issues.

65. The HLPF is also mandated to strengthen the “science-policy interface,” including by considering the global sustainable development report (GSDR). UNEA could both support the contribution by UNEP of relevant information and analyses with respect to the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and also consider the findings and recommendations of the GSDR in its deliberations and strategic guidance to the HLPF in the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and in the context of UNEP's programme of work.

66. UNEA could also consider how to ensure coherence and integration of recommendations and resolutions in the environmental dimension, including with other newly created arrangements such as the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science and Technology. In order to ensure a close linkage between the bureaus of intergovernmental bodies, such as the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the HLPF, it would be worthwhile exploring the option of having inputs to the HLPF presented by UNEA through its President. Strengthening the interlinkages and informal exchanges between bureaus of

<sup>2</sup> DESA has a dedicated EU grant to bridge the gap between major groups and stakeholders on environment and regional intergovernmental platforms and interagency mechanisms on the 2030 agenda at regional level with Major Groups and Stakeholders.

existing governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes and UNEA would give further opportunity to look for synergies and integration within the 2030 Agenda.

67. UNEA has a crucial role to play in delivering the environmental dimension of the SDGs, through its inputs to ECOSOC in the form of outcomes and messages. The cycle of UNEP's regular assessments and reports should be reviewed in light of decisions on the SDG follow-up and review process.

68. UNEA and its open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives could consider practical ways to enhance contributions to the HLPF in the exercise of its mandate and functions, including the transmission of key UNEA outcomes and messages through the submission of letters addressed by UNEA President, either to the President of the General Assembly or to the President of ECOSOC, or both, at the forum's sessions convened under the auspices of the Assembly and under the auspices of the Council, respectively, with the request of forwarding those communications to the forum. In order to consider these options, consideration of the functions of the Bureau, in light of GC decision 27/2 and the relevant rules of procedures, might be also required.

69. UNEP plays a pivotal role in providing assessments, policy-analysis, and integrated analytics and –approaches, to deliver on the environmental dimension of the SDGs, including the follow-up and review process. The Expected Accomplishments of the Programme of Work and Medium Term Strategy over the next three cycles are aligned with the expected outcomes of the SDGs in 2030.

70. UNEP can support member states, stakeholders and UN system entities' implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its technical expertise, knowledge systems and global partnerships and initiatives, including through joint programming at the country level.

71. UNEP aligns its strategic planning to the 2030 Agenda and strengthen collaboration with the rest of the UN system, through inter alia the UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment, to ensure coherence, knowledge sharing and capacity development, and in doing so embedding global normative frameworks and addressing emerging environmental issues.



## Annexe 1 - The environmental dimension in the SDGs

72. **SDG1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere:** A sustainably managed environment is a prerequisite for socio-economic development and poverty reduction. The natural environment supplies ecosystem goods and services that provide income, support job creation, poverty alleviation, and contribute to safety nets and reduce inequity.

73. **SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture:** Nature provides direct sources of food and a series of ecosystem services (e.g. pollination, soil formation, nutrient cycling, and water regulation) that contribute to food security and nutrition, supporting agricultural activities. Increasing world population and changes in consumption patterns put pressure on the environment creating the need to produce food for an additional two billion people by 2030, while preserving and enhancing the natural resource base upon which the well-being of present and future generations depends. This is important considering that unsustainable expansion of agriculture has created serious environmental problems such as soil erosion, water pollution through agrochemicals, and emission of greenhouse gases.

74. **SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all the ages:** A clean environment is essential for human health and well-being. However, the interactions between the environment and human health are highly complex. Indoor and outdoor air pollution, water related diseases, water pollution, and poor management of hazardous chemicals and waste all contribute to undermine health.

75. **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all:** Formal and informal education, including, public awareness and training are critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people and countries to address environmental and development issues and to create green and decent jobs and industries.

76. **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:** Understanding the links between gender inequality and environmental degradation, and taking responsive actions, can accelerate positive dynamics and promote sustainable development outcomes. Enhancing property rights and access to land and natural resources to women can contribute to reduce gender inequalities, improve their livelihood options and poverty status.

77. **SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all:** Sustainable management of water resources and access to safe water and sanitation are essential for unlocking economic growth and productivity, and provide significant leverage for existing investments in health and education. The natural environment e.g. forests, soils and wetlands contributes to management and regulation of water availability and water quality, strengthening the resilience of watersheds and complementing investments in physical infrastructure and institutional and regulatory arrangements for water access, use and disaster preparedness. Water shortages undercut food security and the incomes of rural farmers while improving water management makes national economies, the agriculture and food sectors more resilient to rainfall variability and able to fulfil the needs of growing population.

78. **SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all:** Lack of access to energy supplies and transformation systems is a constraint to human and economic development. The environment provides a series of renewable and non-renewable energy sources i.e. solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, biofuels, natural gas, coal, petroleum, uranium. Increased use of fossil fuels without actions to mitigate greenhouse gases will have global climate change implications.

79. **SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all:** The natural environment plays an important role in supporting economic activities. It contributes directly, by providing resources and raw materials such as water, timber and minerals that are required as inputs for the production of goods and services; and indirectly, through services provided by ecosystems including carbon sequestration, water purification, managing flood risks, and nutrient cycling.

80. **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation:** Constructing new greener infrastructures and retrofitting or reconfiguring existing infrastructure systems are cost-effective and resilient approaches to address issues such as water security, energy security, food security or flood resilience, and exploit the potential of smart technologies to reduce environmental impacts and increase efficiency in the use of natural resources.

81. **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries:** Environment can contribute to the reduction of inequity, including through sound management of natural resources and critical ecosystems, as well as supporting institutional arrangements regarding the use and access to natural resources. Lack of access to natural resources on the other hand is a major contributor to inequality.

82. **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable:** There is a strong link between the quality of life in cities and how cities draw on and manage the natural resources available to them. To date, the trend towards urbanization has been accompanied by increased pressure on the environment and accelerated demand for basic services, infrastructure, jobs, land, and affordable housing, particularly for the nearly 1 billion urban poor who live in informal settlements. Resource efficient cities combine greater productivity and innovation with lower costs and reduced environmental impacts, while providing increased opportunities for consumer choices and sustainable lifestyles.

83. **SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns:** One of the greatest global challenges is to integrate environmental sustainability with economic growth and welfare by decoupling environmental degradation from economic growth and doing more with less. Resource decoupling and impact decoupling are needed to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and to make the transition towards a greener and more socially inclusive global economy.

84. **SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts:** Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, aggravating water management problems, reducing agricultural production and food security, increasing health risks, and damaging critical infrastructure for the provision of water and sanitation, energy and transport services.

85. **SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development:** The oceans cover more than 70 per cent of the surface of our planet and play a key role in supporting life on earth. They are the most diverse and important ecosystem, contributing to global and regional elemental cycling, and regulating the climate. The ocean provides natural resources including food, materials, substances, and energy. Marine Protected Areas contribute to poverty reduction by increasing fish catches and income, creating new jobs, improving health, and empowering women. Increasing levels of debris in the world's seas and oceans is having a major and growing economic impact.

86. **SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss:** Terrestrial ecosystems provide a series of goods, raw materials for construction and energy, food and a series of ecosystem services including the capture of carbon, maintenance of soil quality, provision of habitat for biodiversity, maintenance of water quality, as well as regulation of water flow and erosion control, therefore contributing to reduce the risks of natural disasters such as floods and landslides, regulate climate and maintain the productivity of agricultural systems.

87. **SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:** A better understanding of the links between environment and human security is vital for effective conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. Furthermore, strengthened institutions, rule of law and enforcement contribute to support the implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements and progress towards internationally agreed global environmental goals.

88. **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development:** Stronger partnerships will contribute to sustainable development by mobilizing resources, sharing knowledge, promoting the creation and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and building capacity. There is tremendous scope for making the existing financial system more sustainable by integrating the environment dimension. There is increasing cooperation among multilateral organizations, donors and private sector to provide developing countries and beneficiaries with technologies that increase efficiency in the use of natural resources, generate low waste, treat the generated pollution and mitigate climate change.