

Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 HLPF

Comments from EEG

Page 2: Under ‘Enabling and increasing coordination and mainstreaming’

“That knowledge also needs to be more widely available to all countries and actors, motivating innovative coalitions and partnerships for success.”

EEG’s Input:

In order to share the knowledge, we recommend the inclusion/development of a knowledge-sharing platform that countries and actors can utilise to share best practices.

There can also be a provision for regional and national workshops on the practice and implementation key policies and measures for sustainable development across the globe.

Another programme to facilitate knowledge-sharing is the introduction of an interdisciplinary platform for experts, practitioners, researchers and educators to exchange their ideas on innovation, current trends as well as the practical challenges encountered in the industry.

UNEA can also encourage Member States and stakeholders to submit research abstracts and papers for the benefit of all. These can be empirical, conceptual, constructive or theoretical in nature.

Page 2: Under “Nature-Based Solutions”

EEG’s Input:

It is important to include some of the benefits of Nature-Based Solutions in this section as currently, it is very one-dimensional. For example: the following can be added:

- Nature-based Solutions (NbS) offer innovative solutions in delivering climate resilient infrastructure.
- NbS can be effective at providing infrastructure services and these may cost less (through reduced upfront investment, maintenance costs or both)’
- As NbS facilitate living systems, they are more self-sustaining over a period of time (reduction in maintenance costs).
- Other benefits: Increased tourism, elemental and chemical sinks/sequestration, temperature regulation and more.

Page 3: Under “Sustainable Consumption and Production”

EEG’s Input:

The UNEA must organise capacity-building sessions to propel public-private collaboration for the implementation of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

UNEA can also organise an exclusive environmental exhibition that showcases SCP worldwide patterns and provides an insight into what countries are doing to be more sustainable across various sectors.

Page 3: Under “Sustainable Infrastructure”

EEG’s Input:

The UNEA must address existing challenges in this sector such as growing demand due to population, gaps in funding and resources as well as governance issues.

Another aspect UNEA can greatly contribute to is finding and showcasing new and innovative approaches in sustainable infrastructure. Examples of this include innovative financing, finding viable projects to fill the existing pipeline, integrating green and grey infrastructure (innovative and traditional), inculcating smart technologies and the like.

Page 4: Under “Address the lack of environmental data”

EEG’s Input:

It is important to note here that along with statistics, there is also an urgent need for geospatial data. This will be possible only if we are able to build an effective digital ecosystem. The data can be procured from various sources including: citizen science, satellite, in situ, survey, transactional and others.

Page 6: Under “Strengthening environment rule of law and good governance and its mainstreaming n sectoral laws

EEG’s Input:

With regards to environmental law and the Montevideo Programme, we would like to recommend the following:

- The possibility of future educational/academic endeavours that promote the proper implementation of environmental law. For example, in June 2016, UNEP and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) developed an online course on human rights and environmental protection for sustainable development.

- UNEA must also support courses that teach students and policymakers to develop and implement robust public policies and laws with regards to environmental sustainability and law. Some institutions that can be partnered with include the Environmental Law Institute,
- UNEA or more specifically, UNEP can partner with judicial training institutes to assimilate environmental law training into mainstream judicial education.
- Mandates for non-State actors to be more involved in the promotion and effective implementation of environment law in their respective countries must be developed.
- The development and distribution of environmental law publications for the collective benefit of all must be encouraged.

Page 7: Under “Access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is also a key condition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of integrated approaches”

EEG’s Input:

When aiming for sustainable development, there should also be a focus on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration – *“Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”*

Thus, people must have access to environmental information for the purpose of knowledge-sharing and policy development – aspects that are key when working towards sustainable development at the local, regional and national levels.