4 March 2019

Budget and Programme Performance, including implementation of past UNEA resolutions

(OECPR-4 Agenda item 4)

I. EU + MS statement on progress reports of the Executive Director

- The EU and its Member States appreciate the updates by UN Environment's Executive Director on the progress made to implement various resolutions. At this stage we would like to provide our general comments and will submit our detailed comments in writing.
- Furthermore, we would request UNEP to continue reporting in the future, not only about the "latest" resolutions, but also on the work which is still required under previous resolutions on related subjects, such as on the sound management of chemicals and waste, that would have benefitted from a more complete picture if previous resolutions would also have been taken into account.
- On **pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism,** the EU and its Member States welcome UNEP support to countries dealing with conflict related pollution, either directly or indirectly caused by human displacement. We expect UNEP to continue its support and expand it to other countries or regions, where appropriate, including to undertake field visits and to dispatch assistance missions to affected areas, upon the invitation of affected States, as foreseen by Resolution 3/1.
- Furthermore, we would like to emphasize that, when implementing Resolution 3/1 on conflict pollution, UNEP should explore synergies and develop coordination with other UN agencies and stakeholders.
- On **Contributions of UNEA to the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development**, EU and its Member States welcome the report and the efforts undertaken in order to ensure substantive input from UNEA and active participation of the UNEA president during last years' HLPF.
- We would like to underline the importance of ensuring a similar input and visibility during the upcoming HLPFs. As the main universal decision-making body for environmental decision making, UNEA should continue to pursue a prominent role to ensure that the environmental perspective is taken into account in the proceedings of the HLPF. This includes the provision of substantive inputs

to the HLPF - in particular on the SDGs under review - as well as seeking an oral intervention by the UNEA chair during the HLPF.

- In light of the invitation of the ECOSOC President to provide inputs to the HLPF by 15 March, time is short, we expect the [Secretariat][UNEA President] to provide further clarification on the preparations and steps scheduled for UNEA to provide their inputs and look forward to discussing with other Member States under agenda item 6 a way forward to ensure UNEA will continue to provide their valuable contributions to the HLPF in future years.

- On **Health and Environment** we welcome the work done so far and notably the inter-agency work engaged to implement the resolution. We note that no information is provided on the steps taken in response to the request (in OP 26) related to the inclusion human health factors in UNEP's projects on ecosystem valuation and accounting on the assessment of the health co-benefits of UNEP's current biodiversity-related projects and request the Secretariat to provide further information on the state of play on this issue.

- We call for the timely delivery, in advance to UNEA5, of the two reports requested in that resolution (on pesticides and fertilizers, and Antimicrobial Resistance), noting the progress report mentions that only one scoping meeting was held for each report and that no foreseen date for a first-order draft is announced.

- We also highlight the importance of abiding to a strict conflict of interest policy in the development of the report on the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on the environment and health.

- On **managing soil pollution to achieve Sustainable Development** we stress that soil pollution receives too little attention globally, in view of its wide-ranging impacts, directly affecting biodiversity, ecosystems and human health.

- We welcome the work done to articulate the efforts on the report on soil pollution as well as the report on the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on the environment and health. And we note that the report by the International Technical panel on Soils of the Global Soil Partnership entitled "soil pollution : a hidden reality" only partially addresses the requests specified in the resolution.

- However, we also note that not much information is provided on the progress on the implementation of the resolution, while the progress report indicates that an implementation plan and budget has been drafted to be incorporated in a UNEP/FAO mobilization strategy. We would like to request the Secretariat to provide further information on this draft implementation plan and the related budget envisaged.

- Furthermore, we call on the Secretariat to provide more information on the steps taken to "elaborate technical guidelines for the prevention and minimization of soil contamination as a contribution to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management, including nature-based solutions ".

- **On marine litter and microplastics** the EU and its Member States thank the ED for its report, which state the outcome of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group established under resolution 3/7 as laid down in the co-chairs' "Draft Options For Discussions (Revised)". It should be noted that this report does not fully reflect the options that were presented by various proponents. Also, minutes from the meeting have still not been published. We consider that the challenge for UNEA consists in transforming this outcome that might appear as a list of measures "à la carte" in a clear, articulated, comprehensive and integrated approach susceptible to improve the international efficiency in achieving the long term elimination of discharge of litter and microplastics.

- We would have expected the report to have provided further information on the state of play on the other elements of the resolution. We understand that this can partly be done only on the basis of information provided by the MS themselves and we appreciate that UNEP gave an opportunity to MS to provide information on the actions undertaken to follow-up the UNEA resolutions, by filling in a form embedded in the AHOEEG webpage. We however believe that a reflection should be carried out on simpler ways for MS to report.

- We also wish to thank UNEP for its analysis of voluntary commitments with regard to marine litter and microplastics to assess the potential and realized impact of voluntary commitment targeting marine litter and microplastics and to provide an overview of their scope. On the future follow up and use of this analysis, we would like to understand better from the secretariat how UNEP sees the follow up and use of the analysis and if there is a possibility to complement or correct the information.

- We look forward to further to engaging with UNMS in this meeting to define follow up steps to strengthen international cooperation, coordination and synergies to effectively monitor and address Marine Litter and microplastics, in the context of a comprehensive approach, focusing on prevention and taking better into account the whole life cycle of plastic products.

- We also welcome the report and the progress made on **preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally**. The EU and its Member States remain committed to improve air quality as a policy priority, noting that air pollution remains the single greatest environmental risk to human health, now

around 7 million premature deaths globally per year according to WHO and with negative impact also on ecosystems and the environment

- We acknowledge the efforts for establishing an air quality programme, including the work undertaken on monitoring and assessment, policy and technology support, awareness-raising and communication.

- We encourage to continue this work as outlined in the Executive Director's report in close partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution – this year celebrating its 40th anniversary – as well as with other relevant actors, in particular, where climate change co-benefits can be achieved.

- Furthermore, we seek further information to be provided by the Secretariat on UNEPs activities and progress made on the implementation of the Road Map for Clean Fuel and Vehicle Standards in Southern and Western Africa and the Africa Sustainable Transport Forum Action Plan (as reflected in UNEA Resolution 3/8, 7(b))

- On **eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries**, the EU and its Member States welcome the work undertaken and the progress made on the sound management of lead, in particular lead in paint and waste lead-acid batteries.

- Effectively addressing lead is an important element of a larger and urgent need to prioritise efforts towards the 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals and waste, as emphasised in UNEA resolutions 1/5, 2/7 and 3/4. The mandate provided to UNEP under UNEA resolutions 1/5 and 2/7 on the sound management of chemicals and waste (and in fact also under GC decision 27/12) remains valid and requires decisive broader action. Indeed, the work of UNEP in the field of chemicals and waste needs to be significantly enhanced to address the urgency required by the 2020 goal.

- On **addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems**, we note the progress as reported. On the report we would like to highlight paragraph 15 referring to the conclusions of the 4th Intergovernmental Review held in Bali in October 2018 and note that no approved report, nor conclusions from this meeting are available to date.

- The EU and its Member States acknowledge the need that additional work and support is required related to the monitoring the implementation of SDG6, and that the work under the GEMS/Water programme could be linked to that. We encourage UNEP to continue its activities and cooperation with other UN

Agencies to strengthen monitoring and reporting, while building on existing activities and programmes and avoiding duplication of efforts.

- Furthermore, we recognize the links with the work undertaken in the Waste Water Initiative and the Global Nutrient Management Partnership, and we encourage UNEP to effectively integrate these and related activities in its Programme of Work in a coherent manner.

- With regard to partnerships on data and monitoring, we expect UNEP to take a prudent and due diligent approach.

- On **the implementation of paragraph 88** (a)-(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", we welcome the report of the Executive Director, which provides a useful summary on the state of play relevant to international environmental governance and the strengthening of UNEP.

- We recognize the findings that the universal membership of UNEA has contributed to increased participation of Member States and other Stakeholders, was well as more visibility for the environment within the UN system. We also recognize that progress has been made in other areas, including consolidation of the headquarters functions, strengthening regional offices, communication and awareness raising and improved access to information by stakeholders.

- We regret however, the report is lacking analysis on areas where progress seems to be lagging behind, including to enhance system-wide coordination in the UN system, contributions to the Environment Fund, as well as strengthening the Science-Policy interface. The EU and its Member States would like to request the Secretariat to provide further information and analysis on possible actions to advance in those areas.

- In that regard, we would like to highlight the role of the Environmental Management Group to support implementation of system-wide framework strategies relevant to the protection of the environment, with the view of improving cooperation among the UN-agencies in providing more effective support to Member States to implement the environment dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

- We also would like to reiterate our support and underline the importance of effective implementation of the UN Development Reform as agreed in GA resolution 72/279 and call upon all UN agencies, including UNEP, to implement the reform at all level.

- Furthermore, we highlight the importance of a predictable and sustainable Environment Fund and invite all Member States to contribute to the Fund.

- On **Coral Reefs**, we thank the ED for its comprehensive report as well as the recommendations.
- The EU and its Member States support continued attention to coral reefs, given their role in coastal protection, providing a source of income (tourism and fisheries) that need to be managed well, conserved and protected and restored where relevant.
- We look forward to engaging with other UNMS on how to follow up on the recommendations during this meeting.

II. EU + MS detailed written comments

ED report on Progress on the contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (EA.3/3)

Chapter on Implementation:

§2: contribution to HLPF as a standing item on agenda of each UNEA.

- EU+MS welcome the recognition of the importance of UNEA's contribution to the HLPF as a standing item on the agenda of UNEA.
- Additional information is lacking, however, on how the discussion under this item will be organized. The idea expressed in UNEA3/3 was to focus on the SDGs under review in the upcoming HLPF. Background documentation and/or guiding questions are still missing. It would have been good to have background documentation explicitly highlighting linkages between UNEA's theme and the SDGs under review. Also the EDs report on the UNEA theme could have addressed these issues better.

§3: provision of timely substantive inputs to the annual meetings of the HLPF.

- EU+MS attach great importance to the provision of timely substantive inputs to the annual meetings of the HLPF. According to the procedure agreed in UNEA Res 3/3, such input needs to be prepared by the ED under the guidance of the UNEA President and in consultation with the CPR.
- So far, almost no information has been received on the preparation of the input to the 2019 HLPF. Given the deadline for such submissions of 15/3/2019, clarification is urgently needed.

§4,§5, §6: interaction between UNEA and HLPF/ participation of the UNEA president at HLPF.

- EU+MS continues to underline the importance of close interaction and active participation of the UNEA president during the HLPF. EU+MS welcomes the efforts undertaken to ensure an active slot for the UNEA President during last years HLPF, and looks forward for a similar role at the upcoming HLPF in 2019.

§7: work of UNEP regional offices with member states.

- EU+MS would seek clarification on the proposed development of a corporate strategy on UNEP contributions to the regional forums on sustainable development; and underlines in the context the need for such an initiative to be linked to the PoWB and other ongoing activities.

§8: specific activities undertaken by the regional forums in 2018.

- EU+MS welcome the many activities undertaken at the different regional levels in preparing for the HLPF. EU+MS would seek further information on the activities scheduled in 2019 and on how these would contribute to the HLPF in 2019.

Chapter on Recommendations and Suggested Actions:

§10a) proposal to task UNEP with assisting countries in assessing the integration of environmental dimension in their 2030ASD implementation efforts.

- EU+MS to underline that any such activity should be covered in the PoWB.

§10b) proposal to extend the regional dimension in the work of the UNEA (mirroring the regional session during each HLPF)

- EU+MS questions the added value of such a session with a specific regional focus amidst an UNEA agenda already very full. Focus of UNEA should be on global issues, not on regional issues.

§10c) proposal for UNEP to encourage the MEAs that it administers to provide input to the HLPF and/or instituting reporting by the MEAs to UNEA.

- EU+MS questions the added value of such a decision. The invitations to provide inputs to the HLPF are the authority of the ECOSOC chair. Many MEAs are already responding to that invitation.

III. Annotation for provisional agenda item 4 of OECPR-4:

"The Chair will invite the meeting to consider the following reports of the Executive Director, which have been prepared in response to the various decisions and resolutions of the previous sessions of the Environment Assembly:

1) Progress on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism (EA.3/1)
2) Progress on pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors (EA.3/2) **NA**
3) Progress on the contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (EA.3/3)
4) Progress on environment and health (EA.3/4)
5) Progress on investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (EA.3/5) **NA**
6) Progress on managing soil pollution to achieve Sustainable Development (EA.3/6)
7) Progress on marine litter ad microplastics (EA.3/7)
8) Progress on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (EA.3/8)
9) Progress on eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries (EA.3/9)

10) Progress on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (EA.3/10)
11) Progress on implementation of paragraph 88 (a)-(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (EA.3/11)
12) Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session: Towards a pollution-free planet (UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1)
13) Oceans and Seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res. 10)
14) Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/12 on sustainable coral reefs management (not mentioned in annotated agenda)"

IV. Annex: Background on draft EU + MS statement (<u>not for submission</u>)

Concerning: Draft EU + MS LTT on ED's report "Progress on implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want""

Prepared by: marjaana.kokkonen@ym.fi

<u>Background</u>

The report, prepared in response to resolution 3/11 of the UNEA, describes the progress made in the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want". The report provides relatively neutral description of the situation with regard to different subparagraphs. However, it does not provide a substantial analysis of the progress nor reasons for slower progress in different areas. For example, on interagency coordination, the report highlights the mechanisms and processes through which UN system-wide coordination on the environment is taking place, but falls short on making reference to accomplishments and ongoing work, i.a. in the context of the Environment Management Group.

However, some estimations on progress in different subparagraphs can be made. The establishment of the universal UN Environment Assembly has greatly increased participation by both governments and other groups leading to more visibility for environment also in the UN system. Continued progress has also been made with regard to functioning of UNEP's governing bodies. Other areas were good progress have been made, include consolidation of headquarters functions and strengthening regional offices, communication and awareness raising, and improved access to information by stakeholders.

Slowest progress seems to have been achieved in the areas related to improving system-wide coordination in the UN system, funding to the Environment Fund as well as strengthening of science-policy interface. With regard to system-wide coordination: the full potential of the Environment Management Group (EMG) has not been utilized. On funding: the amount of non-earmarked funding to the Environment Fund has diminished putting the implementation of Programme of Work in jeopardy. On science-policy interface: more efforts could be made to make use of UNEP's scientific reports, especially the GEO-report, in the decision-making of UNEA.

The recently published Nordic Council funded report on international environmental governance provides further views and recommendations for action to advance IEG. The report is available at: http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-5478

Key objectives:

- Strengthened and effective UN Environment Programme and UN Environment Assembly through full implementation of Rio +20 paragraph 88.
- Coordinated implementation of environmental dimension of Agenda2030 across UN agencies building on synergies and avoiding competition.

Key messages:

- EU and its MS warmly welcome the ED report. Almost 7 years after Rio+20 conference, it provides a timely and useful summary on the situation with regard to international environmental governance and strengthening of UNEP. [Placeholder: It is important to continue these discussions. Therefore, the EU suggests UNEA4 to decide on an establishment of a working group on environmental governance that would prepare recommendations to UNEA5 on these issues.]

- We mostly agree with the findings of the report. The establishment of the universal UN Environment Assembly has certainly been a great success with increased numbers of participation both by governments and other groups, leading to more visibility for environment also in the UN system. We also welcome the continued progress with regard to development of UNEP governing bodies' functions.

- Other areas were good progress seems to have been made include consolidation of headquarters functions and strengthening regional offices, communication and awareness raising, and improved access to information by stakeholders.

- However, the ED's report did not really provide a substantial analysis of the progress nor reasons for slower progress in different areas. Suggestions for possible improvements were also missing.

- EU and its MS consider that most work remains in the areas related 1) to improving system-wide coordination in the UN system, 2) funding to the Environment Fund as well as 3) strengthening of science-policy interface.

- With regard to improving system-wide coordination in the UN system, we highlight the role of the Environment Management Group in supporting the implementation of the system-wide framework of strategies on the environment. The most effective implementation of Agenda2030 and support for member states can be achieved by close co-operation among the UN agencies.

- The UN Development System needs to be fit to support the implementation of Agenda 2030. We strongly support the reform and underline the effective implementation of UN resolution 72/279 and call for a strong commitment from all UN agencies, including UNEP to the implementation of the reform on all levels.

- We highlight the importance of non-earmarked contributions to the Environment Fund that allow UNEP to implement that commonly agreed Programme of Work. With only 15 countries providing about 90% of the Fund is not a sustainable basis for long-term. We would like to take this opportunity to invite all Member States to contribute to the Fund.

- We would be interested to hear what is UNEP's own analysis on what actions should be taken (and by who / which instance) to advance in areas that have so far progressed more slowly?

Concerning: Draft LTT on Progress Report ED on resolution 3/1 on pollution and armed conflicts and terrorism

- *The EU/MS shares the concern of Resolution 3/1 regarding pollution and environmental degradation caused by armed conflict or terrorism through the targeting of natural resources and vital civilian infrastructure. Unfortunately, pollution of land, air or water is sometimes used as a weapon of war in areas affected by armed conflicts or terrorism. [INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY]*

- *The EU/MS is firmly against this kind of pollution and has recently (November 2018) in its Council Conclusions on Water Diplomacy, condemned the use of water as a weapon of war, for instance by destroying water infrastructures, polluting water or diverting watercourses. [INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY]*

- The EU/MS welcomes UNEP support to countries in dealing with conflict related pollution, either because they are directly affected by the conflict or are facing massive human displacement caused by the conflict in a neighbouring country. We expect UNEP to continue its support and expand it to other countries or regions, when appropriate.

- *Pollution caused by armed conflict or terrorism has affected recently countries like Iraq, who has suffered from substantial air and water pollution and tabled Resolution 3/1. We welcome UNEP activities in Iraq aimed at tackling waste in Mosul and assessing oil contaminated sites in Iraq. [INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY]*

- The EU/MS encourages UNEP to undertake field visits and to dispatch assistance missions to affected areas, upon the invitation of the affected State, as foreseen by Resolution 3/1.

- We agree that, when implementing Resolution 3/1 on conflict pollution, UNEP should explore synergies and develop coordination with other UN agencies and stakeholders.

- Furthermore, the EU/MS welcomes the development by UNEP of the massive open online course on environmental security and sustaining peace.

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