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Federal Department of the Environment,
Transport, Energy and Communications DETEC

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN
International Affairs Division

Switzerland - General Remarks (Agenda item 4)

Delivered by Sebastian König, 18/03/2019, 12:40.

Merci la co-présidente, Merci le co-président

La Suisse soutient le multilinguisme à l'ONU. Nous nous donc réjouissons que la traduction soit garantie, ce qui rend possible un processus inclusif.

Je passe maintenant à parler en anglais.

Before engaging on the subject matter, we would like to thank the co-chairs for the guiding questions and their willingness to facilitate more interactive discussions.

Co-chairs, distinguished delegates, with a bird's eye's view, and when looking at it very pragmatically, this working group must work towards fulfilling the UNGA mandate: that is to provide recommendations with respect to the topic at hand. In that light, let us use this opportunity here to be explorative in identifying the challenges in IEL and IEG, and be creative in finding response options to address those challenges. At the end of the third session we would like to hold a document in our hands that reflects the broad spectrum of the discussions and recommends a *set* of options that aim to strengthen IEG and IEL, not restricting ourselves to one option and one single way forward.

On the content

First, Switzerland is of the opinion that International environmental *governance* and the interplay of the different actors within global environmental governance, are areas, which we should aim to strengthen in order to support our efforts for the protection of the environment.

Second, also there is a particular momentum and a certain appetite among member states to look at international environmental governance in a broader sense and put the "environment" back on the highest political agenda. There is need to mark a milestone for international environmental governance. We see that opportunity in Stockholm+50 in 2022.

Third, gaps or challenges may be of varying depths and breadths, which in our understanding must be taken into account when addressing the issue. Bearing the diversity of possible gaps and the risks of re-formulating principles in mind, the outcome of this process must not be restricted to one single response option, such as a pact. It is of utmost importance that we are not weakening existing principles.

Forth, Switzerland is guided by the following:

- We need to strengthen UNEP in its normative and in its science for policy work, and build on existing processes and mechanisms, such as the Montevideo Program, when considering to improving on the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements.
- Moreover, when considering the work across the UN system, and to deliver as "One", we should make use of the work of the Environment Management Group that has the mandate to assure the collaboration and coordination on environmental matters across the UN system.

In summarizing

The working group needs to establish a common understanding what the most important challenges in IEL and IEG are. The working group also needs to come to the conclusion that there are multiple ways to address all those challenges. This can include, but is not limited to, the strengthening of international environmental governance, or the formulation of a common goals, e.g. around the internationally agreed environmental goals and Stockholm+50. Most importantly, we need to be cautious no to weaken existing achievements, and to keep the mandate of UNEP in consideration when going forward.

Merci.