



Switzerland – Proposal of Recommendations

3rd Substantive Session of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277

The overarching aim must be to work towards clear, comprehensive, coherent, efficient and effective international rules with corresponding institutions to effectively address environmental issues of global concern. To reach this goal International Environmental Governance (IEG) needs to be further strengthened. Therefore, Switzerland proposes the following recommendations (*Recommendations 1 through 5, in italics*) to be forwarded to the UN General Assembly for consideration.

The Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group, having met in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 12 May 2018, recognizes the challenges related to coherence, coordination and delivery of the international environmental governance system and emphasizes the need for continuous improvement of the international environment governance system in order to keep up with the escalating environmental change and to ensure a more effective implementation of the global environmental agenda.

The Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group recommends to the General Assembly:

Strengthen UN-system wide action on the environment

***Recommendation 1** – To increase efforts to enhance synergies and to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements in order to strengthen coherent system-wide action and facilitate implementation, inter alia, through cooperation within sectorial clusters or between them, or through cooperation between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements.*

Concrete steps include, but are not limited to,

- i) Developing integrated reporting and modular reporting;*
- ii) Developing implementation guidelines for multilateral environmental agreements;*
- iii) Enhancing cooperation among scientific bodies that support multilateral environmental agreements.*

Switzerland recognizes a need for all actors, including governments, United Nations bodies, governing bodies and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), other international and national agencies, and all other relevant stakeholders to continue to promote and undertake mutually supportive efforts and approaches aimed at enhancing cooperation and synergies among MEAs. The “Chemicals and Waste Cluster” with its BRS conventions is exemplary. One should also avoid duplication of reporting by using the same reporting channels. The biodiversity cluster can serve as an example, where a modular reporting could alleviate the reporting burden.

***Recommendation 2** – To request the Executive Director of UNEP, in the capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group, to invite the United Nations system to provide input to the Environment Management Group, including by assessing challenges, needs and considerations related to how the system is currently achieving the identified objectives and functions for international environmental governance.*

Concrete steps include, but are not limited to,

- i) Mapping of existing global and regional action plans and agreements to create an overview of coverage and identify interlinkages among MEAs and UN bodies;*
- ii) Calling on the members of the EMG for the full implementation of the “United Nations System-wide framework of Strategies on the Environment” (UNEP/EA.2/INF/6).*

The EMG consists of 51 specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the UN system including the secretariats of the MEAs. The EMG is chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP. The “United Nations System-wide framework of Strategies on the Environment” has the goal to promote the convergence of different agency strategies related to environment and the elaboration of new system-wide strategies to guide the environmental activities of UN entities. The framework also aims to strengthen the capacity and synergies across the UN system to support the integration of the environment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Recommendation 3 – *To compile existing internationally agreed environmental goals into a framework document, taking into account the current goal setting under sectorial processes.*

The number of international environmental institutions, goals and agreements has increased significantly since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. In 2012, UNEP has published a report on the existing global goals in the environmental domain, stemming for example from Rio+20 or from the MEAs. In the meanwhile, new global and regional goals have been agreed upon, be it for example the Paris Agreement Goal of keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to increase efforts to limit it even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or the Aichi Targets for biodiversity. Others are currently being developed, like the post-2020 targets for the biodiversity cluster. Moreover, the chemicals and waste cluster has been working on a post-2020 framework. We believe that member states with the help of UNEP could work towards establishing a compilation of the internationally agreed environmental goals ready for a 2022 summit (see also *recommendation 5* below). We believe that such a compendium can provide an overview of existing goals, serve a response option to streamline the engagement of the various MEAs and other actors in the environmental domain and create an enabling environment and let us work towards common goals within global environment policy.

Support capacity building for implementation

Recommendation 4 – *To exploit and step up implementation of the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (UNEP’s Montevideo Programme), providing legal technical assistance and capacity-building training to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their capacity to develop and enforce environmental law. Calling for the full implementation of the “Montevideo V Programme” as adopted at UNEA 4.*

Concrete steps include, but are not limited to

- i) Providing training in environmental law matters and promote of education in the same field, including Judges Programmes;*
- ii) Developing and promoting the development of soft law instruments, such as codes of conduct and guidelines to help identify customary law;*
- iii) Allowing the Montevideo Programme to periodically screen for potential gaps, by linking it more closely with UNEP’s scientific work.*

The overall framework of UNEP’s work on “Strengthening Law and Institutions” is broadly aimed at providing legal technical assistance and capacity-building training to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In particular, the Montevideo Programme is focused on promoting and providing legal advisory services for the development or strengthening of regional and global MEAs.

Creating an opportunity for international environmental policy

Recommendation 5 – *To recognize that the 50 year’s commemoration of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm+50) may provide a milestone opportunity to improve on the international environmental governance in general and further reinforce the role of United Nations Environment Programme within international environmental governance.*

To encourage UNEP, within its mandate and following UNEA decision EA-4/L.29, in collaboration with the multilateral agreements and relevant UN entities, to start the preparatory process for recognizing this event.

To take a decision, on the convening of an intergovernmental conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to further increase action towards a comprehensive, coherent, efficient and effective international environmental governance and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNEP.

To start the preparatory process of consultations and stocktaking for the identification of a set of options for improving on international environmental governance, with particular emphasis on emerging environmental issues and the internationally agreed environmental goals, for consideration to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session, and leading up to the Stockholm+50 Conference.

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. Switzerland sees that opportunity in Stockholm+50 in 2022. In addition, according to the modalities resolution, UN GA Decision 27/277, the recommendations may include the convening of an intergovernmental conference.