

Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme
Sixth meeting
7-11 October 2019
Conference Room 1

Note from the Secretariat

Follow-up to Agenda item 3: Programme performance review 2018-2019, including relevant UN Environment Assembly Resolutions

UNEP response to comments made by the European Union and its Member States on the topic of UN Development System Reforms

General comments

EU/MS would like to thank UNEP for the comprehensive note identifying steps taken since June 2019 to implement the Roadmap for mainstreaming UNDS Reforms.

We share UNEP's positive perception of the reform. For an efficient implementation of the reform, UNEP needs to focus on partnerships with other UN actors. A more coordinated UN country team and an independent resident coordinator provide an opportunity for UNEP to contribute to the UN's work without having to be present in the field.

UNEP reply:

UNEP is indeed engaged and will continue to engage with sister UN agencies to support countries in addressing key sustainable development priorities and gaps. For example:

- *Together with the WHO we have developed a strong partnership on environment and health issues at both the regional and country levels.*
- *Together with the ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, and UNITAR, UNEP is supporting countries in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability.*
- *Together with UN Regional Commissions we are undertaking joint work on environment performance reviews, education for sustainable development, green economy, air pollution.*
- *In collaboration with the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environment Agreements like the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, UNEP supports sound management and use of chemicals and wastes to protect human health and the environment. Other agencies like FAO, WHO are involved in this endeavor.*
- *Together with several UN agencies, UNEP actively participates and contributes to Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs) under the UN Sustainable Development Group at the regional level involving over 20 Un Agencies. IBCs are established to deal with region specific challenges, opportunities and cross-sectoral activities. IBCs include gender, social protection, health and wellbeing, migration, youth, environment, data, etc. In Europe, UNEP leads the IBC on*

environment and in the LAC region the IBC on climate change and resilience. Through the IBCs, UN agencies have been able to develop plans for joint action at the country level, preparation of interagency guidance notes, common position papers, and collective support to intergovernmental processes.

Specific comments

- With regards to the Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System: We are pleased to note the outreach activities done in some parts of the world and look forward to seeing a broader global coverage in activities. It is very important for UNEP to ensure that enough knowledge of environmental aspects of the SDG's is transferred to the RC System.

- **UNEP reply:**
 - *We definitely would like to replicate the UNEP/RCs workshop for Africa in other regions, but also explore ways to make it a regular interaction with RCs and contribute to the collective efforts of the UN in supporting countries to meet the goals of the 2030 agenda, in particular the environmental dimension of the 2030 agenda.*
 - *As regards engagement with the UN Resident Coordinator system and Country Teams, we are already engaging – with the extensive support of our Regional Offices – to anticipate policy advisory and technical support to the development of Common Country Analyses in all regions in 2020. Banking on our strength in data provision and using our established Regional Office presence – which will become the focus on the UNDS reform processes – we will ensure that policy capacity is never far from the “front line”.*

- Concerning the funding of the RC system: We are pleased that further steps are taken to implement the 1% levy. Regarding the collection and transfer of the levy, it is important that no new structures are put in place within the organization to meet this goal.

- **UNEP reply:**
 - The structures and systems for the collection and accounting for the 1% levy in UNEP are hosted within the current structures and resources. The processes for managing the levy does involve new procedures which are not fully catered currently in our ERP system and so there is some implication on workload however in this early inception phase this has been minimal. The Secretariat is pleased to confirm that UNEP works with UNON and UNHABITAT to streamline the systems across the three agencies and maximize support from UNHQ/DCO. DCO has also requested all agencies to track and estimate the additional costs generated by the management of the levy, which the Nairobi based organizations have not yet done.

- Regarding measures to put forward candidates who have passed the UNRC assessment to deploy as RCs, it would be interesting to hear about the measures and timelines.

- **UNEP reply:**
 - *This point was covered in detail during the Policy Director's presentation during Q&A session.*

- *The overall process is a lengthy 3-step process where candidates must (a) be selected from within the house; (b) pass a stringent RC assessment competency test; (c) secure selection through the Inter Agency Appointments Panel in New York.*
- Concerning the extensive Dialogue (2-4 September) with the full set of UNRCs deployed in Africa (to be replicated in other regions), it would be interesting to receive information from UNEP of the lessons learnt.
- **UNEP reply:**
 - *This is being prepared by Africa Office and will be transmitted at the earliest opportunity.*
- Regarding UNEP's in-country representatives and regional offices reporting to RCs on UNEP contribution to collective results on the ground, we would like to receive information from UNEP on the reporting cycle and how the RCs intend to use this information.
- **UNEP reply:**
 - *UNEP continues to report on annual basis to the RC who shares it with the concerned governments and the UNDG (now UNSDG). These arrangements may remain the same in the new RC system. However, the UNSDG will be working on streamlining the reporting with probably new electronic tools for reporting.*
- With regards to the 15 % of non-core resources to joint UN activities: We are pleased to note that steps have been taken to report on the new QCPR Indicator.
- Concerning the Cooperation Framework Processes and staff capacities: We are pleased to see a comprehensive list of planned activities. The timeframe of these activities should however be clarified. We propose to continue strengthening the capacities of the staff in order to fully incorporate the environmental dimension of the sustainable development in the cooperation framework processes.
- **UNEP reply:**
 - *What is currently required is support to assist UNEP engage in the CCA and Cooperation Framework processes. This will require engagement from across UNEP to provide technical and policy support at this crucial CCA inception time. Funding for this level of engagement has not been made provision for.*
 - *Two staff members has recently attended the UN Cooperation Framework roll-out Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop and we will share the lessons learnt from the workshop to all staff.*
- We encourage UNEP's strengthened engagement in Cooperation Frameworks processes through e.g. UNEP 'menu of services' offered to governments, UNCTs and RCs. However, we would welcome more information from UNEP on what in practice the 'menu of services' would entail, how they will be developed, what agencies will be involved and how and when the effectiveness of this approach will be monitored and evaluated.

- **UNEP reply:**
 - *A Menu of Services is being developed by UNEP. We are trying to have it ready before the end of 2019 for use early in 2020.*
 - *Across the 7 sub-programmes and through special initiatives UNEP has a wide range of tools, services and workstreams readily available to support RCs/UNCTs. These include:*
 - *development of environmental legislation*
 - *strengthening legal frameworks;*
 - *transboundary cooperation;*
 - *support to national assessments and data collection;*
 - *support to develop national policies*
 - *economic analysis;*
 - *guidance on best available techniques, and environmental practices;*
 - *access scientific and technical knowledge of resource use assessments;*
 - *macroeconomic modelling to forecast benefit;*
 - *policy analysis and alignment;*
 - *institutional capacity building;*
 - *sustainable trade and investment;*
 - *decision making tools for ecosystem management;*
 - *valuation of ecosystem services, to name a few.*

- We welcome the proposed ways to provide accurate data into the CCA through the World Environment Situation Room and to further strengthen the capacity of other UN Agencies in order to better integrate the environmental dimensions in their work.
- We would like to remind the Secretariat to provide further information of potential costs and savings to UNEP, linked to the implementation of the UNDS reform.

- **UNEP reply:**
 - Following the ongoing UN reforms, the funding needs and mechanisms for the new Resident Coordinators model, will be secured through a 'hybrid'- funding model based on three funding sources: (a) 1% coordination levy on 'tightly earmarked third-party non-core contributions'; (b) doubling cost-sharing contributions from UN development system entities; (c) voluntary, predictable, multi-year contributions to a trust fund.
 - UNEP will be contributing through the 1% coordination levy model. Accordingly, out of the five funding sources of UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW), the direct impact of the reform will only be on earmarked funding source – that meet certain conditions. With regards to the 2020-2021 PoW budgets, it important to note that the main purpose of UNEA is to approve the Environment Fund budget while the earmarked funds remain an estimate based on historical trends of expenditures and income. Accordingly, we do not foresee the need to change the earmarked funds budgets in the PoW.
 - UNEP is conducting a full review of all relevant commitments and associated indicators for UN entities under the Funding Compact and will initiate measures to ensure alignment/track compliance including full compliance with international

reporting and transparency standards (IATI). With regards to the non-core resources to joint UN activities, UNEP is assessing the percentage of current resources dedicated to joint UN activities. Our aim is to ensure that we meet or exceed the required allocation. This matter falls under Funding Compact commitments. It is a new QCPR indicator on which reporting will be required. UNEP will therefore review the methodology for capturing joint activities to ensure that we are able to report on the many joint efforts that are ongoing, including, but not limited to, pooled funding expenditures.

Notwithstanding the above UNEP has not established targets related to potential costs savings of these reforms. Initial costing estimates were done on a secretariat wide approach and UNEP doesn't have a mechanism at this time to establish a financial analysis.

- Furthermore, we would appreciate to get more clarity on how the activities set out in the document feed into the development of the MTS and related consultations, including with other UN agencies.
- **UNEP reply:**
 - *It is anticipated that our enhanced engagement at the country and regional levels will not only serve to inform on UN planning at those levels but also identify gaps that need to be filled and thus inform the design of the next MTS.*
- In that context, we request the UNEP Secretariat to provide an update to the CPR on the state of play, in due time for the MS to consider the latest developments in their considerations related to the MTS.