

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday, 27 February 2020  
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
United Nations Office at Nairobi  
Conference Room 4

**Note from the Secretariat for the consultation meeting on the CPR-based review:  
Enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the multilateral  
environmental agreements (MEAs)**

This note, entitled “Enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the multilateral environmental agreements”, is developed in support of the process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations Environment Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, as mandated by paragraphs 9 –13 of UNEA decision 4/2.

At previous consultation meetings under the process for review, member States requested additional information from the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements on possible ways to enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the multilateral environmental agreements. On this basis, the UNEP Secretariat has reached out to those Secretariats to solicit information. This document provides an overview of inputs from MEA Secretariats, for further consideration in the context of the process for review by the CPR.

## **Enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)**

### Introduction

At the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in March 2019, member States adopted decision 4/2 “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the 5<sup>th</sup> session of UNEA”, which mandated a process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the UNEP governing bodies – i.e. UNEA and its intersessional subsidiary body, CPR. One of the focus areas identified by member States and stakeholders during the review process include increasing cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the MEAs.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper<sup>2</sup> is to present concrete ideas that could be further discussed to meaningfully enhance cooperation, coherence and synergies between UNEP and the MEAs, enabling UNEP to fulfill its mandate.

The following options have been developed in full recognition of the fact that all MEAs are legally autonomous with their own governing bodies. It is also important to note that the membership of these governing bodies differ from each other as well as with respect to UNEA, which has 193 UN Member States as its members.

There is long standing programmatic cooperation between the UNEP secretariat and the secretariats of MEAs, as mandated by decisions/resolutions of their respective governing bodies. This programmatic cooperation can serve as the basis for exploring further cooperative options.

### Concrete options/ideas for further consideration

#### **A. Cooperation during UNEA and COP meetings**

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<sup>1</sup> Specific options put forth during the CPR review process include:

- a) Foster closer dialogue and collaboration between UNEA and the MEAs and their governing bodies. This could be done for example through their Chairs or members of their respective Bureaus by identifying mutual priorities for cooperation and for possible intergovernmental decisions that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.
- b) Mobilize MEAs participation in and contributions to UNEA, keeping in mind their respective mandates; organizing dedicated dialogue with MEAs could be explored, for example through a the organization of an “MEA Day” during UNEA which would enable the MEA Chairs/Presidents or members of their respective Bureaus holding dialogue sessions on mutual priorities for cooperation that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.
- c) Both Member States and the Secretariat should consult more actively with the MEAs and other international organizations with a view to foster better policy coherence and cooperation.
- d) MEAs should be encouraged to share ideas for resolutions at UNEA and contribute to the implementation process.
- e) Bring together the heads of global environmental assessments and subsidiary scientific and technology bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements to discuss emerging environmental challenges and identify synergistic solutions.

<sup>2</sup> This paper benefits from the contributions made by the secretariats of BRS, CITES, Minamata and the Vienna Convention/Montreal Protocol.

1. Member States can consider establishing an agenda item on “International cooperation, including with the MEAs” in the sessions of UNEA. Where possible, other MEAs Conferences of the Parties (COP) can consider adding an agenda item on “International cooperation, including with UNEP” (as in the case of BRS). Discussions under this agenda item could focus on particular thematic clusters and include, for example, remarks by relevant MEA COP Presidents or Executive Secretaries in UNEA sessions, and by UNEA President in the MEAs COPs. Supporting documents for the agenda item could be jointly drafted by UNEP and the MEA secretariats.
2. Organize informal events on programmatic cooperation between UNEA and the MEAs in the margins of UNEA sessions and the MEAs COPs. UNEP and MEA secretariats can also consider organizing joint side events on specific topics.
3. Organize structured dialogue(s) between UNEP Executive Director and the Executive Secretaries of MEAs, COP Presidents and UNEA President (or their Bureau representatives) at UNEA and/or at COPs.
4. Prepare “thematic briefs” in consultation with MEA Secretariats on the theme of UNEA and/or proposed resolutions, highlighting ongoing initiatives.
5. Explore the possibility of organizing back-to-back meetings of COPs and UNEA.

**B. Enhanced programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs**

6. Explore modalities for MEAs to participate in the UNEA-5 process towards preparing a political declaration for a UN high-level meeting, in the context of the commemoration of the creation of UNEP by the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972, as mandated by [General Assembly resolution 73/333](#).
7. Provide opportunities for engagement by the MEAs in the intersessional period between the two UNEA sessions by, for example, organizing MEA briefings to the CPR, including at the annual subcommittee meeting.
  - Facilitate national-level discussion between the Permanent Representatives to UNEP and the MEAs on key outcomes of COPs and the general directions/strategy of their respective countries.
8. Make better use of the Executive Director’s quarterly reports to the CPR to highlight key policy developments from COP decisions or intergovernmental processes involving the MEAs. Provide briefings for the Chairs or members of their respective bureaus to help them identify priorities for cooperation and for possible intergovernmental decisions that can promote coherence and synergies between UNEP and MEAs on substantive issues.
9. UNEP and MEAs to cross-analyse their respective governing body decisions and resolutions in order to avoid duplication and to identify potential areas for cooperation based on the latest scientific information, such as the Global Environment Outlook and the Frontiers Report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern.

- Collaborative work between MEA secretariats and UNEP needs to start with identification of issues of common interest and common priorities and designing activities that could address those issues/priorities. Once activities are identified, MEA secretariats and UNEP would need to take things forward with approval of their respective governing bodies.

10. Increase the involvement of the MEAs secretariats in the preparation of UNEA resolution implementation plan as well as in the actual implementation of the relevant resolutions, where appropriate, to strengthen programmatic coherence and cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs.

- Create effective mechanism(s) through which UNEP and MEAs secretariats could mutually inform the development and implementation of each other's programme of work (through e.g. thematic task forces, focal points networks).
- Continue involving the MEA secretariats in reviewing and providing inputs to UNEP's MTS/POW and projects of relevance to them. Further steps could be taken to integrate the MEA Secretariats into the planning process of UNEP's activities and management (e.g. by including MEAs in SMT meetings).

11. Convene regular meetings of the chairs of the scientific advisory bodies by clusters (see for example, the last two meetings of the chairs of the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-06> and <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-05>).

### **C. Joint UNEP/UNEA and MEAs contributions to wide global processes**

12. Convene regular meetings of the chairs of the scientific advisory bodies by clusters, including with a view to providing a strong science-policy input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (see for example, the last two meetings of the chairs of the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-06> and <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CSAB-05>).

- The Executive Director could also meet with the chairs, co-chairs and leaders of global assessments so that information, views and ideas for joint work may be discussed.

13. Strengthen UNEA's imprint during the regional forums of ministers of environment and/or the regional forums on sustainable development. This would also provide an opportunity for stronger collaboration with MEA secretariats with the support of relevant regional coordinators based in UNEP's regional offices.

14. Explore opportunities for strengthening the role of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) in supporting programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs including in the context of the implementation of the post-2020 frameworks for biodiversity and chemicals/waste. The ongoing [EMG Consultative Process on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) could be utilized to this effect.

15. Internal task teams may be formed by UNEP around SDGs in which relevant MEAs can participate. Some outside experts may be invited by UNEP to participate in the task team as advisers when needed.

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