

Third consultation meeting on the CPR based review (Nairobi, 27 February 2020)

1. 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)

Comments by the European Union and its Member States

The EU and its MS thank UNEP for reaching out to MEA Secretariats and compiling a note expanding on possible options for enhancing coordination and cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and MEAs following MS inputs.

Regarding A) Cooperation during UNEA and COP meetings

The EU and its MS support the suggestion to find ways to engage MEAs and important agreements and related fora, as well as their governing bodies in UNEA and vice versa, although the concrete suggestions merit further in-depth consideration and consultations, including with MEA chairs and governing bodies.

The EU and its MS welcome the idea of organizing a specific “MEA session” on possible mutual priorities and synergies or emerging issues during UNEA. However, this should be connected to the theme of UNEA in question and resolutions or follow up to previous relevant resolutions and decisions. We should also keep the respective mandates of each MEA in mind and not duplicate already existing initiatives or policy debates.

As regards joint side events by UNEA/UNEP and MEAs, we welcome the idea. However, since an important consideration in the past was to limit the overall amount of side events at UNEA, such events should be limited in number, closely linked to the theme of UNEA or the respective MEA COP, and constitute a relevant and meaningful contribution to specific substantive issues actively under consideration at the conference in question.

The EU and its MS consider it particularly important to promote MEA engagement in the context of the preparation and implementation of resolutions – either through joint briefings, joint preparation of background documents (by UNEP Secretariat in consultation with MEA Secretariat) and/or providing direct support to the negotiations, where relevant and appropriate. The EU and its MS are of the opinion that this may help to ensure that the substance of resolutions in different bodies is complementary, mutually reinforcing and avoids duplication, whereby coherence of international environmental law/governance is strengthened and effective implementation supported.

Concerning the suggestion to explore organizing COPs and UNEA back-to-back, the preliminary views of the EU and its MS are that there may be a risk of concentrating a considerable workload for delegations in the run-up to such conference weeks. We encourage seeking options to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the global environment policy development process. At this stage, the EU and its MS would suggest that we evaluate how the other, aforementioned options can help produce better coordination among MEAs and UNEA, and strengthen the function of UNEA to act as the world’s highest-level decision-making body on the environment.

Regarding B) Enhanced programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs

The EU and its MS welcome the options outlined under this header. They are of particular importance, as they aim at establishing a continuous substantive exchange among UNEP and MEAs that should ultimately help strengthen overall coherence between the implementation of existing and the drafting of future decisions by respective governing bodies, and facilitate reinforcement of each other's work (in implementing the PoW/B of the UNEP and the MEA secretariats).

The EU and its MS support the take up of knowledge gathering through the MEA into the UNEP policy process and vice versa.

We specifically welcome the suggestion to engage MEA secretariats more actively in the preparation of the MTS and PoW/B (under para 10 of the document).

Furthermore, we believe that the Secretariats could support MS by providing an overview of relevant resolutions and decisions that have already been taken related to the theme of UNEA.

The EU and its MS would also encourage the enhancement of the exchange between the Scientific Panels on the latest Scientific Findings to support identification of areas where cooperation/coordination between MEAs and with UNEA can be strengthened.

Regarding C) Joint UNEP/UNEA and MEAs contributions to wide global processes

The EU and its MS deem that the options outlined under this header would be worth considering. However, as a preliminary reaction, we wish to stress two points:

- Firstly, careful consideration should be given to the resources required to implement mentioned options in comparison to the potential outcome, so as to focus on global processes where coordinated input seems most meaningful.
- Secondly, we would argue that global processes in the field of environment, namely, under the auspices of MEAs (such as in the case of the post-2020 GBF), should ideally be addressed by measures as listed under headers a) and particularly b). We do see a potential added value in the form of stronger UNEP/MEA coordination for global processes to identify relevant (emerging) issues in policy fora not traditionally forming part of the MEA landscape, but where substantive synergies exist and UNEP/MEAs could potentially provide input, such as the WHO Assembly and FAO Conference.

We see merit in convening regular, cost effective 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 and other relevant UN processes in order to send joint messages on the state of the environment and its implications for achieving SDGs.

We find it important to strengthen the role of EMG under the leadership of UNEP, to leverage UNEA imprint at global and regional level. We are a bit hesitant to create additional internal task team around SDGs, as the synergies could be created by EMG. Also, it would be

27 February 2020

useful to strengthen the role of the EMG in supporting programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs.