

U.S. Comments on the “Note from the Secretariat for the consultation meeting on the CPR-based review: Enhancing cooperation between UNEP/UNEA and the MEAs/COPs”
(*comments keyed to document paragraphs*)

Mr. Chairman,

The United States appreciates the Secretariat’s note and has shared specific comments on the proposals with the Secretariat for the facilitators’ consideration. Our overarching comment is that any ideas should contribute to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of UNEA. The link between some of the proposals and that goal was unclear in several instances. We welcome a future draft of this document that is more concise and that keeps that goal in mind. Thank you.

Concrete options/ideas for further consideration

A. Cooperation during UNEA and COP meetings

1. Member States can consider establishing an agenda item on “Cooperation with MEAs” in the sessions of UNEA. This could contribute to identifying opportunities for strengthened programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs. Where not already the case, MEAs Conferences of the Parties (COP) can consider adding an agenda item on “Cooperation with UNEP”. Discussions under this agenda item could focus on specific thematic clusters and include, for example, remarks by relevant MEA COP Presidents or Executive Secretaries in UNEA sessions, and by UNEA President or UNEP Executive Director in MEAs COPs. Supporting documents for the agenda item could be jointly drafted by UNEP and the MEA secretariats.

USA Comment: We support the establishment of an agenda item on Cooperation with MEAs. Our only ask is that these sessions should be mediated by the respective Secretariats -- which have fiduciary responsibilities to their governing bodies and programs of work -- and not by COP or session presidents, who may lack sufficient familiarity with the long-term responsibilities of their organizations).

2. Continue to organize events on programmatic cooperation between UNEA and MEAs in the margins of UNEA sessions and the MEA COPs, highlighting, for example, their joint contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or other mutually supportive activities on a technical or policy issue.

USA Comment: Proposals 1-3 sound quite similar. Isn’t everything covered in idea #1?

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 the high-level segments of the COPs.

4. Prepare “thematic briefs” in consultation with MEA Secretariats on the theme of UNEA and/or proposed resolutions, highlighting ongoing initiatives. Respective MEAs could also consider preparing briefs in consultation with UNEP for their COPs.

USA comment: What is the purpose of such briefs? The purpose of this exercise relative to improving UNEA.

B. Enhanced programmatic cooperation between UNEP and MEAs

5. 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.

The United States comment: no connection with improving UNEA effectiveness and we do not support this idea.

6. Provide opportunities for engagement by MEAs in the intersessional period between the two UNEA sessions by, for example, organizing regular MEA briefings to the CPR, including at the annual subcommittee meeting. This could include a discussion on national level implementation on key outcomes of COPs.

7. Make better use of the Executive Director’s quarterly reports to the CPR to present key policy developments from COP decisions or intergovernmental processes involving MEAs.

8. UNEP and MEAs to identify potential areas for future cooperative initiatives based on the respective governing bodies’ decisions/resolutions and on the latest scientific information, such as the Global Environment Outlook, the Frontiers Report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern, and other relevant scientific assessments and studies, including those conducted by the MEAs.

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

USA Comment: Isn’t this how relationships between/among UNEP and MEAs are supposed to work? And isn’t this already happening? Important that this remains subject to approval by the respective governing bodies.

9. Increase the **involvement** of MEAs in the preparation and implementation of UNEP programme of work and medium-term strategy as well as in the actual implementation of relevant resolutions, where appropriate. Concurrently increase the involvement of UNEP in the

preparation and implementation of the MEAs programmes of work to strengthen programmatic coherence and cooperation between UNEP and MEAs.

- Create effective means by which UNEP secretariat and MEAs secretariats could mutually inform the development and implementation of each other's programme of work through e.g. discussions on areas of mutual interest, development of memorandum of understanding, which provides modalities for enhancing programmatic relationship, etc.
- Further steps could be taken to integrate the MEA Secretariats into the planning process of UNEP's activities and management.

USA Comment: The US del isn't entirely clear on what is meant by "involvement" in the first sentence of para 9. If this involvement is entirely informational/advisory in nature, then we have no objection. However, if Involvement includes actual implementation of programs of work and/or MTS that is an issue for us because UNEP and the MEAs are singularly responsible for the implementation of their own programs.

10. The meetings and cooperation in the context of the "MEAs Focal Points Network" – composed of focal points from each of the UNEP-hosted global MEAs and UNEP Secretariat – offer useful avenues for further actualizing the cooperation on technical level.

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

11. Convene regular meetings or teleconferences of the chairs of the scientific advisory bodies or implementation committees by thematic clusters, including with a view to providing a strong, joint science-policy input to UNEA and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.⁵ These meetings could help identify policy areas of common interest among UNEP and MEAs for advancing the implementation of SDGs.

USA Comment: Consultation/cooperation between advisory bodies seems entirely appropriate. Seeking to produce joint contributions seems unnecessary.

12. 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.

USA Comment: This seems beyond the scope of this process' mandate.

13. Explore opportunities for leveraging the role of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) in mobilizing all MEAs and other EMG members in 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.

USA Comment: This seems beyond the scope of this process' mandate.