



Youth Segment

for inputs to the

United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG)



5th October 2021, 15.00 - 17.00 UTC

Register on: www.bit.ly/unemg-youth

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Youth Constituency Submission to the United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG)

For the 27th Senior Officials Meeting of the UNEMG (SOM 27) - 7th October 2021



CHILDREN AND YOUTH
MAJOR GROUP OF UNEP

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Introduction and Context

This submission is made on behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP for the upcoming UN EMG 27th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) that will take place on the 7th October 2021. The submission highlights inputs and recommendations from the global youth on procedural and substantive elements of the work of the UN EMG; and provides updates on youth engagement in certain UN processes and the upcoming UN Stockholm+50 International meeting

Youth engagement in the context of the UN EMG has taken positive steps in 2021. Young people are now participants in the Technical Segment of the EMG - having participated at the Mid-Term Technical Segment¹ on the 30th June 2021, and subsequently at the Technical Segment on the 30th September 2021. Through both avenues, youth continue to provide concrete recommendations through interventions, and written submission - including the written submission² at the June 2021 meeting. We believe that continued inclusive engagement of the young people in the deliberations of the UN EMG is a crucial step towards inter-generational co-leadership and delivering on the United Nations mandate of working *With and For Young People*.

Inaugural Youth Segment (for inputs) to UN EMG Convened

Building upon the recommendations and commitment in the June 2021 submission, the Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP convened the inaugural youth-led **Youth Segment for inputs to the UN Environment Management Group**³; in the form of a 2-hour long online meeting on the 5th October 2021, from 15.00 -17.00 UTC. Registrations were received from youth groups from 80+ distinct countries across all regions and around 100 participants joined the meeting live⁴.

The Youth Segment also saw participation of the head of the EMG secretariat and invited presentations from UNCCD, IUCN, UNICEF, UNESCO and OHCHR. Furthermore, youth organisations and advocates affiliated with various mandated youth constituencies across the UN system also participated in the Youth Segment. Substantive views shared during the Youth Segment have been captured in this submission.

Enhancing Meaningful Youth Engagement in the Work and Meetings of the EMG

Systemically engage youth as (standing) partners in the in IMGs and Task Teams

- We would like to request the UN EMG secretariat and leads of various task teams (TTs) / Issue Management Groups (IMGs) to engage youth and youth organisations actively, meaningfully, and in a coordinated manner in their respective work;
- The mandated youth constituencies / platforms linked to themes and lead agencies of various IMGs and TTs could act as the standing members in each of the efforts and facilitate engagement of a broad range of youth advocates, groups and networks in the work of IMGs and TTs relevant to their work stream⁵;
- Possibilities for youth to co-lead / co-design and contribute actively to substantive tasks and activities within an IMG and TT should also be explored;
- EMG should provide the young people with the necessary training to enhance their skills and knowledge and explore fellowship and capacity building programs to enhance the capacity of the youth advocates.

¹ Meeting report from the Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 27th SOM, June 2021 -

https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Mid-Term-Technical-Segment-Minutes_2021.pdf

² Youth constituency submission for the Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 27th SOM, June 2021 -

https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Mid-Term-Technical-Segment-Minutes_2021.pdf

³Agenda of the Segment and further details available on:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DSSZWn7ZWq5P2r24Es-sw-VBEJEshbRgA6F7fOWCZCE/edit>

⁴Youth Segment live stream available on: <https://www.facebook.com/unepmgcy/videos/282210530238054>

⁵ Similar to the arrangements of the Task Teams in the Joint Working Group of the UN Youth Strategy Youth 2030

Youth engagement in the meetings of the EMG

- We request the UN EMG to continue to recognize the role of youth and children as important stakeholders in environmental decisions and give young people an equal opportunity to act as stakeholder in the meeting of the UN EMG. Thereby:
 - **Regarding Technical Segment:** continue and enhance the existing participation of Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP in the Technical Segment, building upon the best practices of the Mid-Term technical segment on the 30th June 2021, and technical segment on the 30th September 2021, where youth representatives participated;
 - **Regarding Senior Officials Segment:** we request that the Senior Officials Segment allows for participation of representatives from mandated youth constituencies and youth-led organizations, and those taking part in the Youth Segment at the future SOMs;
- Additionally, young people shall continue to submit written inputs to the UN EMG meetings on relevant items in advance through the UN EMG Secretariat as appropriate.

EMG Nexus Dialogues

- We welcome the ongoing initiative of the UN EMG to convene Nexus Dialogues, and believe that these dialogues help galvanise engagement of the environmental community at large
- On youth participation and access to the Nexus Dialogue, we suggest the following modalities to be in place in the spirit of *Nothing About Youth, Without Youth*:
 - Youth speakers/presenters for the Nexus Dialogues should be identified in close cooperation with the youth constituencies related to the thematic / focus of the Nexus dialogue; efforts must be made to avoid hand-picking of youth speakers / presenters, and prevent tokenistic representation of young people in these;
 - For Nexus Dialogues that have youth as a thematic focus, we recommend that the design and implementation of those Nexus Dialogues occur in co-leadership with the youth constituency from their inception.

Update on ongoing further strengthening of youth engagement

- Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP is working on the strengthening of the self-organised working group that brings together interested constituents from relevant youth constituencies / platforms / stakeholder groups linked with environmental processes, to convene to discuss the work of the EMG vis-à-vis our respective mandates;
- This can be in form of a self-organised *Youth Working Group / Caucus for EMG* (working title) which will serve as space for dialogue and collective discussion for youth groups;
- This would not be a new/complex structure but rather an informal dialogue space convened for existing youth groups to discuss and provide youth inputs the work of the EMG;
- Involvement of UN agencies/secretariats could be subsequently elaborated based upon recommendations coming from the Working Group/Caucus.

Possible funding support and engaging diversity of youth

- We request that efforts be made for sufficient budget will be allocated by the EMG for youth constituencies and youth-led organizations to continue with their advocacy efforts Youth constituencies run on volunteer capacity in their engagement, for example we organized the virtual UN Youth Environment Assembly (YEA) preceding UNEA 5.1 in voluntary capacity with youth participants from more than 170+ countries , however such voluntary engagement on such global scale is not often sustainable;
- Youth groups would hugely benefit from increased financial support and capacity building to amplify their voices, outreach, and ability to contribute to driving the necessary transformation changes called for by science;
- Finally, it is important that young people from all over the world, especially those from low-and-middle income countries, young women, indigenous youth, disabled youth, youth from linguistic and religious minorities, among other marginalised communities, as well as

community-based, grassroots, national, regional, and international youth organisations, are able to participate and provide their views and recommendations to senior officials in a systematic manner.

Regarding the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

- Youth have been engaged in the process of the Decade since mid-2019. The youth involvement ranges from several on-ground and virtual consultations, high-level events to policy papers, and much more. Toward the end of 2020, the Decade coordination group approved the formation of a Youth Task Force for the Decade;
- This [background presentation](#) elaborates the history of youth engagement in the Decade, including key components of the **official Youth Task Force** as also presented to UN agencies in May 2021
 - The constitution of the Task Force took place through a mix of nominations and competitive selection process with more than 500 applications received from all regions of the world
 - The first meeting of the Task Force will take place in October 2021, and the composition of the Task Force will be made available on the website of the Decade
- As a follow-up for the official launch of the Decade, we hosted a series of global consultations towards capacity building as well as creating awareness and amassed a tide of online protagonists calling for worldwide support to the Decade, specifically on implementation and linking the national efforts;
- We welcome the recommendations from the EMG Technical Segment for the IMG on Biodiversity to also address the themes of the Decade on Restoration, and look forward to active contribution of the youth groups in the IMG.

Regarding Proposed Stockholm+50 UN Task Team

Formal Youth Engagement for Stockholm+50

The Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP has been working in cooperation with the host of Stockholm+50, Sweden, towards creating the youth engagement framework for Stockholm+50. This youth engagement framework will be coordinated by a **Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force**, more details are available on the link - www.youthenvironment.org/stockholm50 and in the documents linked in the Annex

Engage as Youth Partners

We also invite further UN agencies, programmes and secretariats to join us in supporting the work of the Stockholm+50 Youth Task!

On the proposed new Task Team on Stockholm+50

- We note and welcome the proposed new IMG on Stockholm+50. We suggest that, should the IMG be approved, it should include the Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force as a standing partner to improve coherence and encourage active participation of youth in the work of the task team, including in events, papers, etc;
- Furthermore, we recommend that the duration of this task team be kept until July or September 2022, so as to ensure that outcomes from the work of the Task Team feed into HLPF and/or the UNGA in 2022.

Inputs on “Pollution Free Planet”

The Youth Platform on Chemicals and Waste (CWP) was launched in February 2021 with the Secretariats of SAICM, BRS and Minamata Conventions. More updates about the Platform are included in the Annex.

The youth constituency shares following perspectives regarding the topic of pollution free planet:

- International Transport emissions from international flights and cargo ships are not considered in the Paris Agreement. Thus, International trade and climate compromises need an intersection to reach coherence;
- Production is highly outsourced to developing nations where raw materials exist to cover the costs, but the packaging, transportation of these materials and products have a higher footprint;
- Pollution from military activities and trials should also be accounted for;
- Systems especially in the developed countries need to take further responsibility for pollution happening from different industries. In developing nations, more funds and technology should be kept available for greening the existing production system;
- We ask for continued monitoring and database development to support evidence based actions and governance in tackling pollution;
- Textile pollution is highlighted, and those buying textiles are from the developed countries. There is a need to incentivise green initiatives while charging those organizations for in-compliance to emission norms, in the context of “Polluter Pays Principle”;
- EMG and UNEP should take leading role in supporting governments to commit and sign voluntary agreements on pollution such as the Clean Air Partnership and upcoming work on Marine Litter and MicroPlastics in the context of UNEA;
- Finally we highlight that the issues of pollution are intersectional in nature and cut across climate and social justice.

Update on youth engagement in Chemicals and Waste pillar in the UN

The Youth Platform on Chemicals and Waste launched in February 2021 with the Secretariats of SAICM, BRS and Minamata Conventions. After consulting with the global youth, secretariats, universities, NGOs and a few governments towards developing methods of meaningful youth engagement with the UN’s work in chemicals and waste, the platform has found the following insights:

- There is an overall agreement that youth engagement in chemicals and waste is both important and beneficial. All parties seem to have either knowledge and/or structural gaps regarding effective and meaningful youth engagement;
- The first steps towards meaningful youth engagement have been identified as: cooperation, regular and open dialogue, integration of safe spaces & participation channels both offline & online, youth empowerment through training, fellowship programs and capacity building, awareness-raising, and strengthening youth organisations and networks. The most immediate need identified for fair, equal, diverse, just, inclusive and meaningful youth engagement is financial support.

In addition to this work, the Youth Platform has been listening to the youth voice, engaging with secretariats and stakeholders across various global platforms, and raising awareness for meaningful (non-tokenistic) engagement in chemicals and waste. Children and youth disproportionately suffer the negative impacts of chemicals and waste and must be included in the decision making process.

Update documents from Chemicals Waste Youth Platform

- o [SAICM, UTC & CYMG of UNEP Communities of Practise Outcomes](#)
- o [Chemicals and Waste ‘About us’ document for executives](#)

Updates on youth engagement in the UNEA & Stockholm+50 process

The links below capture updates on the youth engagement in the process of UNEA and the UN Stockholm+50 International Meeting

- [2021-22 Action Plan & Progress Report of the Children and Youth Major Group](#) as presented to the committee of permanent representatives (CPR) on the 7th May 2021
- Information regarding the virtual Youth Environment Assembly Feb 2021, in the lead-up to UNEA 5.1 - Global Youth Environment Assembly
 - o [IISD-ENB reporting](#)

- [UN press release](#)
- [Plans on youth engagement for UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50](#)
- [Overview of Consultative Activities In Development of the Framework - Stockholm+50 & Youth](#)
- [Presentation from Public Briefing and Interaction Session on Stockholm+50 Youth Engagement on the 15th September 2021](#)

Contributors and Acknowledgements

The inputs to this submission have been prepared by youth constituencies, organisations, groups and advocates world-wide, including those that participated at the inaugural Youth Segment (for inputs) to UN EMG on the 5th October. A non-exhaustive list of contributing entities can be accessed [online here](#), together with the contact information of the elected focal points of the Children and Youth Major Group.

The photo / graphic on the cover page comprises youth and youth partners engaged in the work of the UN EMG at the mid-term Technical Meeting in June 2021, and the inaugural Youth Segment (for inputs) to UN EMG in October 2021

Date of submission: 6th October 2021