

Meeting of the Subcommittee of the CPR

18 July 2023

EU and its Member States written contribution to the Agenda items 2 and 3

1. EU and Member States comments to the briefing on the UNEP Programme Performance Report – 2021- 2022 (Agenda Item 2):

Overarching messages from the EU and MS:

- The EU and the MS appreciate the report on the programme performance review. We heard the presentation of the report, and we are having a discussion on it. It would be good to have reassurance that our comments are taken on board and used to prepare for the ASC.
- This report presents in great detail a set of integrated results and summarizes the indicators of UNEP's work while providing concrete examples. There is a lot of useful and interesting information that will have to be presented in a very clear and structured way at the ASC, highlighting key lessons learned and upcoming actions planned to address the latter.
- We would like to have more information on how the UNEPs Performance t will be approached in the ASC for the CPR to perform its oversight function, in light of the mandate for the ASC to focus on the oversight function of the CPR.

Key comments and questions on the report to be made at the meeting:

- The EU+MS appreciate the good progress made on sub-programmes, with high achievement of targets set.
- However we see a decline in implementation of the current PoW at its mid-point, compared to the mid-point of the previous PoW. Is there an explanation for this?
- We welcome the fact that the report highlights the impact of environmental degradation on poor and vulnerable people, and on the increase of inequality. We would like to understand better, how UNEP can bring attention to this, and how it is trying to address this issue in its work. We encourage UNEP to make its contribution to reducing inequalities and the linkages between environmental policies and opportunities for poverty reduction more explicit. We would welcome receiving further information on poverty an inequality aspects at the ASC.
- We note, that while the overall budget presented (p.43) includes the budget for the Resilience to disasters and conflicts sub-programme that is mainstreamed in

the PoW, there is no information is provided on its performance against its indicators. The EU and MS would like to suggest to include this in a future briefing or the agenda of the ASC.

- We also would like to understand how UNEP works with UNDP in their work on the “Climate Promise” to support the MS in enhanced transparency with regards to their obligations under the Paris agreement. Several EU MS support this work, and we are interested to learn how it can be made even more efficient.
- The EU supports the efforts of UNEP to implement the UN reform and to engage in the dialogue on UN country frameworks and programs, which brings more awareness and understanding of UNEP’s POW. We appreciate this work and would like it to continue.
- Similar to the decisions in the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, EU and MS request the Secretariat to report annually on the complete United Nations development system reform checklist as an annex to existing reporting on the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.
- EU MS consider that all the UNEP work on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services and all the funds allocated to this process is a very important and it should be more widely known. As MS we would like to understand how we can help UNEP to provide more visibility to this work.
- We appreciate the inclusion of challenges, opportunities and lessons learned in each of the sections, but we believe that more details on how these lessons will be translated into future actions are needed.
- We are grateful to have the information regarding the earmarked funds, but more information on the distribution of these funds on the different programs would be appreciated.
- EU MS consider that it would be useful for the document to present a final chapter with conclusions.

Detailed comments on the report, to provide background for further discussion at the Annual Subcommittee Meeting:

- The EU and the MS understand, that overall, UNEP was successful in its work: of the 25 thematic sub-programme indicators that had targets, 19 indicators (76%) fully achieved their targets, four indicators (16%) partially achieved their targets, and two indicators (8%) did not achieve their targets. Four of the seven sub-programmatic areas, (Climate Action, Nature Action, Finance and Economic transformation and Digital transformation) fully met all their 2022 indicator targets.
- However, the document revealed a mild decline in performance at the mid-point stage of the current PoW biennium (2022- 2023) compared to the mid-point

(December 2020) of the previous 2020- 2021. UNEP could evaluate the reasons of this decrease, to take it as lesson learned for the subsequent PoW in the following years. Can this be elaborated at the ASC?

- In the previous PPR UNEP included the recommendations of the strategic review on poverty conducted by the evaluation office. We welcome the fact that the ED highlights the impact of the environment on poor and vulnerable people, and the factor of inequality. However, in this PPR we do not see it well reflected how UNEP gives attention to the importance of integration of poverty reduction in its work. We would like to encourage a sustained follow-up of these recommendations by UNEP.
- We also encourage UNEP to make its contribution to reducing inequalities and the linkages between environmental policies and opportunities for poverty reduction more explicit, taking into account the multiple dimensions of poverty. In this context we want to refer to the recent conclusion of the Flagship programme “UNDP/UNEP Poverty Environment Action”. The EU and its MS want to reiterate our strong support for the continued uptake of the lessons learned of PEA.
- Regarding the Reporting on Enhanced Transparency EU+MS appreciate UNEP work to support 23 countries and three institutions in fulfilling their reporting obligations under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) arrangements of the Paris Agreement. EU+MS are fully supportive of this work since transparency is essential to follow up on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Under the broader umbrella of the UNDP Climate Promise, UNDP also aims to support the ETF in developing countries. We would like to understand how do UNEP and UNDP join their efforts and divide labour, based on each organisations' mandate and expertise established?
- EU MS consider that UNEP work on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into financial, public- and private sector financial decisions and risk management frameworks, is a very important work that should be more widely known. To bridge the financial divide between countries, the reform of the international financial system is urgent. The MDBs need to change the way they operate in order to protect global public goods (to tackle climate change and prevent biodiversity loss) and to put the world back on the path to sustainable development. The EU and its MS would like to support UNEP, as a science-policy driven organization, to let its voice be heard in these debates.
- In terms of supporting the implementation of the GBF, UNEP report states that an important ambition of UNEP is to support countries in revising, updating or otherwise aligning their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF and related decisions. EU + MS fully support UNEP’s efforts to advance GBF implementation and would be interested in hearing how the new thematic fund “Living in Harmony with Nature” will be used to support these efforts. And consequently, will the results achieved by these thematic funds be integrated in UNEP regular reporting?
- The EU and its MS encourage UNEP to sustain the efforts attempted to strengthen the engagement of the UN system in national development dialogues at

the regional and country levels. This has provided UNEP with a unique opportunity to enhance its visibility and amplify the regional impact of its PoW.

- EU MS welcome the positive results regarding UN Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women shown in the performance indicator in 2022 and underline the importance of seeing positive developments in this regard going forward.
- EU + MS welcome the positive results regarding UN Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women shown in the performance indicator in 2022. However, as UNEP points out: while “projects have made progress in developing gender action plans, stakeholder engagement plans and safeguard risk management plans, there is often a lack of emphasis on integrating these plans during project implementation, as attention tends to be primarily focused on activity delivery and financial management”. EU + MS would like to underline the importance of seeing positive developments in this regard going forward and we welcome that concrete measures that will be taken by UNEP in this regard, to be implemented in 2023-2024.
- Overall, EU + MS highlight the importance of timely implementation and closure of all evaluation and audit report recommendations. Also, UNEP report notes this as an area in need of improvement. We would like to hear what actions would be taken to ensure set targets will be met by end of 2023.
- We welcome UNEP’s efforts to improve the risk management and encourage UNEP to continue these efforts.
- We welcome the lessons learned on the review of 28 CCAs and 20 UNSDCF’s to assess how the environment was factored in. The review concluded that the environment is weakly mainstreamed in CCAs, limiting its uptake in solutions in UNSDCF’s. Biodiversity and pollution are also under-addressed in the CCAs reviewed, and actions to deliver on MEAs are largely absent from UNSDCF’s. Therefore, EU MS welcome the efforts regarding the UN reform and the collaboration with UNCTs providing data, analysis and advisory services throughout their programming cycles to mainstream climate, biodiversity and pollution in 48 Common Country Assessments (CCAs), 41 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF’s) and 26 joint UNSDCF workplans, given the data we received during the previous ASC on the integration of climate, biodiversity and pollution in UN system planning.
- Regarding the UN Reform, the EU and its MS welcome distinctly identified three prioritized areas of focus going forward. EU + MS would encourage UNEP to provide a bit more clarity on how the process of reinforced coordination generates development results. Related to this and the work of the Environment Management Group, we note rather modest progress on Executive Direction and Management outcome 2 indicator ii (on entities reporting on mainstreaming of environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda) with only three entities reporting in 2022 and target being 25 by end of 2023. EU MS would like to ask how progress could be enhanced to reach the target by end of 2023.
- 2022 showed UNEP’s continued growth in its accreditation profile which provides the requisite mechanism to design and deliver impactful projects and programmes funded by the GCF. UNEP’s portfolio of projects has experienced a steady growth with a combined worth of US\$ 256.49 million for full funding projects

and readiness projects. EU+MS welcome this growth, but we would like to understand better the challenges related to the partnership with GCF that might cause delays in implementation.

- We note the decision of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on their Update on the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in June 2023, and we would like to request the Secretariat to report annually on the complete United Nations development system reform checklist as an annex to existing reporting on the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. We also encourage UNEP to strive for inter-agency harmonization of reporting on implementation efforts and results of the repositioning of the United Nations development system. We leave it up to the secretariat to suggest what would be the best reporting format to include this.

2. EU and its MS comments for the agenda on the options for the timing of future UNEA sessions (Agenda item 3)

- The EU+MS appreciate the document developed by the Secretariat to inform the CPR on the options for the timing of future UNEA sessions, and the comparison of the two options proposed.
- We welcome the analysis of the relevant UNEA rules and decisions concerning the UNEA meeting cycle.
- However, we would like the Secretariat to provide us with more information on the expected consequences of losing the initially established timing between the UNEA cycle and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QPCR) adoption and the UN budget cycles.
- We would also like to know how other UN Agencies are going to deal with this situation, and how they are going to adapt their timing, if that is the case.
- The EU+MS would also need to get information about the implications on UNEA cycle of the possible change of UN budget biennial cycle to annual approval.
- The EU+MS considered that this clarification is needed to be able to set a common position regarding the agenda item 3.