

Joint Bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly
and the Committee of Permanent Representatives
20 December, 16:00 - 18:00 (GMT+3)
Online

Agenda item 6: Other matters

This note has been developed by the Secretariat for presentation under agenda item 6 (Other matters) of the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
The UNEA and the CPR Bureaux may wish to take note of the document.

**Concept note of the United Nations Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment
Special Session under the theme *Integrated Solutions for a Sustainable Future*
27 February 2024, 08:00-18:30 hrs.**

Context

The United Nations Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment (UNSPBF) serves as a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and inter-agency platform. Its primary purpose is to facilitate collaboration and dialogue among various sectors, including science, policy, and business, in the pursuit of environmental objectives.

Inaugurated during the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) in December 2017, the Forum was established to address the need for a more integrated and dynamic interaction among these sectors, as requested by Member States.

Regionally, the Forum extends its activities to Asia-Pacific and Africa, aligning with environmental ministerial processes. Additionally, it functions as the Secretariat for both the Data for the Environment Alliance (DEAL) and the Expert Group on Big Data and Frontier Technologies. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.un-spbf.org>.

Approach

The Forum's approach is pragmatic and oriented towards policy and technology driven solutions that assist in the realization of environmental goals. It emphasizes the concept of "Integrated Solutions" to foster cooperation among its partners and upholds values such as equity, ethics, transparency, diversity, and inclusion, which are crucial for a fair and sustainable future.

The Forum's Special Sessions at UNEA 6 concentrate on solution-driven thought-leadership that aligns with the UNEA theme and the Executive Director's Report. These sessions are crafted to provoke innovative and inclusive thinking, enriching the dialogue and action around achieving environmental goals and shaping the next Medium-Term Strategy. They encapsulate diverse perspectives from government, industry, finance, science, and society.

UNSPBF's distinct approach, which bridges various stakeholders and sectors, not only amplifies the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) but also promotes a One-UN approach. The Forum's sessions are organized to explore critical aspects from three perspectives:

Policy Perspective: Focusing on policy coherence, an all-encompassing government approach, safeguards, accountabilities, and the role of the multilateral system.

Corporate Perspective: Examining technology and financing solutions, business practices,

resource efficiency, value chains, circularity, and transparency, and advocating for an all-encompassing economic approach.

Societal Perspective: Embracing an all-inclusive societal approach, the sessions engage major groups, youth, women, and indigenous communities.

Central to the Forum's operations is its foundation in science, ensuring that its initiatives and discussions are rooted in scientific understanding and evidence.

On 27 February, the day will be divided into two key sessions, taking place at a specially constructed tent on the 'hill' area at the Gigiri UN premises. The morning session focuses on **Sector Wide Transitions**, while the afternoon session will focus on **Financial and Economic Tools**. The sessions are highly interactive with star speakers and participants representing multiple sectors.

Member States are invited to confirm the participation of Ministers and heads of delegations who may be interested in contributing to the different dialogues under each session.

For more information, please contact: Shereen.zorba@un.org

PROVISIONAL AGENDA
27 February 2024, 08:00-18:30 hrs.

Morning Session: Sector Wide Transitions

UNSPBF-style moderated, interactive debate. The sessions comprise deep-dive segments that speak to the wider theme, introducing perspectives and contributions from multiple sectors and stakeholders. This work builds on the UNSPBF regional and thematic processes and Expert Groups

The Imperative for Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Value Chains

In 2022, over 55% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions stemmed from biomass cultivation, mineral and fossil resource extraction, and their conversion into materials, fuels, and food. This figure rises to over 60% when emissions from land-use changes are included.

Notably, these emissions have increased since the 2015 Paris Agreement, indicating that climate mitigation efforts have inadequately addressed resource-related impacts.

The International Resource Panel's "Global Resources Outlook" reveals that strategies like sustainable consumption, circular economy, and resource efficiency could slash CO₂ emissions by over 80% by 2060. This reduction is achievable while still promoting wellbeing and economic growth.

The session will discuss actionable strategies across housing, mobility, energy, and food systems, emphasizing justice and equity, based on the report's insights.

Who: Hans Bruyninckx, IRP Panel Member and Former Director of the European Environment Agency, Lead author of the Global Resources Outlook 2023

Responsible Mining in a Resource-Hungry World

As the global demand for minerals and metals surges, primarily driven by the low carbon energy transition, infrastructure growth, and digitalization, the mining industry faces significant sustainability challenges.

Between 1970 and 2017, mineral and metal extraction tripled and is projected to double again by 2060 (International Resource Panel, IRP 2019).

This debate will bring together industry leaders, government officials, and experts to discuss the future of responsible mining, focusing on sustainable practices and addressing environmental and social impacts.

The session aims to explore enabling conditions for responsible mining and the sustainable use of mineral resources. It will address the need for effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions, with a particular focus on minimizing negative impacts and fostering sustainable development, especially in resource-rich developing countries.

Key Themes:

- **Global Demand and Public Policy:** Tackling the challenge of meeting the growing demand for minerals in a sustainable manner.
- **Circular Economy and Material Efficiency:** Exploring strategies to enhance the circularity of minerals and reduce future mining.
- **Financial Sector's Influence:** Understanding the role of finance in promoting environmentally and socially responsible mining practices.
- **Governance and Accountability:** Improving the fragmented governance landscape in the mining sector.
- **Role of Multilateralism:** Examining how multilateral cooperation can support sustainable mining practices.

Environmental and Social Concerns: There is increasing scrutiny over the environmental and social impacts of mining. Companies like Vale and Freeport McMoRan have faced criticism for their environmental impacts and human rights violations.

Forests & Finance, an initiative by a coalition of campaign and research organizations, aims to increase transparency about which financial institutions support mining companies that can cause social and environmental impacts. They provide a dataset detailing the financial flows to these companies.

Dialogue participants include:

Government nominated ministers/HL reps	UNEP Economy Division / NY Office World Bank ICMM International Copper Association OCP	Forests & Finance BMO Capital Markets Rio Tinto Vale De Beers
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The Urban Environment: The Near-zero, Resilient Buildings of the Future

Urban areas are at the forefront of the pollution crisis, contributing significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable buildings offer a solution to reduce urban pollution levels and combat climate change.

This session delves into how near-zero emission and resilient buildings can play a pivotal role in mitigating these challenges. It will bring together top experts from UN Habitat, ICLEI, UNEP, the World Bank, OECD and the private sector to discuss the intersection of sustainable architecture, urban planning, and environmental health.

The session comes a week ahead of the Buildings and Climate Global Forum, convened in Paris by the governments of France and Morocco, in partnership with UNEP and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction.

Key Themes:

- **Global and Regional Perspectives:** Analysing the importance of sustainable buildings in different regions, considering environmental and health impacts.

- Economic and Policy Frameworks: Evaluating economic models and policy initiatives that support the adoption of sustainable building practices.
- Innovation and Technology in Sustainable Architecture: Exploring advancements in building materials, energy efficiency, and sustainable design.

Community Engagement and Equity in Urban Planning: Understanding the role of community participation and equity in shaping resilient urban landscapes.

Dialogue participants include:

UNEP / Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction / Minamata Convention / UN Habitat / ICLEI / Cool Coalition	SWITCH Asia Signify / Veolia / Schneider Electric / ABB /Siemens The Prince of Wales’ Corporate Leaders Group MASDAR SEE Foundation
Government Representatives: France, Morocco, Government nominated ministers/HL reps	

Thread Lightly: Unravelling the Fabric of Sustainable Fashion

The fashion industry is a significant contributor to ecological degradation, responsible for 2-8% of global carbon emissions. The prevalent linear economic model in this sector, emphasizing a take-make-waste approach, has led to fashion being largely disposable.

UNEP’s 2023 report, "Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain: A Global Roadmap," stresses the importance of shifting consumption patterns, improving practices, and investing in infrastructure to achieve a circular textile sector. The Sustainable Fashion Communication Playbook, co-published by UNEP and UN FCCC, provides guidance on aligning consumer-facing communication with sustainability targets.

The value chain approach in sustainable fashion focuses on each step of the production process, from raw materials to final products, and even post-consumer recycling. This approach ensures that environmental and social impacts are considered and minimized throughout the entire lifecycle of the product. Key aspects include sourcing sustainable materials, ensuring fair labor practices, minimizing waste during production, and promoting recycling and upcycling of products.

This session will review the integration of sustainability in the fashion and textiles industry, gaining insights into a multifaceted challenge that requires the involvement of diverse stakeholders, including SMEs, large corporations, and financial institutions.

The goal is to create a system that supports ecological integrity and social justice, transitioning from a linear model of production and consumption to a more circular and responsible one.

Dialogue participants include:

Government nominated ministers/HL reps	LVMH Stella McCartney
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UNEP Economy Division
UNFCCC Fashion Charter

H&M
Hamaji
Rummage

UN Partners

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: New Economy

Harnessing Economic and Financial Tools to Tackle the 3 Planetary Crisis

A moderated debate-style interactive session made up of diverse deep-dive segments that feed into the wider discussion:

Tracking Financial Flows to Nature-based Solutions

Nature based Solutions provide critical investment opportunities as they are cost-effective and provide multiple benefits. The opening segment of this session will explore the scale of nature-negative finance flows from both public and private sector sources globally, comparing them to the finance needed to maximize the potential of Nature based Solutions to help tackle climate, biodiversity and degradation challenges. This segment builds on UNEP's newly launched report 'State of Finance for Nature 2023' which tracks finance flows to nature-based solutions.

Who: DED,

The Argument for High-Integrity Carbon Markets

The integrity and effectiveness of carbon markets are vital for meeting the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. One of the key challenges is ensuring they benefit developing countries, which often face the dilemma of balancing fossil fuel exploration for economic development with environmental sustainability.

Addressing equality and equity, especially in developing countries, is central to the effectiveness of carbon markets. This includes ensuring that carbon markets are designed to support sustainable development in these regions, rather than exploiting them.

UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre has explored methodologies to promote transformational change through carbon markets. CTCN concluded that 'Digitalization', 'Private sector and Governments', 'Carbon pricing' and 'Dynamic baselines' are key actions towards transformational change.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has just launched ambitious plans for the growth of high-integrity global carbon markets, with 15 countries set to earn income from the sale of carbon credits generated from preserving their forests. By next year, these countries will have produced over 24 million credits, and as many as 126 million by 2028. These credits could earn up to \$2.5 billion in the right market conditions.

The private sector, particularly corporates, plays a role in driving demand for carbon credits, though this has been met with challenges like accusations of greenwashing and the need for clearer guidelines on credit quality and claims. Financial institutions are pivotal in providing the necessary capital and investment products to support these markets.

The voluntary carbon market is at an inflection point, with growth slowing due to uncertainties about credit quality, eligibility, and public scrutiny, including accusations of greenwashing. This highlights the need for clearer global standards and consistent guidelines to bolster market confidence and integrity.

Participating in the debate:

Government nominated ministers/HL reps	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre
World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)	The World Bank
UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders	DevvStream
	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

The Cost of Climate & Nature Positive Transitions: From Strategy to Action

Countries have made significant progress in developing climate and sustainability strategies. However, when it comes to moving from strategic planning to effective implementation, key questions need to be addressed: how much will the transition cost? What will be the respective roles of the public and the private sector? which domestic and international sources of funding can be mobilized to fulfil additional public spending needs?

Integrated sustainability financing plans will help countries answer these questions and hence their development is one the most critical steps towards the achievement of climate and SDGs objectives.

By providing an integrated whole-of-economy, whole-of-society approaches, financing plans lay out the financial equation that countries need to solve and constitute a roadmap to bridge the finance gap.

This segment will explore country sustainability experiences from a whole-of-economy perspective, building on individual experiences and a multi-sectoral approach.

Government nominated ministers/HL reps	African Development Bank
Institute for Climate Economics (I4CE)	Equity Bank, Kenya
Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)	The World Bank
UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders	IRD

Forecasting the Future: The Power and Potential of Early Warning Systems

In this engaging and informative session, we delve into the critical topic of Early Warning Systems (EWS) and their role in addressing the three planetary crises identified by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The debate aims to uncover the effectiveness, challenges, and future prospects of EWS in mitigating the impacts of natural and man-made hazards.

The debate will be structured into several key segments, each focusing on a specific aspect of EWS. Expert panellists will offer insights, backed by data and case studies, followed by interactive discussions and audience Q&A session.

Key Themes:

- Introduction to Early Warning Systems
- Discussion on how the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Climate Agreement incorporate EWS.
- Space Technologies and Future Innovations
- Addressing the challenges in implementing and maintaining effective EWS, especially in developing countries.
- Debating the opportunities for international cooperation and technological innovation in enhancing EWS.

Dialogue participants include:

UNEP	Government nominated ministers/HL	Global Astronautical Congress
WMO	reps	French Space Agency/SCO,
UNDRR	European Space Agency	IRD
UN-SPIDER	Chinese Earth Observation Centre	NASA / Kenya Space Agency
		Google/IBM / McKinsey