



**“Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.”**

UNEA-6 theme.

## **MEAs high level dialogue one**

### **Strengthening the science policy interface for effective implementation of environmental commitments.**

**Wednesday 28 February 2024, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

#### **A. Introduction**

The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) to be held from 26 February to 1 March 2024, will include a Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) day considered through an opening segment and two consecutive high-level dialogues related to the theme of UNEA-6 which reads “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution”.

UNEA-5 through its decision 5/4 endorsed the outcome of the stocktaking meeting for the process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), which recognized the importance of strengthening the contributions and active participation of MEAs to UNEA to promote coherence between the UNEA resolutions and the MEAs governing bodies’ decisions.

This will be the first time an agenda item on cooperation of MEAs will be included on the agenda of UNEA. Many of the governing bodies of MEAs have adopted decisions that call for strengthening cooperation and collaboration with other international bodies including UNEP. It is therefore important that UNEA-6 considers reciprocating and complementing these decisions by providing concrete guidance to UNEP to promote action.

This concept note is intended to assist Member States, observers and major groups and stakeholders in their preparations for the high-level dialogue on **“Strengthening the science policy interface for effective implementation of environmental commitments”**.

Further background information to support the dialogue can be found in UNEP/EA.6/INF/6<sup>1</sup> - Background document to support the discussions on the supplementary item entitled “Cooperation with Multilateral Environment Agreements.”

This MEAs high-level dialogue will be held on 28 February 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

## **B. Scope**

The high-level dialogue is expected to contribute to strengthening collaboration amongst MEAs, UNEP, scientific panels and platforms for enhancing the use of scientific information in UNEA and MEAs decision making. It will support the effective implementation of environmental commitments as a response to the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. In this context, consideration is given to needs and opportunities for UNEP and MEAs to work together to support strengthening of science-policy interfaces, and for working with science-policy platforms and panels to enhance their impact.

A core mandate of UNEP is to keep the world environment situation under review and strengthen the interface between science and policymaking across the sustainable development agenda.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, UNEP has played a significant role in enhancing the use of scientific evidence in decision-making relating to the environment. The scientific products UNEP has produced throughout its history have made the case for action clear and the focus is now increasingly on transforming the science into actionable tasks and deploying it with a renewed Science-Policy Interface.<sup>3</sup>

MEAs are examples of science-based policy at work. Not only have the MEAs been established in response to scientific evidence, but they also consider, and need continued access to, scientific and other information to support their processes and implementation at all levels. Effective science-policy interfaces are therefore critical to MEA operations and national implementation, and these rely on inputs from multiple sources including the products of science-policy platforms and panels, and other assessment processes. Some of these are mandated by MEAs, while others are independent.

UNEA and each MEA governing body have their own modalities to obtain, review, and agree on the scientific and technical advice that they need to deliver on their mandates. However, given the integrated nature of the environmental issues being addressed, cooperation in seeking and using scientific and technical advice can be very valuable in a range of circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/unea-6-documents>

<sup>2</sup> UNEP MTS 2022-25

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (2021). Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future: A contribution to the dialogue on the Science-Policy Interface. Nairobi

### **C. Participation, format and structure**

The high-level dialogue will be open to all participants accredited to UNEA-6 and will be webcast live on UN Web TV. Interpretation will be available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

The high-level dialogue will be interactive and held fully in person. The participants will be provided with framing questions beforehand to guide the preparation of their interventions. The dialogue will be in the form of a panel discussion followed by reflections from the participants and follow-up questions to the panellists. After the opening remarks by UNEP, the moderator will welcome all participants to the session and deliver short introductory remarks explaining the modalities of participation. After the panel discussion, the moderator will open the floor for an interactive discussion. Effort will be made to give priority in the order of speakers to those speaking at the level of Head of State or Government or at the ministerial level, followed by high-level representatives of stakeholders such as Heads of MEAs Secretariats. Effort will also be made to ensure that participation in the session is interactive in nature and to ensure a balance between speakers from participating Member States, observers and major groups and stakeholders. Delegations will be invited to press the microphone button to indicate their wish to speak when the floor is opened for interventions. In order to provide for maximum participation, interventions made from the floor should be succinct, concise, and not exceed three minutes; and the time limit will be strictly implemented. After the interventions from the audience, the moderator will invite reflections from the panellists. The moderator will conclude the dialogue with brief closing remarks on main messages emanating from the discussions.

#### **Guiding questions**

Member States, observers and major groups and stakeholders will be invited to address the following guiding questions to facilitate an interactive dialogue:

1. How can the increased cooperation amongst MEAs, UNEP and science-policy panels and platforms strengthen UNEA's and MEAs decision making? How could this be achieved?
2. What are the key challenges in policy making related to uptake of science for effective implementation of MEAs and UNEA resolutions? How to overcome these?
3. How can UNEA, UNEP and MEAs work together more effectively to strengthen science-policy interfaces at the national level, for the use of science in national decision making and review of implementation?

### **D. Expected outcomes and call for actions.**

The dialogue will provide ideas and initiatives on how science can inform policy making and the role of UNEP, MEAs and institutions in supporting better environmental governance. The dialogue will also encourage Member States to consider options for 'connecting the dots' related to science policy interfaces across UNEP and MEAs, focusing on the three environmental planetary

crises, including the need for enhanced dialogue and exchange between UNEP and MEAs on science policy issues. Specifically, the dialogue will contribute to identifying:

- ways in which UNEP and MEAs could be working together more effectively to enhance the ways in which science is used to inform decision making at all levels;
- needs and opportunities for UNEP and MEAs to work more closely with science-policy platforms and panels in supporting development and use of their outputs; and
- the potential role of UNEA in facilitating collaboration between and amongst UNEP, MEAs, science policy platforms and panels, and other agencies providing assessments.

A summary of the dialogue will be prepared by the secretariat and presented orally by the moderator at the closing plenary of the session and will be included in the final proceedings report of UNEA-6.

#### **E. Contact details**

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