

International Environmental Governance Workshop

Summary of discussion points

Glion, Switzerland / June 20-22, 2017

Debriefing – Briefing Note – UNEP CPR Subcommittee Meeting, July 6, 2017

Briefing by Mr. Florian Gubler, Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland, on the workshop on International Environmental Governance, which took place in Glion, Switzerland, on 20-22 June 2017

I have the pleasure to brief you about the Workshop on International Environmental Governance, which Switzerland organized in collaboration with UNEP on 20-22 June 2017 in Glion, Switzerland. The workshop was moderated by the scholar, Prof. Maria Ivanova from the Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies of the University of Massachusetts Boston.

The workshop brought together 22 participants from 13 countries and the EU Commission as well as from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and the IPCC. A balance was attained by inviting participants from the capital and members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in Nairobi or Geneva. The accompanying debriefing 1-pager details the list of participants.

The workshop was a member state driven meeting under Chatham House Rules and participants spoke in their personal capacity. Its objective was to review progress on the mandates since Rio+20 and to evaluate the current status of International Environmental Governance and to discuss and evaluate options aimed at supporting IEG. The participants first looked at the question where we stand five years after Rio+20. In a second session, they looked at the governance of UNEP, the Environment Assembly and multilateral environmental agreements. Finally, they discussed the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The participants have identified several topics which would benefit from further reflection. We clustered them into the following groups:

- First : areas of attention that relate to the “interplay and work of the bodies” of UNEP, including UNEA;
- Second: areas relating to the “policy and normative functions” of UNEP;
- Third: areas relating to the “science and science-policy function” of UNEP; and
- Finally, fourth: areas relating to UNEP’s supportive and catalytic function.

It is important to mention that not all participants agreed on each of these areas of attention. Some argued that some of the areas do not deserve to be further pursued. The objective of the workshop was not to come up with agreed conclusions or to even make specific recommendations. The aim had been to elaborate a range of areas that need further attention or discussions. It was the intention to create a space for open and frank deliberations.

- Examples of the first area “interplay and work of the bodies” would include the clarification of the mandate, functions and roles of the Bureaus of the CPR and the UNEA, the process of preparing UNEA resolutions, including the role and function of the open-ended CPR. Concrete proposals were made with regard to the organization of the UNEA.
- Examples of the second group of areas on “policy and normative functions” include the question how UNEP and MEAs could improve their cooperation in a mutually supportive and complementary manner, and how UNEP could best serve the conventions for which it provides the secretariats. Another area concerns the question on how UNEP could make better use of the SDGs to raise the awareness of environmental concerns.
- Examples of the third area on “science and science-policy function” include the strengthening of UNEP as a “knowledge hub” that is able to provide on demand expertise to countries, and the question on how to secure the delivery of the broad environmental dimension across all SDGs based on existing and new data and information.
- Finally and fourth, areas on the “supportive and catalytic function” include the strengthening of UNEP’s regional centers’ ability to respond to bottom-up formulated capacity support needs; or how UNEP could support countries in their preparation of the ratification of new MEAs.

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On the next steps: Prof. Maria Ivanova, being the moderator of the workshop, will prepare a report, based on her independent and academic point of view, building on the discussion and reflections of the workshop. We will be able to make it available to all interested parties sometime after the summer break.

In the short to long term, we encourage all parties, UNEP and all other interested stakeholders to utilize this report as a basis for further reflections, discussions and actions with the aim of supporting and strengthening IEG.