

Special session to commemorate the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme
(UNEP@50)

3-4 March 2022

Concept Note for the High-Level Leadership Dialogues

27 January 2022

I. Introduction

This concept note provides an overview on the organization of the High-Level Leadership Dialogues included in the provisional agenda of the special session on UNEP@50, under the overall theme “Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Two Leadership Dialogues are proposed:

- a) **Looking back: 50 years of UNEP.** Focus on UNEP achievements and foundation of their success (what is working, what needs course adjustment and what can be learnt), as well as past and present challenges. Considering that UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, this leadership dialogue will explore a) UNEP’s contributions to multilateralism, international cooperation and coordination, b) UNEP’s comparative advantage as the leading global environmental authority, and c) ways and means to strengthen UNEP’s ability to support today’s multilateral global challenges of tackling the three planetary crises (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste).
- b) **Looking forward: Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for people and planet.** A reinvigorated environmental multilateralism within the frame of relevant international frameworks. How the science-policy interface and the global environmental governance system can remain fit-for-purpose, keeping up with societal changes and improving transparency, inclusivity, intergenerational equity and solidarity, while accelerating global action in response to the triple planetary crisis.

The UNEP@50 leadership dialogues aim to promote an interactive high-level conversation on the journey of five decades of environmental action, global environmental multilateralism, and international environmental cooperation, and to exchange views to chart a path to strengthen UNEP for the next 50

years, particularly with regards to the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

UNEP Executive Director’s report “Reflecting on the past and imagining the future: a contribution to the dialogue on the science-policy interface” (UNEP/EA.SS.1/2) and the stakeholder report “The UNEP We Want” will serve as background documents for both leadership dialogues.

II. Format and approach

The leadership dialogues will be held on 4th March 2022, in Conference Room 1, from 10:00 to 13:00 Nairobi time. Each leadership dialogue will have a duration of 90 minutes.

The leadership dialogues will be held in hybrid format and will be interpreted in all six official UN languages, using the platform “Interactio”. Participants or their assistants or representatives will be required to ensure connection to the platform prior to the Leadership Dialogue and to familiarize themselves with the platform in advance (by participating in one of the dedicated training sessions offered by the Secretariat).

The proposed conference room arrangements for those attending in person are illustrated in the image below:



III. Participation

The sessions are open to the participation of representatives of Member States, members of specialized agencies, United Nations entities and other intergovernmental organizations and regional economic integration organizations, as well as to representatives of accredited major groups and stakeholders' organizations.

The Leadership Dialogues will involve the participation of pre-registered Contributing Ministers, invited guests, moderators, and rapporteurs.

- a) **Pre-registered Contributing Ministers.** Ministers wishing to take the floor during the dialogues will be invited to register by sending an email to the Secretariat of Governing Bodies indicating so, at their earliest convenience, but not later than 11 February 2022 (a communication from the Secretariat of Governing Bodies will be sent to Member States with the instructions on how to register for the dialogues). Considering the duration of the dialogues (90 minutes each), the participation of up to 10 Contributing Ministers is envisaged (Contributing Ministers will have three minutes for their interventions). Contributing Ministers will be selected from those registered, according to the "first come-first served" principle, and taking into consideration a balanced gender and geographical representation. Although in-person participation is recommended, Contributing Ministers might join and participate virtually.
- b) **Invited guests.** Each dialogue will include the participation of about four invited guests, whose role is to provide inspirational and enlightening perspectives on the topics for each dialogue. Invited guests will be selected and invited by the Secretariat taking into consideration their expertise, and public engagement, as well as regional and gender balance.
- c) **Moderators.** Each dialogue will be facilitated by an experienced facilitator with knowledge on the specific topic of the dialogue. Moderators will play a key role in facilitating a dynamic and engaging exchange of views among participants.
- d) **Rapporteurs.** Each Dialogue will have a representative from Member States, assisted by a member of the Secretariat, to serve as rapporteur for the dialogue. Rapporteurs will capture key messages from the interventions, exchange of views, and conclusions, that will serve as inputs for the summary of the special session on UNEP@50 that will be prepared by the Chair.

IV. Structure of the Leadership Dialogues

Dialogues will be opened by the moderator, who will introduce participants, provide background information and set the scene for the discussion. This would be followed by interventions from Invited Guests, who through their knowledge of the topic will be able to provide in-depth contributions to the dialogue topics.

After this, pre-registered Contributing Ministers (Ministers or Heads of Delegation), will be invited to provide their reactions to the contributions of the Invited Guests, and inputs to the topics. Each Contributing Minister will have three minutes for their intervention; the reading of written statements is not encouraged.

Depending on availability of time, there could be some space for follow up questions and answers between Invited Guests and Contributing Ministers or other participants in the plenary. Such exchange will be facilitated by the moderator.

Once this exchange is concluded, the moderator will wrap up the discussion and close the dialogue.

V. Dialogue Topics

For the Leadership Dialogue on looking back:

- a) The major achievements of UNEP.
- b) The key contribution of UNEP to the science-policy interface.
- c) UNEP's contribution to international cooperation and how can this be harnessed in tackling the triple planetary crisis.
- d) Challenges and lessons learnt in the 50 years and how we can use them to prepare for the future.

For the Leadership Dialogue on looking forward:

- a) Duties to the future: Tackling the triple planetary crisis through the lens of present and future generations.
- b) Keeping the promise: "Future-proofing" the science-policy interface.
- a) Moving towards an all-inclusive, net-negative, nature positive and pollution free future: Accelerating action, including through adequate funding, digital transformations and capacity building.
- b) Networked and inclusive environmental multilateralism in a post-pandemic digital age: the role of private sector.

VI. Outcome of Leadership Dialogues

It is expected that each of the two Leadership Dialogues will provide both provocative and enlightening discussion for the benefit of all participants. Key points for each will be captured in a non-negotiated Chair's Summary and annexed to the report of the UNEA Special Session.