

Resumed Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2)

Concept Note for the Leadership Dialogue with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Tuesday, 1 March 2022, 3 – 4:30 p.m. (Nairobi time)
Conference Room 1

I. Introduction

In line with the approved [draft structure](#) of the resumed session of UNEA-5 (UNEA-5.2), a Leadership Dialogue with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) will take place for 90 minutes on the second day of UNEA-5, which is convening under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs”. The Leadership Dialogue with the MEAs is intended to bring together relevant stakeholders including from across governments, civil society, and the MEAs (for [UNEP-administered MEAs](#) see Annex I). The participants are invited to exchange views and elaborate on current and possible future developments contributing to enhanced environmental governance, with a particular focus on promoting coherent and integrated implementation of the MEAs. As stated in the report of the Executive Director entitled *Nature at the heart of sustainable development* (UNEP/EA.5/2) submitted to UNEA, “The success of the fifth session in catalysing action depends on collective leadership, creativity, determination and a willingness to deliver on the commitments already taken. A successful fifth session is bound to generate ripple effects across established cooperative frameworks such as MEAs”. The Leadership Dialogue will aim to contribute to this effort to catalyse action and partnership in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. Format and approach

The Leadership Dialogue 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:

Proposed approach



Proposed layout in Conference Room 1 for the High-Level Leadership Dialogues.

The first hemicycle will be occupied by the pre-registered Contributing Ministers (or HoD). In the front will be the Invited Guests and the Moderator.



III. Participation

The Dialogue is open to 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 and representatives of the UN system, including MEA secretariats, and major groups and stakeholders. They will each have three minutes and will be selected from those registered, according to “first come-first served” basis and taking into consideration balanced gender and geographical representation. Although in-person participation is recommended, contributing speakers may join and participate virtually.

IV. Dialogue Scope

Despite the efforts of the international community, the unprecedented environmental degradation continues in all sectors – from air and land to freshwater and oceans. Environmental challenges are inherently interlinked and reinforce each other – for example, chemicals and waste accelerate biodiversity loss, while biodiversity loss amplifies the toxic effects of pollution on both ecosystems and human health. As reflected in the aforementioned report of the Executive Director, the health of humans, animals and the planet are also intertwined. Environmental degradation such as desertification

and air pollution cause higher mortalities and diseases, while marine litter affect the entire food chain. Actions that protect the environment and the wildlife, on the other hand, provide a buffer against antimicrobial resistance and other public health threats. The inseparable linkages between nature and human and animal health have been demonstrated by the recent dramatic emergence of zoonotic diseases and brought to the fore the importance of integrated approaches such as the [“One Health”](#).

There is an increasing need to strengthen the implementation of and compliance with the MEAs, including through enhanced funding. This should be paired with improvements in environmental governance through the development of new tools that address the drivers and impacts of environmental degradation more efficiently at all levels. Such integrated approaches are especially crucial in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are “interlinked, integrated and indivisible”.

“The multiple interactions between environmental problems mean that uncoordinated single-issue solutions are inefficient and likely to fail. An integrated approach that addresses the underlying root causes of interlinked environmental problems and pays attention to unintended consequences of actions is both more cost-effective and more likely to be successful than treating the issues as if they were independent of one another. It further allows synergies to be identified and exploited, while steering away from the worst trade-offs.”

Source: The first UNEP synthesis report entitled: *“Making Peace with Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies”* (2021).

As the leading global environmental authority, UNEP is well placed to facilitate dialogue, cooperation and action to address the triple planetary crisis in an integrated manner. This includes leveraging the latest science and knowledge to maximize impact on environmental policymaking, including on nature-based solutions. The ongoing processes to finalize the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the strategic approach for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 also provide timely opportunities to promote cooperation and collaboration.

Guiding questions

1. What concrete steps can governments take to promote implementation of the MEAs at the national level in an integrated manner? What are the key challenges and how can UNEP support?
2. How can governments, through UNEP and the MEAs, work together to catalyse greater uptake of the scientific evidence and other support to facilitate coherent and effective implementation of the MEAs?
3. How could the convening power of UNEA – with its universal membership – be utilized to promote coherent action on global environmental commitments?

V. Proposed Programme

Opening words by Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director

Moderated by Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

Panel (for bios, see Annex II):

- Juliet Kabera, Director General, Rwanda Environment Management Authority
- Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity
- Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
- Martha Rojas-Urrego, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

VI. Outcome of Leadership Dialogue

The Dialogue is expected to highlight concrete ways to strengthen coherent and effective implementation of MEAs at both national and international levels. It will enable elaboration on the type of action governments could take through UNEP and the MEAs to address the interlinked environmental challenges, including by utilizing scientific evidence to promote cooperation and coherence across the global environmental agenda. The Dialogue will result in a summary of the discussion that is expected to be reflected in the proceedings of UNEA 5.2.

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Annex I: UNEP-administered Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Global MEAs

1. [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)
2. [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)
3. [Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals \(CMS\)](#)
4. [Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal](#)
5. [Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade](#)
6. [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)
7. [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#)
8. [Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer](#)

Regional Seas Conventions

9. [Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region \(Abidjan Convention\)](#)
10. [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean \(Barcelona Convention\)](#)
11. [Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region \(Cartagena Convention\)](#)
12. [Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean \(Nairobi Convention\)](#)
13. [Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea \(Tehran Convention\)](#)

Other Regional Conventions

14. [Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa](#)
15. [Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians \(Carpathian Convention\)](#)

Annex II: Panel bios



Carlos Manuel Rodriguez (Moderator) was selected as CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility in June 2020. Rodriguez, a Costa Rican national, was a pioneer in the development of Payment for Ecosystem Services and strategies for forest restoration, ocean conservation, and decarbonization. During his three terms as Environment and Energy Minister, Costa Rica doubled the size of its forests, made its electric sector fully renewable, and consolidated a national park system that has made the Central American country a prime ecotourism destination. Rodriguez has also founded and served on the board of several environmental NGOs and tropical research institutes. After his second tenure as minister, he was Vice President for Global Policy at Conservation International for 12 years



Juliet Kabera (Panelist) is the Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority. Ms. Kabera previously served as a Director General of Environment and Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment, Rwanda. Her career started as an Environment Management Officer, at a time when Rwanda was developing its forward-looking environmental institutions, policies, and enforcement of different laws such as the 2008 law banning plastic bags and the 2019 law banning single-use plastics. In 2019/2020, Juliet served as the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol. She holds a Master of Public Health and a Master in Conservation MBA.



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (Panelist), Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, has worked with UNEP for over two decades and has served in various roles, including as Director of the Law Division, Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division, and Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. Her work at UNEP has focused on the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws at national, regional and international levels. Before joining UNEP, Elizabeth worked with Tanzania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and left as a Counsellor/Senior Legal Counsel.



Rolph Payet (Panelist) is the Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. He is an international policy expert, researcher and speaker on environment, climate and island issues, and was the first President & Vice-Chancellor of the University of Seychelles. He was Minister of Environment and Energy in the Cabinet of Seychelles from 2012 to 2014. Dr Payet has received numerous international awards and recognition for his work on islands, climate change, tertiary education and biodiversity. He is known for his ability to bring together the various disciplines - natural science, economics and business - to innovate solutions for environmental issues. His research in sustainable tourism and climate change continues to benefit numerous tourism developments in Seychelles and elsewhere.



Martha Rojas Urrego (Panelist) is the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Before joining the Ramsar Convention on 22 August 2016, she was Head of Global Advocacy and Acting Deputy Secretary General of CARE International, a development and humanitarian organization, where she led local to global policy work on fighting poverty, development and humanitarian aid, with a strong focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. Between 1994 and 2008, Martha Rojas Urrego worked for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), first as a Senior Biodiversity Policy Advisor and then in 2002 as Head of Global Policy. In the latter position she coordinated IUCN's global policy work, leading the Union's engagement with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). She managed the UN Representation and EU policy function in both CARE and IUCN. Prior to joining IUCN Martha Rojas Urrego was Executive Director of National Parks of Colombia and represented the Government in several multilateral environmental agreements. She also worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Natura Foundation in Colombia. She is a Colombian and French national.