

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SIXTY FIRST SESSION

**INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Co-Chairman,

New Zealand would first like to thank the co-chairs for these informal consultations. We would like to add our input to some of the questions relating to implementation at the country level, enhancement of global governance, funding and partnerships.

Implementation at the Country Level

- In regards to questions one to five relating to 'implementation at the country level', these questions appear to be primarily directed at countries receiving assistance from UN agencies. New Zealand does not receive this sort of assistance but we are keen to listen to the experiences of those countries that do.
- Our main observation as a donor would be that interventions by environment agencies are seldom sufficiently linked to recipient country development priorities. As a result they tend to:
 - divert capacity from higher priority areas;
 - are difficult to sustain once the intervention is over.
- Integrating environment objectives into development planning will also require greater attention to the relationship between development priorities and work undertaken in the MEAs. MEAs need to pay close attention to the ability of countries to meet the normative standards set. Similarly, MEAs need to provide the tools and encouragement for countries to meet the objectives that are obtainable.
- With regard to the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) for Capacity Building and Technology Transfer, this appears to be moving in the right direction with the refined suggestions on enhancing implementation. Indeed, UNEP's proposed work on the BSP framework should give it greater coherence.

Enhancement of Global Governance

- The report of the high-level panel on system-wide coherence makes some useful recommendations about the relationship between UNEP and UNDP. This also needs to be supported by the structure of the relationships between UNEP and the MEAs.
- UNEP and UNDP need to be in a position to relate MEAs to development priorities in order to make meaningful interventions on the ground. This is difficult to do if UNEP is competing with the MEAs to be the authoritative voice on particular environmental issues. UNDP would need to provide UNEP the central role in providing environmental advice. UNDP has a key role in empowering UNEP as the authoritative voice on the environment.
- If UNDP were to provide UNEP with the key role in providing advice, it would create a strong compulsion for the MEAs to work through UNEP in working towards the implementation of agreements, and allowing for the reduction of overlaps at the implementation stage.

- MEA Secretariats should only be involved in implementation of the MEAs in concert with UNEP and UNDP. Otherwise MEA Secretariats will provide another layer of complexity on the ground.
- The key area for coordination is thematic. UNEP can play a strong role in chairing thematic coordination among the MEA Secretariats. For instance it should participate in, and probably chair the Biodiversity Liaison Group. UNEP chemicals could also have a role in coordinating the chemicals Secretariats. This would allow it to develop a role as the interface between thematic groups of MEAs and the wider UN system.
- A strengthened UNEP can effectively fulfil its mandate as the environmental pillar. UNDP's approach to UNEP is important. Similarly, the willingness of the MEAs to engage UNEP in implementation is crucial. But MEA Secretariats respond to the instructions of their COPs. In general, MEA Secretariats do not currently have implementation mandates.
- None of this would appear to require changes to existing mandates. In some respects it would require a more faithful reading of those mandates.
- We see the relationship between UNDP and MEAs as a two-way street: UNDP has to consider the interests of MEAs in the way in which it discharges its mandate. Similarly the MEAs have to consider global development priorities when they discharge theirs.

Funding

- On funding, the accessibility to GEF funds is still difficult for many smaller countries. The cost accounting framework needs to be addressed. It is a costly and overly technical application process. We need simpler, more user-friendly application procedures which do not disadvantage smaller countries.

Partnerships

- On the issue of partnerships, New Zealand experience has been that partnerships can provide useful gains in the environment field. We're conscious, however, that these need to be partner driven, not donor driven. We would be interested in recipient countries' views on whether partnerships have delivered and their thoughts on reasons why or why not.

Briefly, on the question of what happens next after this round of consultations, we welcome your offer, co-chairs, to prepare an options paper - drawing together the perspectives that have come out of the various contributions. From now on, there will need to be complementarity with the dialogue that we hope will start soon on the system wide coherence report. But we already have this dialogue on environment established. We see this as a good format for exploring further and in a more detailed way the options that the co-chairs would distil from discussions here to date.

Thank you