

WWF Comments (Check against delivery)

The UN needs to transform its general practice of using belated and generally ineffective reactive tools to using compelling evidence of damage to anticipate and prevent problems, as well as to integrate solutions into development action. There must be monitoring of progress made in operational activities and the review of progress in the UN's norm and policy making body for the environment to examine results on the ground and provide swift, direct and effective responses to emerging challenges. Such a monitoring and review mechanism should retain decision making power in countries and create an international system that is responsive to country needs and global problems.

As the technical and norm setting specialist, UNEP is ideally placed for a monitoring role and becomes an independent check should operational activities continue to run through UNDP. The information generated through this independent process would be used to set international policies, incentives, standards, and benchmarks and to facilitate capacity-building efforts. It would ensure that countries and donors assess development proposals for social and ecosystem impacts, using the monitoring and review mechanism as a starting point.

MEAs while having different legal personalities and requirements could also report to UNEP to assist with UNEP making a bridge between technical information at country level and policy and norm setting.

The present reform must ensure that the Rio Principles are kept intact and that the precautionary principle is given a central role in policy, research and implementation.

There must be an immediate shift in emphasis in UN development work from 'development' to 'sustainable development' and to protecting the delivery of environmental services. This goes beyond a focus on national policy making and implementation. It would be of symbolic and practical importance to name any new proposed development bodies 'sustainable development' bodies.

Efforts must be made to encourage full cost accounting of impacts of development on the environment, to develop approaches to adequately measure the sustainability of economic development and to put in place mechanisms that sustain our environment and social and economic security. There should be incentive structures established for institutional personnel to integrate environmental, social, human rights and gender equity aspects into policies and programmes. Existing incentive structures must be changed to reward sustainable development programming, integrate environment strongly into projects and consider the impacts on women, the poor and on the environment from development assistance.

Operational activities should be coordinated and efficient at the country level; but, they must also be able to make effective use of necessary expertise, including direct inputs and technical advice from a norm and policy focused UN environment body. At the country level there should be strong environment expertise within UN country offices to assist in

the identification, assessment, mainstreaming and implementation of environment issues in development and poverty reduction activities. These activities should be financed through innovative financing mechanisms, including international levies on international activities, such as high-seas fishing or airplane flights that harm the global commons. Moreover, the challenges of globalization require a network of UN institutions that provides such responses through coordinated decision-making hierarchies and processes that have the fewest number of decision-making layers in order for them to provide fast, targeted and effective assistance. As noted above, a structure at the country level with immediate and direct links to expertise on environment issues is mandatory.

Should UNDP coordinate an RC system across the board, it is ideally placed to ensure integration of environment and development aspirations happen at country level. With one access point to government, it can ensure development policy is viewed through a sustainable development lens. Any executive boards and GA devolved bodies should have as a requirement that the RC system delivers on sustainable development aspirations whether through the Rio, WSSD, MDG, or any of the commitments in Multilateral Environment Agreements.

Information from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment could be used as a basis for setting benchmarks for development from an ecoregion perspective in order to ensure new development proposals were sustainable.

Wider input into the reform process should be sought from civil society including NGOs and scientists from various regions, both to ensure a wider ownership from “we, the peoples” as well as bringing the reform process in tune with the demands of the peoples living in this century. Sufficient time should be allotted to the reform process, even if this means extending the mandate of the panel.

A proper, functional and permanent position for civil society, including NGOs must be found within a reformed system, and consideration of the special concerns of civil society must be ensured, including accountability, participation and transparency. Moreover, concerns expressed by particular sectors of society, such as Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, workers, should be given special attention.

WWF calls for the Bali Strategic plan be referenced in the HLP report with commensurate commitment for UNEP to be strengthened and funded properly to achieve its goals. Also on funding, we fully support the call by the UK for an expanded global environment fund and would like to see the panel make recommendations on this to the GA.

The policies of UN bodies, international financial institutions (IFIs), international trade organs and others must undergo significant appraisals as to whether they address the environmental challenges that the Earth faces today and will face in the near future. Many of these institutions currently contribute to the problems, and this situation cannot continue. We strongly encouraging the panel to make recommendations to harmonise the

goals and aspirations of multilateral environment and sustainable development policies with the Bretton Woods and International Financial Institutions.

Attention was drawn to the Discussion paper submitted by: WEDO: IIED: Greenpeace: ANPED and WWF which contains a number of recommendations for the panel to consider.