

# REFORM PAPERS



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## **High-Level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working-Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building**

*First Session, New York, 25 June, 2004*

### Status Report

#### **1.0 Introduction**

In 2001 the Governing Council of UNEP initiated an Open-ended Intergovernmental consultation on international environmental governance. Recommendations from this process were presented to the seventh session of the UN Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Cartagena, 2002. Decision SS/VII/1, containing a report on international environmental governance as an annex, was adopted at the meeting in Cartagena and presented a contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002 with the objective of strengthening agreement on institutional frameworks for sustainable development.

Recognising the inadequate and unequal capacity of states, in particular developing countries and economies in transition to meet their environmental commitments, and noting the incoherent and uncoordinated approach to capacity building efforts, a key outcome of the international environmental governance process was the recommendation to develop a strategic plan on technology support and capacity building. Under decision 22/171 of July 1999 it was agreed that the plan should be developed by UNEP as the lead agency, in collaboration with UNDP and GEF.

In its decision 22/171 of 7 February 2003, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum requested the Executive Director to develop a draft intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building, on the basis of inputs from States indicating their national or regional priorities, in collaboration with other organisations. At its 8<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum, decision SS.VIII/1 was adopted, stressing the need for the preparation of the strategic plan on technology support and capacity building.

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#### **2.0 UNEP Preparatory Meetings**

A process of evaluation and consultation on capacity building and technology support efforts was initiated in 2004. Elements of this preparatory work are highlighted in Box 1 and 2.

##### **Box 1.**

###### ***Evaluation efforts included:***

Intergovernmental strategic plan for capacity-building and technology support: perspectives on needs and gaps (UNEP.IEG/IGSP/1/3);  
Overview of UNEP's activities in environmental law;  
Overview of progress on international environmental governance (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5\*);  
Overview of UNEP's Inventory of capacity building and technology support activities;  
Overview of activities of UNEP relating to technology

##### **Box 2.**

###### ***Consultation/preparatory meeting included:***

- Meeting of the Environmental Management Group, 20 April, 2004
- Meeting of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi, 5 & 16 May, 2 June, 2004;
- Meeting of Experts, 17-18 June, 2004;
- Civil Society Consultation, 21-22 June, 2004;
- Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting, 25 June, 2004;

### **3.0 Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment & Development Programme**

At a meeting of the working group of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP on 5, 19 May and 2 June 2004, representatives considered their contribution to the intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity building. Eight core issues were considered these included:

- Objectives and basic functions;
- Implications for UNEP and the United Nations System;
- Regional Dimension;
- Needs assessment;
- Identifying the contents of the plan;
- Financing;
- Documents;
- Adoption and implementation;
- Setting of a time-table for the development and implementation of the plan.

All recommendations from the meeting are contained in report UNEP/IEG/IGSP/1/2

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### **4.0 Expert Consultation on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building**

At a meeting of experts on 17-18 June, 2004, in Geneva, individuals and institutions active in the field of capacity building and technology support from around the world and from a broad range of sectors determined and discussed the following core set of issues;

- Objectives and Vision;
- Set of Guiding principles;
- Systemic analysis;
- Needs assessment;
- Demand driven approach;
- Building sustainable capacity;
- Resources (financial, human, institutional);
- Policy, institutional and legal issues;
- Towards a holistic and integrated approach;
- Multilateral environmental agreements;
- Coordination and consultation;
- Technology issues;
- Information and knowledge base;
- Regional dimension;

The full report of the meeting is contained in documents UNEP/IEG/IGSP/1/4 and UNEP/IEG/IGSP/EX/1/2

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### **5.0 Civil Society Consultation**

A civil society consultation on intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building was held on 21 and 22 June, 2004 in Nairobi. At the meeting representatives of civil society from across the world agreed on the following elements to be included within the strategic plan;

- Guiding principles, such as those recognised in the Earth Charter;
- Adoption of a beneficiaries approach;
- Building capacity of decision-makers;
- Enhancing the role of civil society;
- The role of the private sector;
- Address providers and receivers perspectives;
- Monitoring and evaluation;

## **5.0 Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting: First Session**

The first session of the high-level open-ended intergovernmental working group on an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building was hosted in New York on 25 June, 2004.

Mr Arcadio Ntagazwa, President of UNEP Governing Council and Dr Topfer, Executive Director of UNEP opened the meeting. Briefings were provided by Andrew Kiptoon on the Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Professor Phillip LePrestre, University of Quebec on the Expert meeting, and Georgina Ayre, Stakeholder Forum on Civil Society consultation. The floor was then opened for interventions from governments and agencies. Key issues addressed within the interventions are discussed below.

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## **5.1 Challenges**

The plan should seek to address a number of challenges currently faced by developing countries and economies in transition, these include;

- A lack of transparency and accountability in implementation, decision making and financing activities;
  - An absence of monitoring and reporting processes on the implementation activities;
  - Insufficient technological resources to enable commitments to be met;
  - A lack of skills, expertise and tools for effective environmental management;
  - Insufficient financial resources;
  - A lack of sound science to enable research;
  - The absence of meaningful data on which to base decisions;
  - Inadequate and limited access to institutional capacity;
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## **5.2 Modalities**

The following modalities are offered to guide the development of the plan:

- The strategic plan should be action orientated, adopting a strategic vision with associated targets;
  - In defining the objectives and purpose of the strategic plan, the value of strengthened international environmental governance should be elucidated;
  - The strategic plan should take the form of a framework document with a recommendational basis to it;
  - Capacity building and technology support efforts should be addressed from a systems perspective;
  - To ensure effective implementation the strategic plan should determine decentralised entry points;
  - The strategic plan should not create an additional layer of bureaucracy which impedes implementation;
  - Implementation activities conducted under the plan ought to be registered as CSD partnerships;
  - Following its adoption the strategic plan should be presented to ECOSOC.
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## **5.2 Targets**

Adopting a macro-perspective the inclusion of action orientated goals and targets for the implementation of the strategic plan are strongly recommended, including the development of a time-frame. These might include;

- Short-term: 2004-2005
  - Medium-term: 2006-2010
  - Long-term: 2011-2020
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## **5.3 Financing**

Securing adequate and predictable financing for the realisation of the strategic plan should be addressed in the initial stages of its development and in a transparent manner. Issues to be considered include;

trust;

- Dependable funding should come from Voluntary Assessed Contributions;
  - Commitment and intervention is required from the regional development banks and the International Financial Institutions, ensuring donor coordination;
  - New and additional resources should be made available on a predictable and on-going basis;
  - Alternatively existing resources should be allocated towards implementation in an efficient manner;
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#### **5.4 Cooperation/Collaboration**

The strategic plan should be developed and implemented in a spirit of “collaboration not competition”. To achieve the following recommendations are made;

- To promote interagency collaboration and to avoid duplication of efforts, the strategic plan should be developed within the existing UN structure, giving consideration to the relationship between UNEP, UNDP, GEF and UNIDO and in particular to the MOU between UNEP and UNDP;
  - Recognising and building on the comparative advantage of each agency, the plan should maximise the use of existing facilities, receive contributions from other agencies without affecting their mandates, and enhance interagency cooperation, whilst seeking to address the division of labour;
  - The role of UN Resident Coordinators should be strengthened to facilitate implementation of the plan in the field and coordinate efforts between different agencies at the regional and national levels in particular the relations between UNDP national offices and UNEP regional offices, without creating an additional layer of bureaucracy;
  - UNEP should be the lead agency on the development of the strategic plan, but should recognise and seek to harmonise the strategic efforts contained within MEAs and other agencies, including regional bodies so ensure that the plan is based on complementarity. This will be achieved through an invitation to bodies within and outside the UN system to report on their technology support and capacity building efforts;
  - The respective roles and mandates of other agencies, including UNDP’s competence at the national level, and DESAs competence in the integration of the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development should be noted within the strategic plan;
  - Implementation organisations should be identified to ensure the fulfilment of planned measures, whilst ensuring that new and additional responsibilities do not interfere with existing priorities;
  - UNEP is invited to present on what they can bring to the UN Development Group and how they will work with other members of the group.
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#### **5.5 Regional Component**

Taking into consideration regional characteristics, the regional component of capacity building and technology support efforts should be strengthened through the following elements;

- Ensure complementarity of regional efforts and support the use of regional experience through the development of regional networks;
  - Consider the use of development partners between north and south countries to facilitate technology transfer whilst also recognising and promoting south-south cooperation;
  - Synergy and complementarity should be sought between UNEPs regional offices and Nairobi, whilst avoiding the development of new offices;
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#### **5.6 National Level**

Capacity building and technology support have the greatest impact on implementation at the national level. Taking into account national and local characteristics, the following recommendations are made;

- In adopting a flexible country based approach and ensuring applicability, capacity building and technology support efforts should be demand driven, based on the receiver perspective and be led from a bottom-up perspective;
- The strategic plan should engage and strengthen national institutions and country level delivery mechanisms ensuring that programmes are owned at the national level, and assist states in achieving third party compliance;

- should address social and development needs, including those of local stakeholders;
- The strategic plan should facilitate country level coordination with regional offices, taking into consideration respective roles of UN Agencies;
- Tripartite agreements between developed and developing countries should be explored;

## **5.7 Role of UNEP**

The intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building is an initiative for UNEP and to be led by UNEP, a new international structure is therefore not required to deliver the strategic plan. In assisting the agency in its task, the following recommendations are made;

- The UN Development Group should include an environmental task for led by UNEP;
  - The strategic plan should include a definition of UNEPs mandate, particularly within the fields of technology support and capacity building enabling the plan to be developed within this context, and further strengthen UNEPs role in this field;
  - Taking into consideration the work and comparative advantage of other agencies, the strategic plan should relate to the work of UNEP and enhance the programmes role in capacity building the technology support at the national level;
  - Recognising UNEP as the lead programme in environmental matters, other agencies should seek to support not dominate these activities.
  - The strategic plan should seek to integrate national priorities with those of UNEP. This should be facilitated through strengthening the links between UNDP at the national level and UNEP at the regional level;
  - The strategic plan should orientate the work of UNEP towards supporting the environmental component of JPOI with particular focus on the regional components and enhancing the role of UNEP within the development and implementation of partnerships.
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## **5.8 Evaluation, Monitoring and Review**

### **5.8.1 Preparatory Activities**

To ensure capacity building and technology support efforts are appropriate, demand led, responsive to the needs of stakeholders and based on examples of best practice, the following recommendations are made:

- Undertake an objective evaluation of the activities of UN agencies, other international organisation, government and stakeholder to identify needs, gaps, lessons learned and examples of best practice in the field of capacity building and technology support on an ongoing basis;
- Facilitate an assessment of country level frameworks for the delivery of capacity building and technology support programmes.

### **5.8.2 Ongoing Activities**

Appropriate programme delivery is dependant upon the ability to effectively monitor, evaluate and report implementation activities and their impact. To ensure efforts are responsive to changing needs and demands of recipients and that programmes develop over time it is recommended that the following activities are undertaken on an ongoing basis;

- Develop indicators and targets against which measurable progress can be assessed at the national level;
  - Develop a mechanism to allow monitoring and review of implementation activities;
  - Conduct annual follow-up at the inter-governmental level through the existing UN system.
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## **5.7 Definitions**

To avoid misinterpretation of terms and objectives clear definitions should be included within the plan of the following issues:

- The objectives and function of the plan;
  - Technology support and capacity building;
  - The role of UNEP regional offices.
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Whilst recognising the need to adopt a flexible and responsive approach it is recommended that a core set of principles be included within the plan to guide the development of all technology support and capacity building efforts

The strategic plan should recognise the principle of common but differential responsibilities in its development and implementation the development of the plan;

### **5.9 Scientific Base**

Taking into consideration and building on the discussions on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP the plan should seek to;

- Support the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
- Address the scientific competence of developing countries;
- Assist data collection as a contribution to strengthening the scientific integrity of environmental policy;

### **5.10 Integrated Agenda**

To bring about real change the strategic plan needs to address the environment within the context of sustainable development, ensuring a holistic and integrated approach is adopted. To achieve this, the following recommendations are made:

- Coordinate activities around the implementation of the MDGs to enable poverty eradication to be achieved through environmental protection;
- Drawing clear links between the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the MDGs, facilitate the transfer of technologies that supports appropriate development, and integrate environmental priorities into PRSPs;
- Strengthen institutional, legal, economic, scientific, social and technical aspects of the state of the environment.

### **1 Priority Areas**

provide a foci for the strategic plan, a set of niche areas should be identified for its implementation, these might include:

• Biodiversity;	• Policy and best practice tools;
• Desertification;	• Environmental monitoring;
• Chemicals.	• Early warning;
• Oceans and seas;	• Information dissemination;
• Scientific assessment;	• International policies and legislation;
• Climate Change	

### **5.12 Civil Society**

It is recognised that governments can not achieve sustainable development alone, and that civil society and other stakeholders have a critical role to play in policy and decision making and implementation activities. In recognising this the strategic plan should;

- Involve civil society and other stakeholders in all stages of its development and implementation;
- Recognise civil society and other stakeholders as both a recipient and provider of capacity building and technology support;
- Ensure civil society and other stakeholders are involved in all stages including assessment, development, implementation and evaluation, of capacity building and technology support programmes;
- Recognising the need to engage the private sector the strategic plan should address the issue of corporate accountability;

### **5.13 Developing Countries**

Developing countries and in particular Small Island Developing State encounter unique developmental, environmental and financial challenges in recognition of this, the plan should seek to;

- Fully involved developing countries, economies in transition and SIDS in its development;

- Provide SIDS with access to appropriate technologies and resources;

## **7.0 Key Recommendations**

A number of areas of common consensus have emerged between governments, civil society, experts, UN agencies and other international organisation which could be used as building blocks in the preparation of the plan. This is articulated in Box 3.

Box 3

### ***Areas of Common Consensus***

The strategic plan should include a set of definitions and guiding principles;

Recognising the comparative advantage of and working collaboratively with other agencies, UNEP should take the lead in the development, implementation and follow-up of the strategic plan;

Capacity building and technology support efforts should be centred on a systematic needs based assessment, allowing programmes to be demand led and owned at the country level;

New and additional finances and the efficient allocation of existing resources should be identified and considered during the preparation of the plan;

On-going monitoring, evaluation and review of capacity building and technology support efforts should be undertaken against a set of objective targets and indicators;

Taking into consideration regional characteristics, the regional component of capacity building and technology support efforts should be strengthened;

Recognise that capacity building and technology support efforts have the greatest impact at the national and local level;

Involve civil society, developing countries, economies in transition and SIDS in all stages of the development and implementation of the strategic plan;

The strategic plan should ensure a long-term approach is adopted to encourage the delivery of sustainable capacity building and technology support efforts.

and, however, with strong civil society engagement the task

is recommended that UN agencies. Such a process

of civil society and experts