



# **International Environmental Governance Workshop: Stockholm+50 and UNEP Governance**

**Chexbres, Switzerland  
9-11 September 2019**

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**CENTER FOR GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**



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*This Conference was never conceived to be a once and for all definitive approach to the problems of our global environment. For an inherent characteristic of the environmental issue is precisely that it will remain with us for an indefinite period.*

*And because it will, the fundamental task of the Stockholm Conference has been to take the political decisions that will enable the community of nations to act together in a manner consistent with the Earth's physical interdependence.*

*This was our mandate. This is what we did.*

*Maurice Strong, Closing Speech at the 1972 Stockholm Conference*

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## Introduction

On 9-11 September 2019, the Federal Office for the Environment of Switzerland with the support of the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the University of Massachusetts Boston convened a workshop in International Environmental Governance (IEG) in Chexbres, Switzerland. The goal was to think creatively about the upcoming 50th anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as to discuss the opportunity to improve the governance arrangements in the existing institutional landscape. More specifically, participants discussed three mandates for action regarding this anniversary – two from the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) as outlined in decision 4/2 and resolution 4/23, and one from the UN General Assembly as outlined in resolution 73/333.

Twenty-five participants from 14 countries, the European Union, and the United Nations Environment Programme attended the event. Country presence was in balance as all UNEP regions were represented and capital-based officers as well as members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of UNEP based in Nairobi or Geneva attended. The workshop built on the outcomes of a series of IEG workshops that the government of Switzerland had convened over the past 10 years with the most recent having been held in Ittingen on 6-8 June 2018 and Glion on 20-22 June 2017.

This report summarizes the discussions and outlines key findings and options for moving forward. It does not reflect a common posi-

tion but rather the variety of views expressed in the course of the convening as the goals of the meeting did not include reaching a consensus.

## Objectives and Structure of the Workshop

The workshop was structured in two main sessions followed by a synthesis session:

- Towards Stockholm+50
- Intersessional Review Process of UNEP's governance

Seeking to unlock the potential for a 2022 Stockholm+50 event in the context of existing mandates from the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) process entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”, the workshop focused on the already generated expectations and need for a conference, its goals, objectives and processes. Participants also deliberated on UNEP's existing governance arrangements with a strong focus on UNEA resolutions.

Participants engaged in their personal capacity under Chatham House rules. To ensure fruitful discussion, the Center for Governance and Sustainability prepared a thought starter on each of the two topics that were distributed in advance.

## Towards Stockholm+50

Two main mandates guide the preparation of Stockholm+50: the UN Environment Assembly decision 4/2 to commemorate the creation of UNEP and UN General Assembly



Resolution 73/333 asking to convene a UN high-level meeting with a view to strengthening the implementation of international environmental governance and law. Furthermore, UN Environment Assembly resolution 4/23 requests the preparation of science-policy input to the preparations of the event.

Participants highlighted the opportunity to go beyond the celebration of UNEP's creation given the urgency to tackle global environmental decline, building on the momentum provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the work on a Global Pact for the Environment and UNEP reform. The key messages from the discussions are summarized below, focusing on the outcomes, substance, location, and preparatory process for the event.

### **Outcome**

Global conferences are considered successful when their outcome is an ambitious political declaration that speaks to politicians and is clear and relevant for the general public. The declaration can be complemented with an Action Plan that outlines concrete measures. In essence, these were the core outcomes of the 1972 Stockholm Conference – the Stockholm Declaration with 26 principles and the Stockholm Action Plan with 106 recommendations. In comparison with the conference in 1972, today a stronger mechanism for monitoring and enabling implementation at all levels of governance (monitoring, review and accounting) is necessary. This is an area of potential innovation that the Stockholm+50 event could explore and utilize, building on the mechanism of Voluntary National Reviews.

Voluntary instruments and mandates for political work on emerging issues should be part of agenda for Stockholm+50. For example, the 10 Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production is scheduled to end in 2022 requiring an assessment of its role post-2022. The content should be robust, aiming to ban and regulate activities harmful to the environment and to raise the level of environmental protection and conservation. Measures are needed to improve capacity on the ground, including improving financial support for implementation.

Renewed commitment and boost for the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development is necessary, including improving capacity to better monitor, display, and communicate environmental trends. Institutionally, Stockholm+50 is a chance to strengthen UNEP in international environmental governance.

### **Content**

Anniversaries provide an opportunity to assess the trajectory to date and envision a way forward for the longer-term. The fiftieth anniversary, participants noted, is in fact a milestone toward the 100th anniversary in 2072. In 2019, for example, the International Labor Organization marked 100 years since its creation. In the face of a mounting ecological crisis, an international extinction rebellion, and youth climate strikes, this 50th environmental anniversary provides an opportunity to assess “where we are and where we want to go,” articulate “what we want, what we don’t want, and how to get where

we want”, participants noted. The content of the Stockholm+50 event, therefore, will be important in shaping the agenda for years into the future.

To this end, participants agreed, the event should be forward looking and dynamic and focus on major shifts needed while also identifying successes, gaps and challenges. It could identify emerging issues such as plastic pollution or the principle of non-regression and enhance synergies by “connecting the dots”. In this context, it is crucial for states and stakeholders to be able to report on achievements on existing environmental commitments and exchange best practices. How have countries implemented the Stockholm Action Plan and the subsequent plans that followed – the Rio principles, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Rio+20 outcome document? How have countries implemented their commitments under the various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) or 10YFP on sustainable consumption and production? What can they learn from their peers? Ultimately, to connect with a broader audience, the message should be clear to communicate at the national level – what are we trying to solve?

Financing is a key challenge and an important goal could be to create a financial compact for implementation. Indeed, participants noted that most global conferences are platforms for new commitments but without follow up, they remain empty promises. Taking stock of implementation and creating the conditions for improving it, would therefore be significant. Provision of support – technical, financial, institutional – will be important.

Focus on implementation of environmental agreements and goals can also help accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, based on a potential mid-term review. This could help identify areas where there are challenges and the reasons for lagging behind, for example in SDG12 on responsible consumption and production. This is indeed a major concern that demands concerted attention and action, improved measurement, and a more compelling message. UNEP’s relationship with the various multilateral environmental agreements – the ones it administers and the ones that it does not – is complex and would benefit from clarification.

All participants noted with concern that environmental decline is significant and measures to halt and reverse it are urgent. The agenda, therefore, needs to enable states to focus on the environmental dimension of sustainable development and ensure that progress is made. Views varied regarding whether Stockholm+50 should focus on the environment, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the nexus between the environment and the economy, an assessment of successes, or some other topic solicited from a broader audience. While participants acknowledged that there is a need to break silos and embrace a cross-cutting approach, they also acknowledged the risk for the environmental agenda to be marginalized unless it is in clear focus of the Stockholm+50 conference.

## Location

Where Stockholm+50 will be held was a critical question for all participants. Since the event will celebrate both the 50th anniversary of the Stockholm Conference, Stockholm emerged as the most legitimate option for a main event. Other locations for a main Stockholm+50 conference were considered, namely Nairobi and New York. Multiple, additional events in locations around the globe, including a UNEP+50 commemoration, could complement the event. Ensuring high participation was considered imperative and participants emphasized the need of attracting heads of state to give the environment the high-level political attention it requires. Engagement of political leaders will ensure visibility and media coverage and hence yield a higher level of commitment to outcomes, participants agreed.

- Stockholm is the legitimate/natural location for a global event that commemorates the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment of 1972. It is historically important as the location of the first UN conference on the environment. Stockholm could also attract heads of state for a well-planned commemoration of an important global milestone. Additionally, it would be a location where a significant number of technical and scientific experts from around the world are likely to convene. At the time of the workshop discussions, the Swedish government was assessing the feasibility of organizing the event in Stockholm.
- Nairobi hosts the headquarters of UNEP and a celebration of the creation of UNEP

i.e. UNEP+50 needs to engage Nairobi as the center of environmental decision-making. A commemoration event could also provide the reason for holding a special session of the UN Environment Assembly. However, only 40% of UN member states have missions in Nairobi and participation in Stockholm+50 will put additional demands on many countries, especially low-income ones.

- New York was also discussed as a potential location since it a logical venue for organizing special events or meetings during the UN General Assembly. It draws large numbers of participants, which can be both helpful and challenging. However, in New York, political interests often collide, and it is hard to defend the environmental agenda and prevent environmental experts from being marginalized within UNGA debates.
- Multiple locations over the course of an entire year complementing the main event is another option. A multi-city, multi-stakeholder, multi-agenda commemoration presents opportunities for innovation. For example, the major event could be held in Stockholm while a UNEP+50 event could take place in Nairobi, and a special event during the UN General Assembly can be held in New York. Meanwhile, events could take place in several other countries around the world and give the necessary positive impetus and energy to the global environmental agenda while connecting to local realities and priorities. One such



precedent includes the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador preceded by three preparatory committee meetings organized in New York, Nairobi and Surabaya (Indonesia).

## Preparatory Process

As these mandates exist and provide a working basis to advance the preparations there is need to establish a common understanding of the existing mandates and a discussion if and to what extent a UNGA resolution is needed. Different models for Stockholm+50 were discussed, including using lessons learned from the UN Climate Action Summit. Most of the participants noted that there should be a clear connection to the UNGA decision's recommendation on international environmental governance and law, to UNEA's decision on a UNEP+50 event, and to World Environment Day, which is celebrated on June 6 every year marking the start date of the Stockholm Conference in 1972. These processes should be complementary and can even be merged. Participants expressed support for a preparatory process that is capital-driven.

Strong individual and institutional leadership, especially from governments and UNEP, will be critical to the success of the event regardless of the form it takes. The two-year preparatory process for the 1972 Stockholm Conference was successful when Maurice Strong took on the role of Secretary-General of the Conference and brought together a dynamic secretariat in Geneva that could engage with most of the specialized UN agencies and the missions of UN member states represented in Geneva. Much like the original process, the 50th anniversary pro-

cess should be transparent, inclusive and participatory – engaging not only states, but also stakeholders in the preparatory process. Ownership of the process and outcomes could be generated by holding regional preparatory meetings.

Another positive and engaging factor that we could use in this iteration of the preparation: Maurice Strong had convened a team of 150 scientific and intellectual leaders from 58 countries to engage as consultants for the conference agenda and produce the main background document. In preparations for the 2022 event, the role of science will be critical, and scientists could engage in the process much like they did at the creation moment of the international environmental governance system.

Mobilizing sufficient financing early on requires urgent consideration to ensure the successful preparation of the event. Importantly, attracting and engaging the broader public in dynamic, modern ways will be critical. Stockholm+50 should not be “just another conference,” participants agreed. Dynamic remote participation through new technologies could engage people across the globe in the celebrations and entice real commitment to action. It can also minimize the ecological footprint and create an enabling space – environmental multilateralism 2.0 – that complements the traditional conference. Engaging youth, participants noted, will be important and the topic of environment has to appeal to a broader public through organizing unconventional bottom-up events. Harnessing online technologies will be important in mobilizing and engaging a broader global constituency.

## Intersessional Review Process of UNEP's Governance

In March 2019, governments discussed at the 4th session of UNEA next steps for reforming international environmental governance. UNEA decision 4/2 initiates an intersessional review process focusing on four areas: functioning and interplay of UNEP's governing bodies and their bureaus, preparation of resolutions, and follow-up.<sup>1</sup> The intersessional review process provides an important opportunity to assess UNEP's internal working mechanisms, in particular with respect to the mandates of its governing bodies and their meetings and their relationship with each other.

### Functioning and Interplay of UNEP's Governing Bodies

Several governing bodies have responsibility for policy guidance, management, and oversight of UNEP. Their functioning and interplay is important to the operation of the organization and to global environmental governance more broadly.

### UN Environment Assembly

Establishing UNEA with universal membership was the most significant governance reform taken to implement paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document. To understand opportunities to refine the governance reforms, paragraph 10a of UNEA decision 4/2 requests to “review the preparation, working arrangements, and scheduling of sessions of UNEA.”

Similarly to the Governing Council of UNEP, which UNEA replaced, the Assembly has a

two-fold role that includes a policy function to act as a normative decision-making body and an executive function to govern and oversee the operations of UNEP. The policy function consists of preparation of resolutions/decisions, discussed in conjunction with paragraph 10b of UNEA decision 4/2.

The working arrangements determine how UNEA involves the multilateral system, draws knowledge from academia and engages civil society. In particular, the link between UNEA and multilateral environmental agreements is vague and needs strengthening. Similarly, science is not properly feeding into decision-making, despite the recent launch of the Science-Policy-Business Forum (since 2016) as it remains distinct from the policy function of UNEA and the science function of UNEP.

The observed proliferation of resolutions might be a consequence of reducing the frequency of the sessions of the governing body. The Governing Council convened annually in a regular session in Nairobi and in a special session in countries around the world. UNEA convenes every two years in Nairobi. Introducing special sessions of UNEA on even years could alleviate challenges resulting from congestion of resolutions in regular sessions. Special sessions of UNEA are technically possible to hold but are arguably challenging from a political standpoint.

The high-level segment convenes at the end of the UNEA session for two days to take strategic decisions and provide political

<sup>1</sup> UNEP (2019). UN Environment Assembly Decision 4/2. Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. <https://bit.ly/2Zssp5z>

guidance. It provides an opportunity for empowering ministers by giving them various ways to engage and influence, with the main outcome of a ministerial declaration on a specific topic/theme. The following three opportunities for participation could fulfill the needs of ministers:

- launch high-level alliances and partnerships
- influence decision-making at UNEA (including discuss and decide contentious and unresolved issues)
- interact and network

Attracting ministerial participation and increasing the impact and visibility of UNEA requires careful selection of the theme of the high-level segment. Possibilities for selection of a science-based topic that is informed by UNEP's science-policy processes could be examined, in particular the role of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) and/or other assessments. A captivating theme provides clarity and direction to UNEA, as well as attracts participation and media coverage. However, to date, selection of topics has occurred in an ad hoc fashion and developing more continuity is needed to have an impact. This could be achieved by developing a long-term work agenda for UNEA.

A key feature of the high-level segment is the organization of interactive dialogues among ministers and stakeholders. However, the current format does not induce dialogue among ministers and other models should be explored and used. The meetings of the MEAs have already implemented more innovative approaches and could provide models. For instance, Minamata COP-1 used closed

ministerial roundtables that stimulated interactive discussions among ministers. UNEA is often cited as the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, but it fails to actively engage ministers in decision-making. One opportunity is to invite ministers one day prior to the high-level segment for consultations on selected resolutions, where progress cannot be achieved at the technical level. The President of UNEA could play an active role in choosing topics and convening ministers. Critically, UNEA needs to evolve into a dynamic and enabling platform to engage ministers. This could be achieved by providing more focus to emerging issues, addressing topics of MEAs in an integrated fashion or involving ministers from other sectors.

### **Highlighted Challenges for UNEA**

- Low attendance and lack of audience and interest in ministers' statements
- Limited ministerial involvement in negotiations on resolutions
- Weak involvement of MEAs
- Lack of interaction and genuine dialogue among ministers
- No continuity in the agenda at different UNEA sessions

### **Possible Actions**

- Involve ministers in promoting resolutions to resolve urgent issues of political nature that cannot be solved on the technical level
- UNEA President to take a stronger initiative to convene ministers to solve

pertinent issues requiring a political push

- Organize high-level consultations among like-minded countries to empower ministers to lead efforts on topics of political interest
- Organize small round-table meetings only for ministers for dynamic discussions
- Invite ministers from different sectors to generate a more holistic view
- Develop a long-term work program and agenda for UNEA to create continuity

### **Committee of Permanent Representatives**

The CPR's mandate is oversight of UNEP, including mainly the negotiation and review of the program of work, budget, the Medium-Term Strategy and decisions pertaining to UNEP's functioning, and the monitoring of the implementation of UNEA resolutions. Possibilities for clarifying the role of the two new CPR bodies are elaborated below.

#### ***Annual sub-committee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives***

The annual sub-committee meeting of the CPR (ASC) is mandated to review the medium-term strategy, the program of work and budget. It was created to increase oversight of implementation and attract capital engagement in intersessional work. Its oversight role has been welcomed as it helps to give an overall view of UNEP's activities, but it still requires sharpening to fulfil that mandate and live up to expectations.

Participation levels have been low and im-

balanced with greatest participation from countries with a permanent mission in Nairobi. Similarly, capital-level participation is dominated by developed countries. This might result in lower interest in enhancing the programmatic performance of the ASC. Lack of extrabudgetary resources to support participation could further exacerbate the difficulties in ensuring adequate representation. To increase more balanced participation, the 6th ASC received funds to support the participation of countries without a permanent mission in Nairobi.

Various possibilities exist to strengthen the oversight role. Importantly, the current focus on reporting of successes in implementation of the program of work should be complemented with critical analysis of challenges encountered and articulation of lessons learned. Furthermore, the oversight function could give more emphasis to understanding challenges in implementing resolutions.

The ASC could also be used in even years for member states to announce upcoming resolutions, which would help member states interested in the same topic to come together. However, this creates a risk of deviating from its oversight function, if resolutions start dominating the discussions.

### **Challenges**

- Lack of participation from capitals with relevant expertise
- Limited engagement/interest on the oversight related work (program of work and budget, Medium-Term Strategy, etc.) could be driven by poor articulation and low awareness of its benefits for programmatic performance



**Table 1. Frequency and duration of the meetings of the governing body of UNEP (1973-2019)<sup>2</sup>**

Period	Frequency and Duration
1973-1985	Two-week-long regular sessions of the Governing Council (GC) organized annually
1985-1997	Two-week-long regular sessions of GC organized every two years (uneven years) One-week long special sessions of GC organized every two years (even years)
1999-2013	One-week-long regular sessions of GC organized every two years (uneven years) One-week long special sessions of GC organized every two years (even years)
2014-2019	One-week-long regular sessions of UNEA organized every two years

- Low accessibility due to low number of permanent missions
- Extrabudgetary funding for participation has been made available only recently
- Structure of the meeting is challenging as it focuses largely on reporting and allocates insufficiently time for discussion on lessons learned
- Lacks decision-making capacity
- Rename to reflect better its character e.g. Review Committee Meeting
- Provide extrabudgetary funding to increase participation from developing countries
- Consider adding the adoption of input to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) as a new function

#### **Possible Actions**

- Provide more clarity to mandate to focus on oversight
- Allocate more time to discuss, identify and translate lessons learned into the future program of work
- Incorporate as new element discussions on lessons learned from implementation of resolutions

#### **Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR)**

The mandate of the OECPR is to contribute to the preparation of UNEA's agenda and prepare decisions for adoption at UNEA. The timing of OECPR requires consideration. Organizing it back-to-back with UNEA makes decision-making more manageable, in particular as the number of resolutions is high and their deliberation will require time. However, the substance of resolutions might suffer as such timing does not allow for internal consultations on draft resolutions between OECPR and UNEA.

<sup>2</sup> <https://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/previous-governing-council-sessions>



Understanding and clearly communicating the nature of the OECPR, requires a change in its name to reflect its function. Renaming it the Preparatory Committee of the Assembly would help attract participation and increase engagement prior to UNEA. Multiple options for reviewing the objectives, preparation, and working arrangements of OECPR exist. One option is to merge OECPR and UNEA to generate a two-week-long UNEA session. More frequent and longer regular sessions of the governing body of UNEP have been organized in the past, as shown in table 1. An assessment of prior experiences would help evaluate possible benefits and challenges in organizing two-week-long sessions of UNEA.

### **Highlighted Challenges**

- Lack of discipline in adhering to guidelines for the preparation and submission of resolutions, including respecting the suggested timelines
- Timing OECPR back-to-back with UNEA yields considerable synergies, but substance suffers from lack of time for internal consultations

### **Proposed Actions**

- Analyze scheduling options to maximize the substantial discussions of resolutions
- Rename and transform as the Preparatory Committee of UNEA
- Encourage member states to adhere to guidelines for submitting resolutions, including respecting suggested timelines
- Manage an online portal to generate a dialogue on draft resolutions

- Cluster resolutions based on a common thrust (not substance or title)
- Clarify benefits and challenges of organizing two-week-long regular sessions of UNEA
- Establish a multi-stakeholder committee to review resolutions before negotiations

### **Bureaus**

The CPR bureau is responsible for organizing the work of the CPR and provides guidance to the Secretariat, but no resolution has been adopted to specify its functions. The UNEA bureau's mandate following the Rules of Procedure of UNEA is to "assist the President in the general conduct of business of the UNEA."<sup>3</sup> To enhance cooperation between the two bureaus joint meetings are regularly organized, but overlap still exists and paragraph 10b of UNEA Decision 4/2 requests a review of the respective roles and responsibilities of the bureaus. There is a need to clarify their responsibilities and working arrangements and distinct their respective mandates from each other to ensure clear division of labor thus improve institutional efficiency.

The Rules of Procedure enable the bureaus to adopt Terms of Reference to guide the conduct of business. To this end, the Secretariat has proposed draft Terms of References for the two bureaus that provide a useful starting point for in-depth consideration and possible refinement. In line with the policy function of UNEA, the UNEA Bureau could focus on the preparation of UNEA, in consultation with the CPR bureau. The CPR bureau could focus on support to the oversight function, including helping to prepare the ASC.

<sup>3</sup> Rule 18 (para 1) of Rules of Procedure of UNEA

### **Highlighted Challenges**

- Lack of coordination and duplication of work between the bureaus

### **Proposed Actions**

- Adopt Terms of Reference for both bureaus to clarify their roles

### **Preparation of Resolutions**

As a result of the governance reforms of UNEP, member states began to take responsibility for introducing resolutions, which had previously come primarily from the secretariat. The new practice has increased member states ownership of the process, but the number of resolutions has increased, which risks diluting their message. Paragraph 10c of UNEA decision 4/2 requests to “review the criteria, modalities and timing for presenting and negotiating draft resolutions and decisions.”

Resolutions are a core outcome of UNEA sessions. They can be categorized as operative, normative and politically declaratory. There is a need to develop soft guidance on how resolutions should be developed. The premise is that any member state has the right to introduce a resolution up to 24 hours before the commencement of UNEA in line with the Rules of Procedure.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, UNEA’s mandate is to provide overarching policy guidance and, therefore, the topics of resolutions cannot be limited.

Development of a guidance document could take the form of a handbook that outlines recommendations for the preparation of resolutions, including concrete examples. It could be prepared by the UNEA bureau and/

or the Secretariat and build on the guidance document prepared for submission of resolutions for UNEA-4. Ultimately, the guidance needs to generate more discipline to ensure consistency of draft resolutions and their delivery within suggested timelines.

Resolutions need to be championed by member states. However, it might be useful to provide the Secretariat the opportunity to propose operative decisions and/or useful elements for consideration by member states in conjunction with progress reports. Alternatively, the ASC could be used in even years for the secretariat to propose recommendations, based on lessons learned from programme performance review, for member states to consider in their proposals.

Ensuring division of labor is important. Resolutions pertaining to the program of work and budget should be predominantly dealt with or prepared by the CPR, for technical resolutions allow for technical leadership from capitals.

Lack of consultations among member states in the preparation of resolutions hinders coordinated preparation. The online portal developed for UNEA-4 helped to increase transparency of the preparation of draft resolutions among member states prior to UNEA. Regional ministerial meetings organized in preparation of UNEA also provide an important avenue for prior consultation in many regions.

After resolutions have been submitted to the Secretariat, it is important to understand

<sup>4</sup> Rule 44 of Rules of Procedure of UNEA

their budgetary implications and links to the program of work thus helping to align activities and resource them realistically. For UNEA-4, the Secretariat piloted the Program Budget Implication (PBI) system used in New York to estimate budgetary implications.

Due to the large number of draft resolutions, clustering has been used to group resolutions. In general, clustering has been found useful, but it has also presented problems of grouping issues that seem related but are not. Clustering should be based on the substantive thrust and focus of the resolution, not its title, to avoid future problems.

Consideration could be given to the following elements in preparation of guidance for submission of resolutions for UNEA:

- Introduced by member states within a suggested timeline
- Is of global environmental concern
- Deemed relevant by more than one member state
- Explains how it is linked to or complements the program of work
- Provides a target and proposes metrics for follow-up
- Identifies main addressees
- Explains links to MEAs
- Aligned with UNEP's mandate, addresses particularly emerging issues or global environmental challenges

- Includes a concept note that clarifies its purpose, added value and link to the UNEA theme

Since Rio+20, UNEP's governance has evolved significantly. However, new layers have increased the level of complexity and the design as a whole requires rethinking. The intersessional review process provides a valuable opportunity to simplify and clarify the roles of the governing bodies to ensure the effective functioning of UNEP.

## Concluding Remarks

Despite continuous efforts, global environmental governance is not delivering the resolution of global environmental problems. Implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development is still lagging behind and truly integrated solutions are largely absent. Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP has been mandated but there is an opportunity to go beyond a celebration of UNEP's creation. Given the urgency to tackle the global environmental crisis, it will be important to assess past successes, identify areas where more work is needed and build on the momentum provided by the 2030 Agenda and UN Development System reform. The event will be a milestone towards 2072, 100 years after the Stockholm Conference and the creation of UNEP. To this end, a longer-term focus can help articulate a compelling vision for global environmental policy for the remainder of this century.

The substantial reform of UNEP's core governance structures requires an intersessional review of accomplishments and remaining concerns as well as an action plan for improvement. The discussions in Chexbres highlighted the need for more active engagement of ministers in the work of the UN Environment Assembly and enhancing its standing as the preeminent global environmental governance body. Development of a long-term work program and agenda for UNEA would create continuity and be an important framework within which the functioning and interplay of the governance bodies of UNEP could be improved. Increasing organizational efficiency is a guiding principle, which can be achieved by helping the CPR to fulfill its oversight function and to confine decision-making to UNEA. For instance, given

that resolutions are negotiated in the OECPR its institutional home would seem to better fall under the Assembly. Similarly, the roles of the two bureaus need clarity to ensure that the UNEA Bureau fulfills its core responsibility for preparing UNEA. These and other highlighted challenges and proposed actions that resulted from the discussions among participants offer a baseline for solidifying the achievements of the reform process and addressing unresolved concerns ■

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## Center for Governance and Sustainability

The Center for Governance and Sustainability seeks to bring academic rigor to real-world policy challenges in environment, development, and sustainability governance. It serves as information hub, brutal analyst, and honest broker among scholars, students, and practitioners.

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