
**First meeting of the Consultative Group
of Ministers or High-level Representatives
on International Environmental Governance**
Belgrade, 27 – 28 June 2009

BELGRADE PROCESS

MOVING FORWARD WITH DEVELOPING A SET OF OPTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

CO-CHAIRS SUMMARY

Summary

This Summary of the co-Chairs sets out the discussions from the First Meeting of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance and the process and the work for future meetings.

1. The First Meeting of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High Level Representatives on International Environmental Governance [hereafter the Consultative Group] convened under Governing Council decision 25/4 was held from 27-28 June 2009 in Belgrade, Serbia.
2. Opening statements were made by the Mayor of the City of Belgrade, the President of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) and the UNEP Executive Director.
3. The consultations were informed by background papers setting out a number of key questions and identifying the core challenges that countries are facing on International Environmental Governance (IEG).
4. The Consultative Group was made up of delegates from 38 countries, including 8 ministers and 2 deputy ministers. The Group elected by acclamation H.E. Ms. Stefania Prestigiacomo Minister for Environment, Land and Sea of Italy and H.E. John Njoroge Michuki, Minister for Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya to serve as co-Chairs of the meeting.
5. The co-Chairs summary is a reflection of the interactive dialogue that occurred among the ministers and high-level representatives attending the Consultative Group meeting. It reflects the ideas presented and discussed.
6. The Consultative Group will present its final report to the eleventh special session of the GC/GMEF in February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia
7. **Ministers and high-level representatives generally supported the following:**
 - Any reform to IEG should be based on the principle that form should follow function.
 - Consultations on functions will lead to a discussion on forms that could range from incremental changes to other broader institutional reforms.
 - The IEG debate should be addressed in the broader context of environmental sustainability and sustainable development.
 - Developing a set of options for improving IEG should follow from a fresh examination of multiple challenges and emerging opportunities.
 - Incremental changes to IEG can be considered alongside other more fundamental reforms.
 - The work of the Consultative Group should continue to be political in nature.
8. **Other matters discussed during the course of the consultations on IEG included:**

In the context of making incremental changes, clustering and synergies between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) was stressed by many, while others referred to creating new institutions.
9. The political nature of the discussion was highlighted and participation at the highest level was encouraged. It was considered that the Group could provide a political strategy to facilitate progress on the reform of IEG.

10. Some participants highlighted the significance of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit Report on the Management Review of Environmental Governance within the United Nations System.
11. Many participants stressed the importance of strengthening the status and working methods of the GMEF in order to respond to global environmental challenges.
12. Many emphasised the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface, and capacity building in the context of delivering on the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building.
13. The need for new additional and predictable financial resources was stressed by many.
14. Others stressed that any outcomes intended to strengthen IEG should be based on core principles including the polluter pays principle and common but differentiated responsibility.
15. Some participants highlighted that the Consultative Group's discussion on IEG should take into account ongoing international processes on governance such as the 5th replenishment of the Global Environment Facility, 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen (UNFCCC COP 15), and a possible Rio +20.
16. Participants discussed the Executive Director's paper that presented the core challenges to the current IEG system as the basis for articulating key functions for the UN system in:
 - Creating a strong, credible and coherent science base
 - Developing a global authoritative and responsive voice for sustainability
 - Achieving coherence within the UN system
 - Securing sufficient, predictable and coherent funding
 - Ensuring a responsive and cohesive approach to meeting country needs
 - Facilitating the transition towards a global green economy
17. The Consultative Group invited the Executive Director to prepare a paper that draws upon the discussion of the Consultative Group during its first meeting and any subsequent written comments provided by participating governments, proposing a number of potential functions and possible forms to address such functions and to circulate the document for comments electronically to participating governments through the co-Chairs. The Executive Director would, after receiving comments, prepare a final version of the paper in consultation with the co-Chairs to submit to the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group.
18. Noting the context and the busy period in which the IEG discussions are taking place some participants suggested that consideration be given to recommending to the Eleventh Special Session of the GC/GMEF that the mandate of the Consultative Group be extended beyond the current 2010 mandate, while some others were of a different view.
19. Participants also considered it appropriate to explore the possibility for the GC/GMEF to put forward to the General Assembly a proposal for UNEP to be involved in the preparatory process for a possible Rio+20 in 2012.
20. Participants noted the elements of a roadmap attached in Annex I to this co-Chairs Summary and requested the Executive Director to make arrangements for the second

meeting of the Group with a high-level officials meeting to be convened immediately before it. The second meeting will take place in late October/early November in Rome, Italy.

21. Participants expressed their sincere and special thanks to the Government of the Republic of Serbia and H. E. Oliver Dulić, Minister for Environment and Spatial Planning of Serbia and President of the GC/GMEF, for the warm hospitality and impeccable arrangements in hosting the first meeting of the Consultative Group.

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Annex One

BELGRADE PROCESS

‘Roadmap’ on the implementation of UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/4 on International environmental governance

Note by co-Chairs

Summary

This roadmap is presented by the co-Chairs to guide the Belgrade Process on the steps it should undertake to respond to Governing Council Decision 25/4.

Background

At the twenty fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya, the Governing Council approved decision 25/4 on International Environmental Governance. The decision stated that:

The Governing Council,

Taking note of the recommendation contained in the report by the co-Chairs of the informal consultations of the General Assembly on the institutional framework for United Nations environment work, dated 10 February 2009, to produce proposals that “allow improving the current system”,¹

Taking note also of the discussion paper prepared by the Executive Director for the ministerial consultations at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council on the theme: “Globalization and the environment – global crises: national chaos?”² which presents the scale and nature of current global crises and the emerging opportunities to respond to them,

Taking note further of the discussion paper prepared by the Executive Director for the ministerial consultations at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council on the theme: “International Environmental Governance and United Nations reform – international environmental governance: help or hindrance?”³ which addresses International Environmental Governance from a country perspective,

Taking into account decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002 on International Environmental Governance, which, together with its appendix, is known as the “Cartagena package”, and the management review of environmental governance within the United Nations system prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit,⁴

Aware that the consultative process proposed below and the conclusions reached by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session will provide input to, among other things, the General Assembly’s follow-up to the measures set out in paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁵

1. *Decides* to establish a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives, inviting each United Nations region to propose between two and four Governments to participate, while remaining open to participation by other interested Governments;
2. *Requests* the group of ministers or high-level representatives to conclude its work and present a set of options for improving international environmental governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session, with a view to providing inputs to the United Nations General Assembly;
3. *Decides* that the group will have two co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country, and requests the Executive Director to participate as an adviser to the group;
4. *Urges* the group to begin its work as soon as possible and, at its first meeting, to determine the structure of its work;
5. *Requests* the Executive Director to seek extrabudgetary resources, if required, in order to facilitate the participation in the meetings of the developing countries proposed by the regional groups.

¹ UNEP/GC.25/INF/35.

² UNEP/GC.25/16.

³ UNEP/GC.25/16/Add.1.

⁴ JIU/REP/2008/3, contained in document UNEP/GC.25/INF/33.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005.

Implementing the Decision

The President of the UNEP Governing Council will take an active role in the implementation of the decision, and in particular in getting the process underway.

There is a role prescribed for 'each UN region' in relation to the establishment of the consultative group. Given that it is a decision of the Governing Council of UNEP, and it is intended to provide inputs into the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the role of 'each UN region' described in the decision will be channeled through the regionally representative Governing Council Bureau, working together with the heads of each UN regional group in Nairobi, and with capitals as appropriate.

There is no reference in the decision to any role for the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The CPR will be kept fully briefed at all times on the progress being made in the implementation of the decision.

The Executive Director will participate as an adviser to the group, and provide Secretariat support to assist the Consultative Group, as appropriate.

An essential element of success will be to ensure complete openness, transparency, and inclusiveness in how the process is managed. In this context, in addition to keeping the CPR fully informed, steps will also be taken by the President to ensure that New York is informed of progress in implementing the decision.

Timing – the 'roadmap' ahead

There are five essential steps to implementing the decision:

1. establishing a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives;
2. the consultative group agreeing upon two co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country;
3. the consultative group beginning its work as soon as possible;
4. the consultative group at its first meeting, determining the structure of its work; and
5. the consultative group concluding its work and presenting a set of options for improving International Environmental Governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session, with a view to providing inputs to the United Nations General Assembly

'Roadmap'

Steps	Action	Follow up	Timing	Status
Establishing a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives	President writes to GC Bureau, copied to others on implementation of the decision, attaching a draft roadmap.	President with support from Secretariat.	Mid-March	✓
	President writes to New York missions, copied to others, on implementation of the decision.	President with support from Secretariat.	Mid- March	✓
	GC Bureau members respond to the President's letter.	GC Bureau members.	Mid-April 2009	✓
	President writes to Consultative Group, including regarding options for the location, date and time of first meeting.	President with support from Secretariat.	Late-April 2009	✓
The Consultative Group agreeing upon two co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country	Consultative Group agrees to co-chairs.	Consultative Group.	At first meeting – 27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
The Consultative Group beginning its work as soon as possible	Location, date and time of first meeting determined.	President with GC Bureau.	May 2009	✓
	Mission to Belgrade in preparation of first meeting.	Secretariat with support of the President and staff of Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	May 2009	✓
	Draft agenda and background papers prepared for the first meeting.	President with support from Secretariat.	May 2009	✓

Steps	Action	Follow up	Timing	Status
	Preparations undertaken for the first meeting.	President with support from GC Bureau and Secretariat.	March/April/May/June 2009	✓
	First meeting of Consultative Group convened.	co-Chairs with support of the President and Secretariat.	27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
	Structure of work of consultative group, including any external input to the process, agreed.	Consultative Group.	At first meeting – 27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
The Consultative Group at its first meeting, determining the structure of its work	Location, date, time and agenda for subsequent meeting(s) agreed.	Consultative Group.	At first meeting – 27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
	Dedicated webpage on UNEP website agreed.	Consultative Group.	At first meeting – 27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
	Modalities for development of draft set of options identified.	Consultative Group.	At first meeting – 27-28 June 2009, Belgrade	✓
	Prepare a paper proposing a number of potential functions and possible forms to address such functions. Circulate the draft paper for comments electronically to participating governments through the co-Chairs.	Executive Director	August/September 2009	
	Finalize the paper in consultation with the co-Chairs after receiving comments from participating governments.	Executive Director	September 2009	
	Mission to Rome in preparation of second meeting.	Secretariat with support of the co-Chair and staff of Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea	August/September 2009	

Steps	Action	Follow up	Timing	Status
<p>The Consultative Group concluding its work and presenting a set of options for improving International Environmental Governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session with a view to providing inputs to the United Nations General Assembly</p>	<p>Identification of possible set of options addressed.</p> <p>Second meeting of consultative group, with a high-level officials meeting to be convened immediately before it.</p> <p>Final draft set of options submitted for translation.</p> <p>Final set of options presented to the GC/GMEF.</p> <p>Final set of options considered by the GC/GMEF for transmission to the UNGA.</p> <p>Transmission of final set of options to UNGA.</p>	<p>Consultative Group.</p> <p>Consultative Group with support of Executive Director.</p> <p>Consultative Group.</p> <p>Consultative Group.</p> <p>GC/GMEF.</p> <p>President with support from Secretariat.</p>	<p>At Second Meeting – October/November 2009, Rome</p> <p>October/November 2009, Rome</p> <p>December 2009</p> <p>February 2010</p> <p>February 2010</p> <p>February/March 2010</p>	

Timing of the process

Under the guidance of the co-Chairs, the consultative group will conclude its work and present a set of options for improving international environmental governance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session, with a view to providing inputs to the United Nations General Assembly.

In order to allow time for translation into all United Nations languages, the final draft report will need to be completed by mid-December 2009.

The Executive Director will participate as an adviser to the consultative group and the Secretariat will provide support to the President and the consultative group, as appropriate, in assisting it with the completion of its work.