



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE MÉXICO



**The Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations**

24 May 2006

Excellency,

We wish to thank you for your active participation in the first round of informal consultations on the issue of the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities. We have been pleasantly encouraged by the positive exchange of views that characterized our meetings on 19 and 25 April.

As announced in our previous meeting, a web link with relevant background information on environmental governance issues is being established and its details will soon be made available. We hope these efforts will help promote further inclusiveness and transparency in our work.

We have given further thought on how the next phase of our informal consultations could proceed. Building on the fruitful discussions we have had so far, and the two questions we posed in our letter of 20 March 2006, we propose that delegations focus during the next rounds on the following, more specific questions:

1. *Enhanced coordination*

Which are the major challenges at a normative/policy level as well as at the operational level with respect to coordination and what are their practical implications? Are there specificities at the global, regional and national level to take into consideration?

How can coordination within the UN system be improved, both vertically (who should lead? and in what situation?) and horizontally (who should participate?) in order to overcome present weaknesses and to improve the UN response to environmental challenges?

How can appropriate coordination between the UN system and the environmental treaties be ensured? Are there any best practices to be replicated?

Could the Environment Management Group (EMG) be more effectively utilized in this regard, as per its mandate, and how could this eventually be done?

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

2. *Improved policy advice and guidance*

Which are the major gaps with respect to policy guidance and advice and what are their practical implications?

How can these gaps best be addressed while respecting the legal autonomy of the treaties?

How could a more coherent global environment agenda be promoted?

Is the GC/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum being effectively utilized in this context, as per its mandate and in its interaction with other governing bodies/boards and if not, how should it be used more effectively?

How can the gap between policy guidance and the implementation of such guidance best be overcome? What are the specific challenges

/ within the UN system?

/ between the UN system and the MEAs?

/ between the UN system and other international organizations like the World Bank?

3. *Better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building*

Which are the major challenges with respect to better environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level and what are their practical implications?

What does the UN system currently offer in this respect and how can it be improved?

How best could the UN system support the implementation of environmental policies in developing countries?

How can the functioning of multilateral funding mechanisms for the environment such as GEF be better oriented and have a larger impact on the ground?

More in general, how can the environmental dimension be improved in a manner that contributes to the strengthening of sustainable development?

4. *Better treaty compliance, while respecting the legal autonomy of the treaties*

Which are the major challenges with respect to treaty compliance and what are their practical implications?

How can we ensure coherence and effectiveness in treaty compliance?

How can capacities be built at the national level in order to foster implementation? Which UN entities should engage in what kind of capacity-building in order to support the national implementation of international agreements? How need such entities be organized to deliver the requested services?

How can we minimize administrative costs and avoid duplications? How can we ensure a better allocation of resources?

How can the proliferation of meetings and of reporting obligations be addressed in a concrete manner? What are the possibilities of a more unified reporting system? Can COPs and expert meetings under different MEAs be organized in a more “consolidated” way? If yes, how?

5. Strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation

Which are the major challenges with respect to strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation and what are their practical implications?

How can the scientific knowledge that is available, including in terms of monitoring and assessment of emerging trends and of early warning, be brought together in a manner that makes it more useful to all Member States as well as more authoritative and accessible?

These questions are suggested in an effort to help delegations prepare for what we hope will be focused, concrete and interactive follow-up discussions. They reflect points made by delegations during the first round of informal consultations. We believe that more detailed and, if possible, practical answers to these questions will help us to clarify further the issues at hand and build additional momentum towards a constructive outcome for the informal consultations.

We propose to hold consultations according to the following schedule:

- Questions 1., 2. and 3. on 6 June (p.m.) and 7 June (p.m.) and, if necessary, 13 June (a.m. + p.m.);
- Questions 4. and 5. on 20 June (a.m. + p.m.);
- Stocktaking/Wrap-up on 27 June (a.m.)

We also re-emphasize that we remain in close contact with the Secretary General’s High Level Panel on System Wide Coherence to ensure that the two processes are mutually supportive and complementary.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.



Ambassador
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Permanent Representative of
Mexico



Ambassador
Peter Maurer
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