



Republic of Croatia

**First round of informal consultations
on the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities
18 - 25 January 2007
UN Headquarters, New York**

Implementation at the country level

- 1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of international actors in the area of environment (UNEP, UNDP, other UN entities, the World Bank, the MEAs) in supporting environmental objectives in your country/your area of activity in terms of scientific knowledge, normative/policy advice and operational support?**
 - Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) play an important role in regulating the processes of global environment protection and preservation in line with widely shared sustainable development goals. Further developments in this context should aim at achieving of better synergies among existing MEAs, as well as at strengthening of monitoring mechanisms at both global and national level.
 - The cooperation with a large number of international actors in the area of environment has resulted in a number of successfully conducted and implemented projects (concerning climate change, biodiversity, waste management, environmental impact assessment, environmental monitoring, marine environment protection and monitoring, sustainable consumption and production, education for sustainable development) which have helped Croatia to reach higher environmental standards in accordance with global environmental policies.
 - However, the existence of numerous international actors in the area of environment has sometimes resulted in uncoordinated initiatives and overlaps, as well as in duplication of activities. Apart from the inefficient use of resources, such approaches placed on the country a heavy burden in terms of participation in MEA processes, compliance, implementation, reporting and overall coordination at national level.
 - To date operational support to Croatia has been best developed, and the dynamics of such cooperation should be maintained in the future.
 - Croatia still lacks scientific support, expertise, assessment and co-operation in addressing its environmental priorities (air protection, sea protection, waste management).

- Croatia focuses its environmental protection to the area of waste and water management, as well as on sustainable development in interaction with energy use and environment. So far, Croatia has received little or no support in those areas from the international actors.
- 2. According to your national priorities, what activities could be developed in your country regarding scientific knowledge, normative/policy advice and operational support?**
- The activities which could be developed in Croatia relate to the development of international expertise in the field of marine environment.
- 3. How can interaction between your country and the different entities as well as among these entities be improved at country level?**
- By organizing workshops focused on environmental issues at both global and national level. This step should be considered as a preparatory phase for launching joint interdisciplinary projects which would address the specific environmental needs of the country.
 - By organizing regular periodic meetings which would consider the sum of policy instruments, financing mechanisms, rules, procedures and norms that help the regulation of national environmental protection, in compliance with the latest developments in global environmental governance and specific mandates of actors present at national level.
- 4. What is your assessment of the advancement of the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and other elements of the Cartagena outcome and how can implementation be improved?**
- Croatia is committed towards the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan which will provide developing countries and countries with economies in transition with capacities to protect the environment nationally and globally, and serve as a tool for strengthened international environmental governance.
 - Croatia has already started activities linked to the strengthening of capacities, as well as to the development of environmental management tools and instruments to assess environmental state and trends. In this regard, we are looking forward to strengthen cooperation with UNEP. At the same time, Croatia is ready to share its expertise in carrying out environmentally sustainable projects in other countries, especially those in Africa.
 - The UNEP-GEF project “Development of the National Biosafety Framework” was successfully implemented in Croatia from February 2003 to December 2004. The main objective of this Project was the preparation of a National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.
 - Presently, the GMO issue in Croatia is regulated by the Act on Genetically Modified Organisms (OG 70/05), which entered into force on 17 June 2005. The Act regulates the handling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), products containing and/or consisting of, or originating from GMOs, contained use of GMOs, deliberate release of GMOs into the environment, placing on the market of GMOs and products containing

and/or consisting of, or originating from GMOs, handling, transportation and packaging of GMOs, managing waste resulting from using GMOs, liability for damage caused by unauthorized use of GMOs, competent authorities for implementation of this Act, and performing administrative and inspection supervision over the implementation of this Act. The Act also partially transposes provisions of relevant EU Directives. Further transposition is ongoing and full transposition is planned for the end of 2008.

5. How can countries be better supported in their effort to integrate environmental objectives into development planning and operation as well as economic policies? How can environmental objectives be better addressed in situations of natural disasters and complex emergencies?

- Croatia has successfully integrated environmental objectives into its development policy and environmental protection is not seen as a burden to the development.
- International actors are invited to give technical support for and/or co-finance environmental projects which would promote further environmental initiatives as a driving force not an obstacle for business development and should be in line with a national development strategy. In case of Croatia environmental initiatives should focus on the new technologies.
- Environmental objectives in natural disasters and complex emergencies can be better addressed by better scientific data, early warning systems and good contingency plans.

Enhancement of global governance: recommendations for the different actors at a global level

6. What are your conclusions, in the light of experiences at country level, with regard to the cooperation of UNEP and UNDP, UNEP and the MEAs, MEAs among themselves, UNEP and other UN entities, UNEP and the WB?

- Good cooperation among international actors in line with national strategy and supported by national authorities is one of the most important prerequisites for carrying out a successful project.
- Lack of coordination usually causes overlaps and unnecessary duplications, as well as divergences and/or discrepancies which hinder the advancement in the state of the environment.
- At global level, efforts should be made to create a more coherent institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities. The overall goal is to strengthen the environmental dimension into the broader sustainable development agenda. These efforts should be reflected at national level, too.

7. How can cooperation and coordination mechanisms be improved within the UN system and globally?

- By increased coordination and creating synergies among various entities within the global environmental governance scheme.
- By clarifying the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines of intergovernmental, operative, financial and administrative environmental entities of the UN system, as well as consideration of possible rationalization of those entities.
- By functional clustering, like the one carried out in relation to chemicals and waste issues (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm conventions), which would provide an enhanced level of service and support to the parties of the conventions.

8. Can a strengthened UNEP efficiently and fully fulfill its mandate as the environmental pillar of the UN system?

- If UNEP is to become an environmental pillar to the UN system, it should strengthen its scientific, normative and analytical capacities.

9. What practical measures within existing mandates could be implemented in order to enhance the effectiveness of the UN activities on environment? Are changes in mandate for different entities necessary?

- Possible changes should be focused on the development of a more effective institutional framework for the environment which should be responsive to the needs of all countries, avoid duplication of work and improve synergies among principal actors.

Funding

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of present funding schemes in terms of the timely availability of sufficient funds? How can improvements be achieved?

- The existing administrative procedure concerning the approval of submitted project proposals, as well as the procedure of allocating funds for the approved ones, should be simplified and carried out in shorter time frame. It is one of the most important prerequisites for a timely and well-coordinated launching of the (approved) projects which determines all other phases of their implementation and their final results.
- It would help if the implementing agencies would consolidate as much as possible their administrative procedures before the allocation of the funds to the recipient country. The same could apply to their reporting mechanisms after the completion of the project.
- International financial mechanisms should continue to take into account environmental needs (projects) of countries with economies in transition.

Partnerships

11. How can partnerships of the global environmental governance system with civil society, business and science communities be strengthened?

- By launching more public-private initiatives.
- By fostering of entrepreneurship and partnership.
- By strengthening NGOs' work and capacities - through the involvement of the scientific community, in particular.