

Egypt

**Informal consultations of the General Assembly on the institutional
framework
for the United Nations system's environmental activities**

I would like at the outset, to welcome our co-chairs – and wish them luck and success and to wish everyone a happy and more environment friendly new year.

I take this opportunity also to associate myself with the statement made by the delegation of Pakistan on behalf of the G77 & China and would also like to thank the co-chairs for their efforts in preparing the guiding questions contained in their letter dated November 22, 2005. In the mean time I wish to state that, at this stage my delegation prefers to deal with the issue in a broader manner and make some preliminary remarks on the current status of the United Nations environmental activities:

1. From my delegation's perspective, there is a need for giving more attention to the needs of developing countries in the field of capacity building and technology transfer, assisting them in the implementation of MEAs helping in studying national needs in the field of environmental protection and developing renewable energy resources.

With regard to the operational support, more funding should be made available to the entities to enable it to better perform their role supporting the operations of projects at the national level.

Providing expertise in the fields of interest determined by national governments

2. The process and the efforts to achieve system-wide coherence through the United Nations system should be based on paragraphs 168 and 169 together. Paragraph 168 speaks of diverse and complimentary fields of the United Nations funds and programmes and their important contributions to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. Hence, it is clear that any effort in this regard should not be a separate process, rather than an attempt to achieve these main goals and targets, including sustainable development with its mutually reinforcing pillars i.e. economic development, social development and environmental protection.

Any effort to achieve the desired system-wide coherence, including in the environmental activities, should not necessarily lead to a change in the status or structure of the funds and programmes, but should target better

coordination and coherence, including by proposing different options to tackle this issue and through a strong political commitment and at the highest level to deliver on commitments and provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries, and access to scientific research for the developing countries, which reflects the main interests for these countries.

3. As for what reasons the (UNEP) is not achieving all what is expected from it? The answer, in our view, is not because it lacks the appropriate structure of mandates, but because there is no implementation of the agreed commitments and UNEP is not provided with the needed support to perform its full mandate. We consider that there is an urgent need to strengthen the scientific base of UNEP to provide decision makers with environmentally sound choices. This should be done by streamlining existing institutions, including the coordinating bodies of the environmental activities like the EMG, to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient allocation of the already insufficient resources to respond to the current and future challenges.
4. Linked to the issue of political will is the financial assistance and the deteriorating role of the GEF, where the financial support to developing countries to implement the environmental conventions is eroding by the introduction of conditionalities threatening the fourth replenishment process.
5. It is important when we are addressing the problem of fragmentation of environment that we do not cause another type of fragmentation, this time a more serious one, which is the fragmentation of sustainable development with its three mutually reinforcing pillars.
6. I would be helpful if we could, through you co-chair, get from the United Nations Secretariat a detailed list of the special funds under UNEP and UNDP and other UN bodies that are currently financing the UN environmental activities. This list will help us to consider streamlining this funding and align it with the mandates agreed upon by member states, according to their priorities and will ultimately help in bringing the needed coherence in the system.
7. I wish to conclude with a procedural question on how you envisage the nature of the outcome of these informal consultations? And how do you intend to coordinate it with the work of the Panel on the system-wide coherence in view of their close interrelationship.

It is clear for us that we continue to have divergent views on how to handle the issue. We believe that the outcome of these informal consultations should be a negotiated outcome within our commitment to the intergovernmental nature of the process, and we look forward to discuss under your guidance any other options in this regard.

8. These kinds of questions are limiting the focus of the debate and the activities the environmental field at the level of the developing countries. We should seek a system where the treatment of the environmental issues to be at the Global level.

These questions as if environmental protection, is the responsibility of only the developing countries. And it omits what is relevant to the obligations of the developed countries.

9. However, I would like now to try to give some detailed answer to some of the questions submitted by the distinguished co-chairs:

- How can interaction between your country and the different entities as well as among these entities be improved at country level?
 - Better coordination among the entities working in the same country and improving transparency. i.e. building on existing structures and enhancing efficiencies and coordination rather than creating new ones.
 - Creating a database that link countries and their projects implemented under different entities.
 - Timely review to the objectives and projects achieved to be able to assess the success of the entities in helping the countries in putting national priorities. This would, on the other hand, avoid duplication of the same objective in more than one project.
 - UNEP should help national governments to better understand and coordinate activities including through the provision of list of special funds working under UNEP.

- How can countries be better supported in their effort to integrate environmental objectives into development planning and operations as well as in economic policies?
 - Dealing with the environmental issues in the larger contexts of the sustainable development with its economic and social dimensions.
 - Supporting countries in preparing comprehensive strategies for sustainable development, and assisting them in their implementation.

- Narrowing the gap between the global agenda in the UN and the national needs and objectives, with special regards to those of developing countries who often bare the expenses of environmental degradation caused by Developed Countries.
- Reduction of bureaucratic barriers to better implementation and coordination, and reduction of work force in the administration of these entities, making available more resources for the implementation of projects.
- Focusing and limiting the UN entities role in the management policies of national natural resources, on the scientific knowledge, normative/policy advise and operational support.

-How can environmental objectives be better addressed in situations of natural disasters and complex emergencies?

- Adequate funding for the newly established Central Emergency Response Fund CERF is key to adequate response to disasters.
- The international community should make resources available to the UN funds for natural disasters and crises, rather than waiting to mobilize such resources when disasters strike.
- The UN should respond to disasters consistently and coherently in all regions and countries.

I thank you.
