

Informal consultations, January 2007.

General comments:

- We are glad to resume informal consultations, keeping para 169 of the Summit Outcome high on the UN agenda. A key challenge for the UN continues to be that of strengthening its normative role and of securing effective implementation in support of globally-agreed goals and targets.
- The co-chairs' summary of the first round of consultations forms a solid basis for continued discussions. Important additional momentum comes from the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. We must succeed on environment if we are to succeed with development and humanitarian affairs. The UN must deliver as one to promote sustainable development.
- It is important that consultations continue to be inclusive and transparent. Capitals should be duly involved, cf. UNEPs Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Nairobi in February where UN reform is also on the agenda.

Regarding implementation at country-level (cf. questions in Annex):

- We welcome the initiative to focus on actual needs and challenges at the country level. The process leading up to the Bali Strategic Plan on capacity-building revealed that the needs are many and diverse. These must be responded too in a systematic and strategic way.
- The high-level Panel recognised the importance of the UN delivering as one at the country level. It is important that environment is duly reflected in the One UN programmes and that environmental expertise is available at the One UN offices. UNEP as the body of knowledge and agreements that exists on environment and sustainable development should be duly involved and reflected in the UN reform process.
- It is important to note that MEAs are also important frameworks for action and implementation, with their shared goals for both donors and recipients on key areas such as climate change, biological diversity and chemicals. (Norway's new action plan for environment in development cooperation recognises the obligation to help developing countries develop the capacity to achieve the important goals set in these agreements).

Regarding governance at the global level:

- The UN needs a more powerful, efficient and coherent environment pillar. UNEPs role and mandate to act as the UNs leading authority on environment must be focussed and strengthened.
- In the long run, UNEP in Nairobi should be upgraded into a UNEO. In the meantime, form must follow function. The Cartagena "package" on International Environmental Governance (IEG) must be forwarded and implemented (i.e. improved financial and scientific basis, capacity-building, universal membership).
- UNEP must offer leadership and continue to build strategic alliances with other bodies. UNEPs ministerial forum (GMEF) should strengthen linkages with other policy-setting bodies. One could consider new routines for bringing input and information to the attention of the GMEF. UNEP must strengthen its contacts and linkages to the different MEAs and help promote a closer thematic "clusterings" of these.
- The system-wide UNEP-led Environment Management Group (EMG) needs to be strengthened as a mechanism for horizontal coordination on environment. As a

coordinating body, one should consider giving the EMG some form of formal or financial means enhancing its important coordinating role in order to fulfil its broad and cross-cutting mandate.

Regarding funding:

- Financing of environmental activities is inadequate and unpredictable. Funding mechanisms should promote broad-based ownership and legitimacy.
- The GEF must be strengthened.

Regarding partnerships:

- Environment is linked to major driving forces such as trade, globalisation and production and consumption patterns. The UN must actively involve civil society, business and science communities: to increase knowledge, inform policy discussions and secure implementation.