

**STATEMENT****10 September 2007****UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY****Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities****Delivered by HE Frances Lisson, Ambassador & Deputy Permanent Representative**

Australia would like to thank the Co-Chairs for their excellent work in having drawn together in their Options Paper a diverse range of proposals for improving the framework for the UN's environmental activities.

Australia appreciates that this is difficult work, and commends the Co-Chairs' presentation of proposals under seven distinct, but interrelated, themes. At the very least, this has been useful for framing our discussion. It is now up to Member States to look at these proposals in more depth, and to prioritise our work, identifying areas where real practical benefits can be delivered.

Co-Chairs, discussions on IEG long pre-date this forum, and throughout this time, Australia has not heard a convincing argument that there is something fundamentally wrong with the structure of our current system. In our view, and as we have stated before, we already have a well-developed framework for global environmental policy development and implementation – we just need to make better use of it.

With this in mind, we suggest Member States now focus on proposals that are practical and achievable in the short term, that work within the current system, and most importantly, that improve environmental outcomes on the ground.

We have and will continue to listen to the views of others, but on the basis of our own initial analysis of the Co-Chairs' proposals, we think that '*Building Block 2 (Coordination and cooperation at the level of agencies)*' provides a good starting point for our discussions. In our view, this theme seeks to address the core issue – improving environmental outcomes 'on the ground' and mainstreaming and integrating environmental considerations into policy-making and development activities. This needs to happen at all levels - from the international, to the regional, and down to the national.

Co-Chairs, we understand there is a considerable amount of work already underway in seeking to better coordinate the work of UN agencies. It might therefore prove useful to focus our work by prioritising a number of your options under Building Block 2. In particular, we would be interested to further explore the relationship between UNEP and UNDP, building on their existing MOU. We should seek to ensure that their complementarities and respective comparative advantages are harnessed to produce the best possible environmental outcomes on the ground.

We thank you again for your leadership in this forum and look forward to working with you and our colleagues to develop practical and achievable solutions, concentrating on areas where the General Assembly can best add value.

Thank you.