

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**INFORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS OF THE PLENARY ON THE ISSUE
OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN FOLLOW-UP TO
PARAGRAPH 169 OF THE 2005 WORLD SUMMIT OUTCOME**

**STATEMENT BY TONY FAUTUA
FIRST SECRETARY
PERMANENT MISSION OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

New Zealand would first like to thank the co-chairs for reconvening these informal consultations. We wish to express in particular our appreciation for the effort in producing an Options Paper that succinctly summarises the shortcomings of the current system, provides practical building blocks to address these issues and outlines options for improving the international environmental governance (IEG) that could be considered in future.

As a general remark, the options paper strikes a chord with our own views on the need for pragmatic reform of existing institutions in a way that would in turn result in better implementation of environmental policies at the national level. We would like to see two key outcomes from this process:

- better coordination of the activities of UNEP and UNDP as well as the Global Environment facility (GEF), to deliver the UN's development activities and programmes in a manner that encourages coherence between environmental and development goals at the national level; and,
- secondly, we would hope for clearly defined mandates and complementary roles for multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and UNEP, which are adhered to.

I shall now comment on the seven building blocks for strengthened international environmental governance set out in chapter 3.

In regards to **building block 1: scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity**, we see value in environmental monitoring being carried out at the global level. There is a need for work on the global environment which adds value and does not duplicate work elsewhere.

We consider that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides a number of good features that could be applied to the global environment more generally. These features include:

- collating the best science available, rather than attempting to carry out its own research;
- producing guidance for policy-makers that is politically aware and therefore useful.

We would therefore welcome further exploring the option for UNEP to coordinate scientific work that is currently being carried out, in order to provide guidance for policy makers on the global environment.

On the second building block, '**coordination and cooperation at a UN agency level**', we agree that coordination and cooperation at the agency level should be strengthened and that UNEP should be the central point for coordination across the environmental pillar.

We share the view that clarifying the respective roles of UNEP and UNDP and encouraging the coordination of the development activities will enhance efforts to implement good environmental policies at the country level. The Bali Strategic Plan should remain the framework for UNEP's implementation efforts, together with increased engagement between UNEP and UNDP. Our view is that coordinating the activities of UNEP, UNDP and the GEF is a key ingredient to achieve good institutional alignment of environmental activities at the country level.

Furthermore, we welcome the option to improve coherence both among MEAs and between UNEP and MEAs. There needs to be more clarity and coherence around the respective roles and mandates of the MEAs and UNEP at the implementation level.

In relation to the **building block on MEAs**, New Zealand is positively disposed towards the option of clustering MEAs with the view to reducing policy overlap, administrative inefficiencies and the sheer volume of meetings that states are required to attend. We recognise that this will be a challenging task and clustering may not be the complete solution. But we nonetheless consider that this is an option worth exploring.

We are also mindful of the need to ensure MEA autonomy. Our primary concern is that MEAs represent legally binding commitments that have been ratified at the national level. There is a need for MEAs to have a clear concept of their mandate and adhere to high-standards of decision making.

New Zealand agrees that MEAs should support the country level activities of UNDP and UNEP. There is a growing trend for MEA Secretariats to develop an implementing role within their mandates, rather than simply carrying out their core functions to service the MEAs themselves. This often occurs in isolation from the needs of the recipient country and other agencies operating on the ground. Our view is that MEA implementation should be driven by UNEP, in close cooperation with UNDP and in accordance with recipient country priorities, and not by MEA Secretariats.

As for the fourth building block, '**regional presence and activities at the regional level**', we agree with the overarching goal of the options that would lead to better use being made of the regional offices of UNEP. We support the options that reinforce efforts to coordinate the work of UNEP and UNDP at the country level and the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

In regards to the fifth building block, '**Bali Strategic Plan, capacity-building and technology support**', we support the ongoing use of the Bali Strategic Plan as a framework for implementation efforts by UN Agencies. There are positive signs that UNEP, under Executive Director Achim Steiner, is using it as a basis for their activities. In line with our comments on cooperation between UN agencies, we agree that the Bali Strategic Plan also provides a good framework for cooperation between MEAs, UNEP, UNDP and the GEF.

On the building block '**IT, partnerships and advocacy**', we are open to efforts aimed at improving IEG, including administrative efficiency and information sharing through the use of better IT technologies.

On the seventh building block, '**Financing**', New Zealand supports financing mechanisms that reflect the principles of the Paris Declaration. To this end we would strongly encourage that funding resources are not ear-marked, so that agencies and funds have the flexibility to align to partner's goals, not those of donors. Funds also need to be easily accessed by partner countries and we should therefore encourage that funding systems are able to respond to the varying needs of partner countries.

New Zealand would encourage cost savings that can be achieved through greater administrative efficiencies where practical by avoiding the duplication of effort within the environmental pillar. This should also include harmonisation and alignment with other UN agencies operating at country level, especially through the 'One UN at country level' process where this exists. We are not keen to support the creation of any new funds and therefore welcome the language around new focal areas to be included within the GEF or through increased replenishments.

I wish to close by making a brief comment on chapter 4, '**the broader transformation of the IEG system**'. New Zealand remains sceptical about the proposals by delegations for the institutional overhaul of UNEP, in order to strengthen the environmental pillar as a whole. Our preference remains to focus on incremental reform within existing mandates rather than institutional transformation, such as the proposal to establish the United Nations Environment Organisation (UNEO).

Once again, we thank our co-chairs for your excellent work and we look forward to hearing from you on the next steps.

Thank you.