



# **Towards a Stronger System of International Environmental Governance**

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# A UNEO's Potential for Advancing Key Sustainable Development Issues

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## Introduction

- CSD is a convening and catalytic process
- UN DESA has no real mandate or capacity to take permanent lead on SD matters
- A number of SD issues/tools are not well dealt with by international bodies.
- A modern/resourced UNEO would be ideally placed to take the lead on them

# 1. Health and Environment

- Health is often a greater public & governmental concern and driver than environment protection
- Growing interest in health and environment links
- Better understanding of impact on environmental factors on health outcomes could generate more support for environmental protection
- No systematic cooperation between UNEP and WHO on H&E issues and regional collaboration highly dependent on voluntary donor funding

# 2. SD Criteria & Indicators for Industrial Sectors & WSSD Goals

- Difficult to operationalize SD in any sector without sector-specific C & I
- Regional C & I have been key to progress in implementing Sustainable Forest Management
- WSSD goals would be facilitated with C&I
- A strengthened UNEP or a UNEO should take the initiative to develop such C&I in cooperation with relevant IGOs, governments and civil society bodies

### **3. Integration of Environment into Development and Poverty Alleviation**

- Environmental protection tends to be under-emphasized in development planning
- Economic benefits from dealing with environmental problems are not well-known
- Environment is often absent from Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
- Treatment of environment in MDGs is weak and WSSD is used to supplement

### **4. Environment and Security**

- UNEP has experience in assessing environmental damage following conflict
- UNEP has begun to explore connections between environment and human security with UNDP and OSCE
- Area is ripe for UNEP activity, e.g. transboundary water management
- Potential to develop guidelines or codes of conduct should be explored

## 5. Assistance for the Development of SD Strategies

- SD Strategies are important way for governments/companies to promote SD implementation
- At Rio+5/WSSD, countries committed to undertake national SD strategies
- While CSD tracks progress, it does not promote them or provide drafting help
- UNEP involvement would be welcome and helpful

## 6. Environment Assessment/ Strategic Environmental Assessment

- UN is absent from EA/SEA field except for UNEP work on trade & environment
- At WSSD, countries agreed to implement EA/SEA in the future
- EA/SEA would be taken up more quickly by developing countries if more capacity building & training available
- Also need for countries to make more effort to systematically incorporate climate change impacts into project and policy development processes

## 7. Sustainable Production and Consumption

- At WSSD countries agreed on the importance of sustainable production and consumption
- Marrakech Process to develop framework of programmes on SP&C over 10 years
- UNEP already active in this field through its "Life Cycle Initiative" and Cleaner Production Work
- More UNEP activity on key issues, e.g. energy efficiency, renewable energy, would be welcome

## Conclusion

- UNEP has not been able to keep up with the growth of environment issues/tools
- There are a number of areas in which its active or further involvement would be welcome.
- A stronger UNEP or a UNEO would be seen as the leading environmental player on such matters
- A stronger UNEP or a UNEO would have greater status/resources to lead international work on them

