Enhancing the UN system information exchange on Environmental Capacity Building (ECB)

A study on the existing UN system information exchange networks linked to environmental capacity building for consideration the Environmental Management Group (EMG)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper aims to provide an overview of the existing policy framework, activities and coordinating arrangements in the area of UN inter-agency information exchange concerning environmental capacity building. It has been prepared for the Environmental Management Group (EMG) by an independent consultant who is familiar with UN information exchange networks concerning environmental capacity building that are operating within the United Nations. The paper aims to identify opportunities for enhancing UN system information exchange and coordination in the area of environmental capacity building and to explore possible areas in which the EMG might provide added value.

2. The paper is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides a background, context and a summary of the process of the document preparation. Chapter 2 features a summary of key international agreements and decisions affecting information exchange on environmental capacity building. Chapter 3 summarizes the common objectives, advantages and challenges related to establishing an EMG information-sharing network on environmental capacity building. Annex 1 outlines the results of a survey representing the current status of the coordinating and information exchange mechanisms operating throughout the UN system on environmental capacity building.

3. Based on the research, three main objectives emerged that support the development of a UN system information sharing mechanism on environmental capacity building. These include;

   ➢ To identify common areas of interest and overlap related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)
   ➢ Provide a mechanism for enhancing UN system horizontal linkages on environmental capacity building
   ➢ Simplifying and harmonizing approaches on environmental capacity building needs assessment

4. The research has provided useful insights concerning *how* to facilitate cooperation for strengthening UN system wide information-exchange on environmental capacity building. The study supports the basic premise that a new mechanism has to *add value, improve cost-effectiveness and facilitate synergies*.

5. Chapters 4 and 5 feature the added value of the EMG and outline three options that merit further attention. In general, these options outline how to enhance horizontal linkages on environmental capacity building across the UN system.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background and Context

6. The WSSD Plan of Implementation emphasizes the importance of capacity building in all areas of sustainable development and calls for better resourced, more effective, coordinated and complementary capacity building activities and cooperation in poverty alleviation and sustainable development programs.

7. The EMG, in its capacity as the UN system wide mechanism for enhancing cooperation in the areas of environment and human settlements, decided to focus on the environment-related capacity building activities of its members to identify the needs and gaps and potentials for further synergies and cooperation.

8. Related to this, the EMG is considering possibilities for facilitating the coordinated exchange of information and data (*lessons learned, experiences and methodologies)* concerning environmental capacity building within the UN system and is exploring the possibility of establishing an information exchange mechanism within the existing framework.

9. To define the scope of its work, the EMG Issue Management Group on Capacity Building (IMGCB) prepared two pilot situation/needs analysis papers in the areas of capacity building for biodiversity and chemicals management. The two surveys provide a useful mapping of the UN system's environmental capacity building activities and initiatives and a thorough review of the agencies' experiences, lessons learned and best practices in this area.

10. The EMG's work on environmental capacity building also contributed to the implementation of UNEP GC decision SS.VIII/1 of 31 March 2004 on International Environmental Governance. The Group provided the High Level Open-Ended Inter-governmental Working Group on an *Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (IGSP)* with the results of the two surveys, as well as a compilation of the UN activities and initiatives on environmental capacity building and the UN system consolidated views on UN system cooperation on environmental capacity building.

11. On the basis of the two surveys and the valuable information received from the UN agencies, the Group decided to prepare a third survey which could highlight how information and knowledge are currently being disseminated and shared within the UN system. The exercise was considered useful as it could identify the possible needs and gaps in the area of information exchange and also propose possibilities for further inter-agency cooperation through strengthening / establishing effective cooperative frameworks, taking into account the potential role of the EMG.

12. The EMG determined that, before the UN system and international financial institutions strengthen cooperation and synergies, there needed to be a common understanding on what constitutes capacity building and technology support. The UN Inter-agency Workshop on Capacity Development in November 2002, organized under the auspices of

the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), proposed the following definition of capacity building/development for use in the UN system. It is also the definition used to guide this study;

Capacity refers to the ability of individuals, communities, institutions, organizations, social and political systems to use the natural, financial, political, and social and human resources that are available to them for the definition and pursuit of sustainable development goals. Capacity building or capacity development is the process by which individuals, institutions and countries strengthen these abilities. The United Nations and other external actors can assist this endogenous process, by:

➢ *focusing on enhancing the skills, knowledge and social capabilities available to individuals, institutions, and social and political systems, but also by*
➢ *supporting their integration into the knowledge networks that help to sustain these capabilities; as well as*
➢ *Contributing to material and financial support necessary to apply the skills, knowledge and social capabilities.*

1.2 Preparation of the Current Draft

13. The study was commissioned on behalf of the EMG in order to provide greater insight on the UN inter-agency information exchange on activities, experiences and lessons learned in the area of environmental capacity building and to examine possibilities for further enhancing the UN inter-agency cooperation in this area. To that end, the report includes information on the existing information exchange networks on environment related capacity building, and analysis of the institutional needs and gaps, lessons learned and experiences. The paper ends by suggesting three options for strengthening the existing cooperative frameworks and outlines how the EMG Secretariat can support them.

14. The research method involved disseminating a questionnaire (Annex 3) and conducting interviews (Annex 4) with the EMG members between October 2, 2004 and November 30, 2004. The study was physically based in New York and supplemented by the consultant's participation in a special Joint Liaison Group[1] meeting hosted by the CBD Secretariat in Montreal, Canada on November 2-4, 2004. The project benefited from the ongoing guidance of the EMG Secretariat throughout its implementation, including a formal review during a regular meeting of the EMG members on November 8, 2004, in Geneva.

1.3 Scope

15. The Issue Management Group (IMG) on capacity building, at its meeting in October 2004, agreed that the consultant should explore whether EMG members feel that information on environmental capacity building is being disseminated and shared within the UN system in an effective, informed, coordinated and balanced manner.

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1 A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD secretariats was established in 2001 with the aim of enhancing collaboration between the three Conventions. Through the JLG, the three secretariats share information on the work of their Conventions and identify possible joint activities and any potential conflicts. On November 2-4, 2004 the JLG met in Montreal, Canada in order to discuss interoperability.

16. During the EMG meeting held in Geneva on November 8, 2004, the scope of the exercise was reconfirmed. The consultant was requested to elaborate on three options discussed during the meeting concerning inter-agency information sharing on environmental capacity building. The IMG requested further elaboration and consideration of a possible role for the EMG Secretariat.

17. The following research questions were used to help determine whether there are UN inter-agency objectives in common that support an institution-wide information exchange mechanism on environmental capacity building.

   ➢ *What does "knowledge sharing" mean to the EMG members? What is the relevance of "knowledge" to the overall mission?*

   ➢ *How can the EMG members use knowledge and greater access to information on environmental capacity building in order to "work smarter"? What kind of knowledge will support staff to better carry out functions, such as policy advocacy and advisory work at the inter-governmental, regional and national level? How should the EMG change to support the creation, transfer, and use of such knowledge?*

   ➢ *What types of incentive and accountability structures would motivate/enable sharing between institutions?*

CHAPTER 2- INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS CONCERNED WITH EFFECTIVE INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION

18. An increasing number of resolutions of the UN General Assembly and international agreements concerning enhancing cooperation on environmental capacity building have emerged in recent years. The following sections highlight the key UN decisions, and provisions included, concerning enhancing cooperation and information exchange, so that institutions can contribute more coherently to the achievement of the priorities.

2.1 Agenda 21

19. Chapter 37[2] of the report of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* stresses reinforcing international cooperation and coordinated information exchange on environmental capacity building. It called for enhancing the expertise and collective contribution of the United Nations system for capacity- and capability-building initiatives related to environment. *Section 37.7,* for example, stresses that donors and recipients, the organizations and institutions of the United Nations system, and international public and private organizations, should review the development of the cooperation process as it relates to technical cooperation, including that related to technology transfer and know-how activities linked to sustainable development.

20. *Section 37.8* further elaborates that organizations, organs, bodies and institutions of the United Nations system, together with other international and regional organizations and the public and private sectors, strengthen *their joint activities in technical cooperation,*

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2 Agenda 21- Chapter 37- National Mechanism and International Cooperation for capacity building in Developing Countries

including that related to technology transfer and know-how, in order to address linked environment and development issues and to promote coherence and consistency of action.

21. *Section 37.10* stresses that institutions learn from each other's experiences, such as through existing planning exercises. This should be complemented with *information networks and consultations with donor organizations in order to improve coordination*, as well as access to the existing body of scientific and technical knowledge and information available in institutions elsewhere.

2.2. Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)

22. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (WSSD) renewed the commitments of Agenda 21, concerning cooperation and information exchange. For example, Chapter 10, paragraph 105a, of the Plan states;

> *'The international institutions should promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and the development, transfer and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries and countries with economies in transition on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, as set out in chapter 34 of Agenda 21, including through urgent actions at all levels to provide information more effectively.'*

23. Chapter 11, paragraph 140b, outlines the institutional framework for achieving sustainable development and suggests strengthening collaboration within and between the United Nations system, International Financial Institutions, the Global Environment Facility and the World Trade Organization, utilizing the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the United Nations Development Group, the Environment Management Group and other inter-agency coordinating bodies.

24. The JPOI states that strengthened inter-agency collaboration should be pursued in all relevant contexts, with special emphasis on the operational level, involving partnership arrangements on specific issues to support, in particular, the efforts of developing countries in implementing Agenda 21[3].

2.3 UNEP GC/GMEF Decision GCSS V11/1, UNEP Cartagena /GCSS V11/6

25. The International Environmental Governance (IEG) process underlined the importance of coordination*, collaboration and synergies* across the environmental activities of the United Nations system.

26. The UNEP Governing Council, at its seventh special session in Cartagena, and its Decision SS VII/1, stressed further reinforcement of UNEP's capacity building and technology support mandate with a focus on increasing country-level delivery. The international environmental governance (IEG) mandate highlighted the need for the IGSP[4] to address the gaps identified by assessments of existing activities and needs, and

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3 Resolution 2, WSSD Plan of Implementation, 2002

4 Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building IGSP

asks for the plan to be implemented through *enhanced coordination* with other United Nations bodies, including GEF and UNDP[5].

2.4 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

27. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, World leaders placed development at the heart of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight Millennium Development Goals constitute an ambitious agenda to significantly improve the human condition by 2015. The Goals set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The Millennium Development Goal 7 aims to *ensure environmental sustainability* and to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

28. Since the international system is structured around countries as the main actors in policymaking, UN and institution-wide support for the MDGs should be straightforwardly applied at the country level. Therefore, a mechanism that supports system wide policy coherence on this subject at the global level also supports greater policy coherence concerning the MDGs' implementation strategies at the local level through nationally designed and implemented development policies.

2.5 MEAs, COPs, GEF Decisions

29. International cooperation and the provision of support to developing countries and to countries with economies in transition are crucial for ensuring the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The Conventions' secretariats are enhancing international cooperation in order to identify synergies and aid effectiveness. Individual efforts are seen as impossible without support from the Conventions' main financial mechanism (the GEF), its implementing agencies, and the other international organizations.

30. The Conventions' Conferences of the Parties have assigned growing importance to international and interagency cooperation in particular in the area of capacity building. For example, the Convention of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UNFCCC have adopted a framework for capacity building in developing countries and have requested the other organizations to support its implementation. Within the deliberations of the UNCCD, as well as the Stockholm Convention, the need for greater synergies to enhance capacity building in order to assist countries to meet the objectives of the Conventions is clearly called for.

31. Recent examples of MEA-COPs decisions concerning enhancing cooperation and information sharing include;

32. As provided in article 7.2 of the UNFCCC, Cooperation with relevant international organizations, such as with scientific bodies, UN agencies, and other conventions, is an important dimension of the Convention process. The convention itself calls on the COP to

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5 Paragraph 34 of the Report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance, doc. UNEP/GCSS.VII/6.

"seek and utilize the services and cooperation of, and information provided by, competent international organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies".

33. The UNFCCC *affirmed* at its eighth Conference of the Parties (COP), New Delhi, November 2003, that there is a need for *enhanced cooperation* between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, with the aim of ensuring the environmental integrity of the conventions and promoting synergies under the common objective of sustainable development, in order to avoid duplication of efforts, strengthen joint efforts and use available resources more efficiently.

34. The UNFCCC COP 10, in its decision -/CP.10[6] on capacity-building for developing countries, requested its Secretariat " to continue to cooperate with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and other pertinent United Nations Conventions to maximize synergy in implementing capacity-building activities through, for example, sharing information, knowledge, experiences and lessons learned in implementation of the respective Conventions";

35. The Strategic Vision of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), adopted at the 11th Conference of the Parties in 2000, puts a strong emphasis on Parties' capacity. Goal 1 – 'Enhance the ability of each Party to implement the Convention' – outlines the need for organizational capacity and cooperation to achieve the goal and considers the potential of regional coordination and collaboration for national capacity building efforts.

36. The Strategic Plan of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) for 2000-2005, adopted by the 6th Conference of the Parties in 1999, identifies, in objective 4, the need for facilitating and improving implementation of the Convention.

37. The 8th Conference of the Parties on Wetlands in 2002 adopted the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008. For example, objective 4 of the Plan asks for ensuring that the Convention has the required implementation mechanisms, resources, and capacity to achieve its mission. The operational objective 18.1 suggests 'developing the capacity within, and promoting cooperation among, institutions in contracting parties to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands'.

38. The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade was adopted in September 1998. In Article 16, The Convention provides that Parties shall cooperate in promoting technical assistance and, more specifically, that Parties with more advanced programmes for regulating chemicals should provide technical assistance, including training, to other Parties in developing their infrastructure and capacity to manage chemicals. The Convention contains an article on information exchange.

39. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) adopted a Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity-Building GEF /CC.22/ (November 2003) that emphasizes the growing importance of environmental capacity building. The approach outlines the need to

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[6] Taken from the advance unedited version of the decision adopted in Buenos Aires on 17 December 2004.

support concerted efforts to identify synergies between the conventions. It emphasizes the development of strategic partnerships and related activities that promote synergies between the conventions, as it is central to implementing and sustaining capacity development activities at the country level.

CHAPTER 3 – COMMON OBJECTIVES, ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO ESTABLISHING AN EMG NETWORK FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY BUILDING

40. The basis for strengthening a UN inter-agency network on environmental capacity building is to help institutions *work smarter*.[7]   A properly designed inter-agency knowledge sharing strategy will facilitate easier exchange of key resources, experiences and lessons learned on environment capacity building across the institutions.

41. EMG members stressed that a UN inter-agency information sharing mechanism on environmental capacity building should practically support members with their daily work. Before these and other benefits can emerge, however, the EMG must set *common objectives related to information exchange* at the global level.

3.1 Common Objectives

42. Based on the findings, three main objectives emerged that support the development of a UN system wide information-sharing mechanism on environmental capacity building. These include;

   ➢ To clarify common areas of interest and overlap resulting from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)
   ➢ Provide a mechanism for horizontal linkages on environmental capacity building at the global level that supports UN policy coherence at the national level
   ➢ Simplifying and harmonizing approaches and guidance to governments and parties - 'Working Smarter'

3.2 Advantages

43. The benefits of applying knowledge management[8] concepts and tools system-wide include streamlining UN interventions and achieving greater policy coherence on environmental capacity building. The key benefits include increasing system-wide access to an enhanced knowledge base on environmental capacity building and providing a process for identifying strategic partnerships and synergies on environmental capacity building. Based on the findings, the following additional practical applications include;

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7 Building people networks are essential to working smarter; for this the knowledge networks should be strengthened, more face-to-face interaction introduced, guidelines developed and rationales sharpened

8 Knowledge differs from information and data in that knowledge is complex and contextual, created as part of an interactive process, essentially a human attribute, value laden, and connected to action to be relevant

3.2.1 UN Inter-agency Discussion Forum (MDGs, JPOI)

44. Enhanced international cooperation supports policy coherence and technology transfer for implementing the MDGs. Linkages across agencies will support greater UN policy coherence concerning MDG planning, such as raising the stature of MDG-7 and for integrating environment in the remaining MDGs as a priority issue within governments. Enhanced inter-agency policy coherence and coordination for translating these goals will eventually support the allocation and mobilization of financial resources and affect how these policies are related and integrated government-wide.

45. A UN interagency platform for substantive and technical discussion can support inter-agency cluster work, problem solving and greater policy coherence, such as implementing the common international agreements - the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3.2.2 Information Sharing across Institutions

46. Based on the findings (*Annex 1-survey of information exchange mechanisms*), an overarching UN system information-sharing mechanism that supports the dissemination and integration of information on environmental capacity building across the UN system does not exist. However, in terms of coordinating mechanisms on environmental capacity building, there are a variety of successful initiatives and tools already in place, such as the dialogue among like-minded institutions in the form of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions, the joint FAO/IAEA division, the Resident Coordinator System and the UNDAF at the country level, to name just a few.

47. The study identified many coordination facilities emerging within sectors in response to the increased demand (post WSSD) from the agencies for strategic partnerships. For example, the IOMC[9] is the pre-eminent mechanism for initiating, facilitating and coordinating international action to achieve the WSSD 2020 goal for sound management of chemicals. Also, UNITAR is facilitating a bottoms-up and country-driven programme on CPP and intends to facilitate information exchange in this area on behalf of the UN agencies. The study therefore supports the *timely* development of an overarching mechanism that provides the missing horizontal linkages in order to complement the existing sectoral cooperation frameworks.

3.2.3 Knowledge Services on Environmental Capacity Building

48. An information exchange mechanism that provides key *knowledge services* will support the EMG members with their daily work and facilitate synergies between the institutions on environmental capacity building. For example, a clearinghouse or web service, if properly designed, can link to useful information of the agencies, such as staff contacts, capacity building inventories, experiences, events calendars and lessons learned on environmental capacity building. By presenting selected information in a user-friendly manner, opportunities for greater inter-agency collaboration are facilitated.

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9 It was established in 1995 through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the executive heads of ILO, FAO, UNEP, UNIDO, OECD and WHO

following recommendations made by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and in particular its Chapter 19, Agenda 21

SEE http://www.who.int/iomc/en/

49. The study identified that the ease at which information is accessed on environmental capacity building is important and therefore, whether a mechanism is *user-friendly* or not will influence its ultimate success. Users tend to be very *client focused and responsive* and are not likely to spend valuable time seeking information. For example, the United Nations University (UNU) provides capacity building and training to government officials The UNU and other service-oriented organizations could benefit from having increased access to the agencies' comparative experiences and key resources. Noting, however, that obtaining that information will not inhibit a staff member's ability to be responsive to his or her clients.

3.2.4 Promoting Institutional Knowledge, Experiences and Resources on Environmental Capacity Building

50. An information broker filters and differentiates between knowledge and information, such as lessons learned, efficiently for a larger group. EMG Members expressed that they do not have time to filter through the *large amounts of information* on environmental capacity building. As information on environmental capacity building is already available on the institutions' individual websites, there is no need to spend resources in order to move it to a new location. The value added for EMG members, however, is a mechanism that *filters and brokers* information on their behalf.

3.2.5 Support implementing the Multilateral Environment Agreements

51. The MEAs are operating at the global and the national level.[10] At the global level, the Conventions' Secretariats benefit from their participation in the EMG network through having increased access to UN information and networking opportunities on environmental capacity building.

52. The study found that the MEAs would benefit from increased access to UN knowledge on environmental capacity building, such as lessons learned and best practices concerning environmental capacity building at the national level. For example, the GEF NCSA programme on capacity building is one such best practice with valuable lessons to share throughout the entire EMG network.[11]

3.3. Challenges

53. Understanding the barriers to inter-agency information exchange on environmental capacity building was central to this study. This included consideration of the gaps in information exchange between the institutions at the global, regional and national levels.

54. Based on this study, in order to achieve the benefits of networking described above, the following challenges need to be overcome.

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10 Informal meeting on interoperability of information among the three RIO and other environmental Conventions, Montreal, 2-3 November, 2004

11 HTTP://www.undp.org/gef

3.3.1 Scarcity of Resources (human and other)

55. Many EMG members expressed concern about the time required for active participation in a new inter-agency information-sharing network. Related to this, the findings support that a UN inter-agency mechanism on environmental capacity building should facilitate information exchange on behalf of the EMG members.

3.3.2 Organizational Culture

56. The study identified a lack of system-wide incentives for external information exchange on environmental capacity building. Currently and in general, information is shared based on an organization's desire to showcase its best practices. Also, whether a professional shares his or her work experiences is either a conscience or a non-conscience event.

57. Although the UN is a fertile ground for employing a knowledge management approach with its global reach of countries and cultures, expansive expertise and issue coverage, as well as an extensive depth of experience and skills, linking these dimensions is very time-consuming. Establishing a knowledge-sharing culture is an ongoing task that requires commitment, persistence and proper sponsorship.

3.3.3 Information Management Strategies

58. The study found that although some institutions have advanced information-sharing strategies that employ knowledge management tools, many institutions do not. Also, information-sharing strategies (if they exist) were originally designed in order to support an organization's internal information needs and were targeted to meet the needs of a specific client or group of clients.

59. How an organization stores its development experiences and lessons learned is a factor for consideration. For example, many organizations do not document their best practices and, therefore, in order to identify a suitable mechanism for distilling this *useful* information, creativity and flexibility will be required. Experiences in the field of knowledge management demonstrate that networking is the best approach to this.[12]

3.3.4 Incentives

60. Determining *how* to promote active information sharing amongst a diverse group of participants was identified as a key challenge. Incentives are the primary tool employed to support information-sharing in a non-traditional information-sharing culture.[13] In principle, institutions share information, cooperate and collaborate based on their comparative advantage, strengths and added value. Information-sharing systems are designed, consciously or non-consciously, in order to meet an organization's internal knowledge and information needs. Therefore, positive incentives are needed to support active information-sharing between the institutions and are a key element of a new networking strategy.

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12 UNDP- GLO/03/2001

13 UNDP- GLO/03/2001

3.3.5 Demand

61. A principle for attaining active information sharing between the agencies is that the service should be demand-based and tailored to the users' information needs. As mentioned previously, incentives support active information-sharing and also generate the ongoing demand for information and knowledge services. The findings support that a mechanism is designed so that it maximizes utility. This will support the emergence of a *culture* of information-sharing between the agencies.

3.3.6 Institutional Differences (Mandates, Goals and Methodologies)

62. Agencies with small or large mandates have different clients and different needs which require specific information sharing methodologies.

3.3.7 Technical Issues

63. Environmental capacity building is a very broad topic and includes many sectors. Therefore, the study supports that attempts for obtaining UN system wide information synchronicity is very difficult at this point, given the disparity in the agencies' technical abilities found during this study. Technical operability requires a system-wide agreement concerning common data formats, protocols and standards. At this point however, the UN system can learn from attempts to achieve technical interoperability on a much smaller scale such as the experience of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), which is further elaborated in the next paragraph.

64. The three Rio Conventions[14] are working on standardizing their information and are currently implementing a strategy concerning technical interoperability between them. For example, the Secretariats are working on standardizing key information to be displayed on their websites, including information related to the national focal points, decisions and recommendations, case studies, documents, reports, and catalogues.

CHAPTER 4 – ADDED VALUE OF THE EMG

4.1 Institutional Mandate

65. There are a variety of mechanisms in the UN system addressing cooperation and coordination in the area of environmental capacity building. At the system-wide level, the UNDG aims at improving the effectiveness of UN development work at the country level, involving the Resident Coordinator System, the Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). What is missing, however, is an inter-agency mechanism to provide an overview of these, their purposes and members.[15]

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14 A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD secretariats was established in 2001 with the aim of enhancing collaboration between the three Conventions. Through the JLG, the three secretariats share information on the work of their Conventions and identify possible joint activities and any potential conflicts.

15 Capacity Building for Chemicals Management – A Situation and Needs Analysis for the Environmental Management Group (EMG), September 2004

66. The EMG is an established global network that already hosts the key institutions working on environmental capacity building, including the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and the UN agencies. Strengthening the EMG's role in inter-agency information exchange is, therefore, a natural progression. As a global forum with a broad institutional membership, the EMG can provide a natural bridge between the different organizations.

67. The potential role for the EMG in facilitating information exchange can be best described in terms of scale at the global level. The EMG is strategically positioned to facilitate information exchange and support efforts on environmental capacity building at the global level. The new facility can deliver key services, such as amalgamating information on the institutional partnerships and compiling resources and training materials.

68. The EMG addresses specific environment and human settlement issues and is an established platform for strategic interaction and networking (identification of gaps and needs, enhancing information exchange and the exchange of best practices). Its mandate may be enhanced by considering ways for structured inter-agency networking and for providing the horizontal linkages for information exchange across agencies.

69. Environmental capacity building is a broad topic and encompasses many sectors including biodiversity, chemicals, climate change, etc. The study found that, for each of these areas, information sharing and coordination is already happening. A new EMG information-sharing mechanism should, therefore, facilitate information-sharing within the specific environmental sectors and enhance synergies though coordination and information-sharing between the organizations and MEAs.

70. Concerning enhancing information exchange, a significant challenge to overcome is the lack of a common database for accessing the 'useful information' (lessons learned, comparative experiences, contacts) related to environmental capacity building. While noting that capturing valuable information may be difficult to attain, various organizations have the required information, however, in different formats. To deal with this, there is a need to work towards the harmonization of formats for presenting information on environmental issues and capacity building. The role of EMG could be to facilitate this exchange and support the storing of this valuable information, such as lessons learned. This would have to be done with due regard to the mandates of the various organizations.

4.2 EMG links Sectors, Institutions, Inter-governmental Processes, Policy and Practice

71. The EMG is in an excellent position to promote institutional experiences across the different sectors and institutions working on environmental capacity building. As a broad platform, it can facilitate substantive discussions, enrich global programmes and achieve greater policy coherence concerning common work, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. By providing key knowledge services on environmental capacity building, the EMG can promote the agencies' comparative strengths in order to *work smarter'* on these common goals.

72. At the global level, the EMG supports the work of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (IGSP), and is therefore in a strategic position to reassure governments that the UN system is working together to address environmental capacity building needs in a balanced, coordinated and effective manner.

73. The EMG can build upon the work of Earthwatch[16] and other institutions that share the inter-agency mandate concerning information exchange on environmental capacity building. Increasing access to other institutions' resources and networks, such as strengthening links to academia, enriches the knowledge services that could eventually be provided.

4.3 Build on the EMG 'Issue Management Approach'

74. The EMG is an established platform for substantive and technical discussion on environmental capacity building and currently exercises this through employing the 'Issues Management Approach'. The Issue Management Group (IMG) is an effective mechanism that supports discussion on inter-agency issues concerning environmental capacity building. The EMG can build on this function in order to respond to the current EMG members' demand for increased substantive and technical discussions at the global level.

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS

75. The current picture demonstrates that UN information exchange on environmental capacity building is complex, largely ad hoc and usually project-based.[17] The study, however, has provided valuable insights concerning the institutions that are benefiting internally from *knowledge management (KM)* and structured information exchange. These experiences can be applied to the wider UN community in order to enhance UN system knowledge-sharing and synergies on environmental capacity building.

76. The study found that information exchange related to environmental capacity building is being facilitated throughout the UN system in a variety of ways, including, through global mechanisms, institutional partnerships, clearinghouse mechanisms, information-sharing workshops and trainings, etc. *(Annex 1- UN survey of information exchange mechanisms).*

77. The challenge for the EMG is to design a mechanism that *brokers* knowledge and information, such as lessons learned, experiences and resources. Based on the challenges identified, the recommendation is to design a light structure at the global level and a flexible approach such as structured networking. The new mechanism should facilitate knowledge-sharing on behalf of the members and distil only the *useful* information on environmental capacity building in a cost-effective manner.

78. The EMG can learn and build upon *best practices* concerning information exchange operating within the UN. For example, valuable lessons can be drawn from the UNDP's

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16 http://earthwatch.unep.net/about/about.php In June 1994, The first inter-agency Earth watch Working Party agreed on the following mission statement for the revitalized Earth watch: "The mission of the UN system-wide Earth watch is to coordinate, harmonize and integrate observing, assessment and reporting activities across the UN system in order to provide environmental and appropriate socio-economic information for national and international decision-making on sustainable development and for early warning of emerging problems requiring international action.

17 Capacity Building for Biological diversity – a situation and needs analysis for the Environmental Management Group EMG), October 2004

internal *Practice* networks, the Joint Liaison Group of the Three Rio Conventions and the Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals (INFOCAP) (*Annex 1*)**.**

79. The study determined that, as coordination is already taking place within sectors, a facility that helps to identify synergies and that provides a global platform for enhancing information exchange (facilitating horizontal linkages) on the MDGs and the JPOI is a valid option.

80. The beneficiaries of a global UN inter-agency information exchange mechanism still need to be determined. The EMG must determine whether a new global information-sharing mechanism will be concerned with strengthening the EMG members' capacities for environmental capacity building, elaborated on in both options one and two; or if the beneficiaries of a new information-sharing mechanism will be the EMG's key partners and governments, which has been elaborated on in option three below.

81. The three designs are presented as conceptual frameworks and incorporate the design considerations that were expressed by EMG members during the study. These have to do with maintaining respect for organizational diversity, the different mandates and the cultural differences. In order to design a physical structure, however, a comprehensive institution-wide knowledge audit is highly recommended as the immediate next step. This can be conducted during the project implementation phase.

82. Based on the discussions with EMG members, the following service lines[18] can be applied to a UN system-wide information-sharing strategy on environmental capacity building.

> ➢ *Information exchange*
> ➢ *UN policy and programme support*
> ➢ *Knowledge brokering - experiences, and lessons learned*

18

Figure 1: Options- Enhancing Information Exchange on Environmental Capacity Building
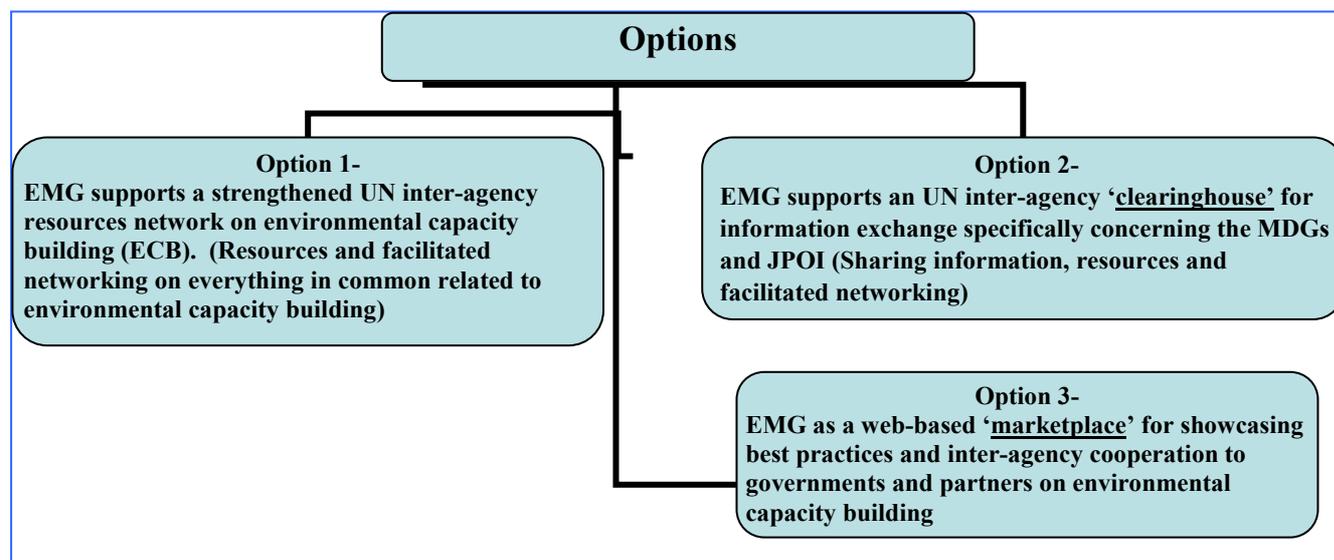
5.1 OPTION 1 – EMG as a UN inter-agency network (platform) on environmental capacity building

83. This option involves developing a multi-functional information-sharing mechanism at the global level. The objective is to support synergies by delivering *key knowledge services* and information exchange on environmental capacity building to EMG members. The new facility is to be based at the EMG Secretariat and supports members by facilitating greater access to useful information, knowledge and resources on environmental capacity building.

Networking Approach

84. This approach incorporates the integration of other institutions' information at the search level. Commonly regarded as the best option for information-sharing and the best suited to inter-agency and UN culture[19], the search engine links to the information based at each organization. The key feature is that, by creating the additional opportunity for networking, the mechanism leads to the development of pilot as well as joint and cross-sectoral projects and to the establishment of mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of expertise and experiences.

85. The differentiation of *knowledge* from *information* was a key finding that emerged during the study and supports applying the *networking approach*.

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[19] This approach has been recognized by many UN library professionals as the limitations of the other approaches in the context of inter-agency dialogue emerge. It was recently discussed at the UN knowledge sharing and information management congress chaired by the Chief of the IMF library in New York September 2004.

86. This type of clearinghouse[20] contributes to improving cooperation between the international organizations by 'facilitating' coordination of relevant activities and through making use of the synergies they offer. This approach also employs an organized *network of networks* and uses the decentralized capabilities of the Internet. As such, it provides links and search mechanisms to all related sites maintained by the other international organizations. For example, the information and the content of sites remain under the responsibility of the *owner* of the individual site that is responsible for access, quality and maintenance of the data and information provided. The EMG could establish quality criteria for the selection of cooperating sites and for standards of information and data provided.

Benefits

   ✔ *Cost-effective exchange of information, transfer of expertise and best practices among the agencies and related institutions concerning environmental capacity building*
   ✔ *Dissemination of evidence-based knowledge and of methods and tools (e.g. to carry out assessments plans and projects) related to environmental capacity building*
   ✔ *Build capacities and skills concerning environmental capacity building*

5.2 OPTION 2 - EMG Clearinghouse (information exchange platform) on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) [21]

87. In comparison to option one, this clearinghouse is a more directed mechanism that;

   (a) *assists UN agencies and Convention secretariats by facilitating the exchange of information on and experience with assisting countries to implement their programmes commitments related to the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)*

   (b) *builds inter-agency capacities on environmental capacity building*

88. The approach employs the same *design* principles as option one, except that the network is primarily concerned with disseminating, collecting information and resources and networking on programmes concerned with the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Benefits

89. The mechanism provides targeted knowledge services, including resources on environmental capacity building, and an information exchange mechanism in order to

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20 The concept of a "clearinghouse" as an information sharing mechanism has become popular over the past years along with the considerable advances made in the development of the Internet and in the fields of information management technology and computer networking. A clearing house can be defined as an Internet-based centre for the collection, classification and distribution of information held by recognized (authorized) organizations that are competent in the issues dealt with by the clearing house. As such, a clearinghouse provides its users with sophisticated search tools to access relevant information and data that are kept and maintained, to a large extent, by the original sources of information.

21 http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html

enhance inter-agency programme alignment and greater policy coherence related to the MDGs' framework and the JPOI. The main benefits include;

- ✔ *A cost-effective exchange of information, transfer of expertise and best practices among all agencies and institutions on MDGs and JPOI*
- ✔ *A facility for dissemination of evidence-based knowledge and of methods and tools (e.g. to carry out assessment plans and projects on the MDGs and JPOI)*
- ✔ *An inter-agency facility that supports the integration of MDGs and environment into programmes and policies*
- ✔ *An inter-agency facility for the development of staff capacity and skills concerning the implementation of the MDGs and JPOI*

5.3 OPTION 3 – The EMG as a Marketplace – A Showcase of Inter-Agency 'Best Practices' and International Cooperation on Environmental Capacity Building

90. This mechanism is directed at showing the EMG members' best practices and development results to governments, partners and the general public on a website. Its goal is to improve the quality of UN analytic work that is disseminated to governments and partners. In particular, an EMG advocacy website could:

(a) Help governments and partners to access information, resources and analytical work
(b) Provide users with the opportunity to view standardized and customized tool kits and best practices
(c) Contribute to donor cooperation initiatives

Benefits

- ✔ *As a cost-effective showcase for displaying best practices and development results to learn from*
- ✔ *As an advocacy network directed to governments and partners who benefit by learning about active UN cooperation on environmental capacity building*
- ✔ *As a promotional website concerning EMG cooperation on environmental capacity building for governments and key partners*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS

BCH	Biosafety Clearinghouse
BPSP	Biodiversity Planning Support Programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-based organization
CDI	Capacity Development Initiative
CHM	Clearinghouse Mechanism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COP	Community of Practice
COP	Conference of the Parties
CCP	UNITAR Climate Change Programme
EMG	Environmental Management Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBF	Global Biodiversity Forum
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IMG	Issue Management Group
ISP	Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
KA	Knowledge Audit
KM	Knowledge Management
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	MULTILATERAL Environmental Agreement
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
NA	Needs Assessment
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NC	National Coordinator
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SGP	Small Grants Programme
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP-WCMC - United Nations Environment Programme, World Conservation Monitoring Centre	
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNIDO   United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOPS   United Nations Office for Project Services
UNU   United Nations University
WCO   World Customs Organization
WHC   Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)
WHO   World Health Organization
WSSD   World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO   World Trade Organization
WWF   World Wide Fund for Nature/World Wildlife Fund

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ANNEX 1

SURVEY OF INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISMS OF UN AGENCIES AND RELATED MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS CONCERNED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY BUILDING

 In order to present a picture of the activities that could fall under the broad scope of 'information sharing mechanisms' and to inform current understanding of how the UN agencies and the MEA Secretariats share information on environmental capacity building, this annex is meant to provide examples of prevalent activity. It is not intended to provide information on details, but to present a picture of what is working and to provide references that enable those interested to obtain more information on the specific activities. The following sections categorize the most prevalent type of information sharing mechanisms identified in the current exercise. The following categorizations are also helpful for ascertaining further insights into the different purposes and mediums of institutional information-sharing, which are;

- *Global institutions and programmes*
- *Institutional partnerships and joint cooperation*
- *Networking, thematic portals and specialized search facilities.*
- *Workshops, training and international conferences*
- *UN inter-agency initiatives on MDGs in the context of environmental capacity building*
- *Clearinghouses*
- *Digital libraries*

1. Global Institutions and Coordination Mechanisms

This section presents examples of global coordination mechanisms and highlights notable features and related knowledge services established in order to enhance institutional cooperation and information sharing on sector specific work on environmental capacity building.

Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF)[22].

This series of international and regional meetings brings together key actors from the conservation community to discuss critical issues at the forefront of the field. The mission of the GBF is to provide a mechanism to foster analysis and critical dialogue among a wide range of stakeholders on key ecological, economic, social and institutional issues related to biodiversity. As a multi-stakeholder forum, the GBF also aims to expand the "biodiversity" constituency to foster broader involvement and commitment of independent, public and business sector partners in actively supporting the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit-sharing), as well as other biodiversity-related agreements. The GBF is an instrument for exchanging, refining and improving arguments, for informing Governments, and for promoting innovation. The objectives of the GBF include assisting policy making and implementation at all levels; promoting complementarities among the sectoral processes relevant to biodiversity; facilitating partnerships within and/or between sectors of society; and to raise awareness and promote the effective participation of stakeholders in relevant processes.

UN-Water

UN DESA, in follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and General Assembly resolution 57/141, is responsible for an inter-agency mechanism to ensure effective information

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22 http://www.gbf.ch

sharing and coherence in the wide spectrum of activities in the United Nations system relating to oceans and coastal areas called UN-Water.

Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Energy[23] and UN-Energy

UN DESA currently hosts a matrix of activities, which provides details of UN-system activities in the field of Energy. This was prepared as an information tool to facilitate the work of the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Energy in its preparations for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in 2001, for which energy and atmosphere and energy and transport were major themes. The matrix is a living document that is updated and elaborated periodically as appropriate, and has been used as an internal tool for the coordination of UN activities in the area of energy. It was put into public domain at the request of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development at their first session held in New York, 6-10 March 2000. The Matrix of Activities is already providing useful information on coordination and cooperation within the UN system in the area of energy, as well as details about specific energy-related activities undertaken in preparation for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. UN DESA is also setting up UN-energy as a new system-wide collaborative mechanism to address the energy-related aspects of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as agreed by the CEB.

Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)[24].

The IOMC is the *pre-eminent mechanism for initiating, facilitating and co-coordinating* international action to achieve the WSSD 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals. It was established in 1995 through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the executive heads of ILO, FAO, UNEP, UNIDO, OECD and WHO following recommendations made by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and in particular its Chapter 19, Agenda 21. UNITAR joined IOMC in 1997. More recently, UNDP and the World Bank have participated in the IOMC as observers, with the option to become full members in the near future. WHO currently provides the secretariat for the IOMC.

IOMC Inventory of Activities [25-]

The IOMC hosts the 'Inventory of Activities' that provides details of the relevant programmes and activities of each IOMC Participating Organization. It includes the title of each activity, the name of the IOMC Participating Organization (IOMC PO) responsible for implementation, any partners involved, programme area, outputs of the work, and duration of activity, resources allocated, geographical coverage and the relevant contact point. The listing of activity profiles can be sorted by participating organization and date. *IOMC Calendar of Events [26].* The database includes main events organized by IOMC POs. The information included is kept up-to-date by each Organization, which can be contacted for further information.

Inter-Governmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)[27]

The IFCS is a multi-stakeholder forum that develops policy guidance, sets priorities for action, builds partnerships, and monitors progress to improve chemical safety. The IFCS was *established in 1994 to improve international coordination and cooperation on chemical safety issues by providing an open and inclusive venue for governments, IGOs and NGOs to:* identify emerging issues and build

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23 http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/energy/intergov/iaenrma.htm

24 http://www.who.int/iomc/en/

25 www.who.int/iomc/activity/en/.

26 www.who.int/iomc/events/en/.

27 See http://www.who.int/ifcs/

consensus on chemical safety priorities, stimulate research, and foster understanding of the issues. Forum sessions are convened approximately every three years.

Capacity.org[28]

This is an initiative of the European Centre for Development of Policy Management with the aim to look at the policy and practice of capacity development within international development cooperation. Capacity.org aims to "unbundle" the complex of ideas and practices surrounding this term. In particular, it aims to encourage perspectives and experiences from the South, to provide ease of access to related materials and topics, and to promote a virtual platform for exchange. Designed with development researchers, practitioners and decision-makers in primarily African and donor countries in mind, and drawing on publications, reports, viewpoints and experiences of individuals and Organizations involved in capacity development work.

The Information Exchange Network on Capacity Building for the Sound Management of Chemicals (INFOCAP)[29]

INFOCAP is an internet-based network designed to facilitate the exchange and public accessibility of information related to chemicals management capacity building. The general objective of INFOCAP is to enhance effective cooperation and coordination among countries and Organizations that provide or receive assistance related to the sound management of chemicals. INFOCAP acts as a *gateway to information* on capacity building for the sound management of chemicals. It allows users to post and find information regarding: National Chemicals Management Profiles, priorities and action plans; sources of potential support for chemicals management projects; past, on-going and planned chemicals management projects; chemicals management guidance and training materials; and key contacts in the field of chemical safety. Many regard this as 'the' overarching mechanism for supporting coordination and information sharing for chemicals management.

2. Institutional Partnerships' and Joint Cooperation

UNDESA-Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the complementary Commission on Sustainable Development Database[30]

The third partnerships fair will be held during CSD-13, 11-22 April 2005, and will focus on partnerships activities in the *thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements*. Partnerships for sustainable development are a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at implementing sustainable development as an important complementary outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). At its 11th Session in May 2003, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) reaffirmed that partnerships contribute to the implementation of intergovernmental commitments, recognizing that partnerships are a complement to, not a substitute for, intergovernmental commitments.

The Ecosystem Conservation Group (ECG)[31]

The ECG was established at UNEP in 1974 for the purpose of promoting thematic joint programming and to advise its member Organizations on the development and implementation of relevant ecosystems and genetic resources conservation activities. The work of ECG aimed to contribute towards promoting interlinkages and complementarities, and encourage the compatibility of different

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28 http://www.capacity.org

29 See http://www.infocap.info

30 http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/search/browse.do

31 http://www.unep.org/documents/?DocumentID=43&ArticleID=204

approaches to common problems to the extent possible, and hence enhancing synergy and harmony among and between work programmes of the Group's members with those of the global environmental Conventions. Furthermore, it strived not only to underpin the ethic of nature conservation, but also to promote the concept of the sustainable use of the Earth's biosphere, its ecosystems and their biotic resources.

GWP –Global Water Partnership 32

The Global Water Partnership was founded in 1996 by UNDP along with the World Bank and Swedish SIDA to support countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. It is a working partnership among all those involved in water management: government agencies, public institutions, private companies, professional Organizations, MULTILATERAL development agencies and others committed to the Dublin-Rio principles. The *Toolbox for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)[33]* is the core feature of the Global Water Partnership's information/knowledge management efforts. It is a comprehensive and interactive source of knowledge, experience and guidance for sustainable water resources development and management. The Toolbox aims to help decision makers and practitioners to put together policy packages for improved water management in the context of IWRM and draws together experience and shares knowledge in implementing it, worldwide.

The UNITAR Climate Change Programme (CCP) 34

The CCP launched a new, two-year project with ENDA-TM, ERC, MIND and in consultation with the Open University UK, which aims to strengthen regional capacities in both Africa and Asia. The overall objective of the project is to directly provide resources to these three regional centers to enhance their training capacity as national centers that will address key problems arising from the interaction of climate change and sustainable development. Their field of action will be first targeted to Western Africa, Southern Africa, and South Asia but will be capable of quickly expanding as required. UNITARs CCP programme is also looking to bring support to all agencies as the *UN technical executing body,* for example the current with LDCs and NAPAs with UNFCCC Sec, UNDP, UNEP and the Least Developed countries experts group.

UNITAR's Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals and Waste Management (CWM) [35]

The CWM supports developing countries and countries in economic transition in their efforts to ensure that dangerous chemicals and waste are handled safely without causing harm to human health and the environment. The programmes are closely linked to Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 and related recommendations of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS). CWM programmes are implemented through partnerships with Participating Organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), which is comprised of other Organizations working on chemicals management. UNITAR's Programmes to Facilitate National Infrastructure Assessment, Strategy Development and Integrated Chemicals Management aim to assist countries in building an integrated and coordinated approach to national chemicals management while UNITAR's Specialized Training and Capacity Building Programmes aim to assist countries in addressing selected topics of chemicals and waste management.

32 http://www.gwpforum.org

33 http://gwpforum.netmasters05.netmasters.nl/en/surveyFrame en.html

34 .http://www.unitar.org/ccp/about.htm

35 http://www.unitar.org/cwm/about.htm

Health and Environment Linkages Initiative (HELI)- WHO/UNEP[36]

The HELI partnership begun as a proposal on the health and environment linkages made at WSSD in order to improve the *policy responses*, and provide a *global partnership of governments, NGOs, civil society, academic and research institutions, and international Organizations, necessary to provide health for all*. UNEP is committed to the further development and implementation of the HELI proposal, in cooperation with WHO, Health Canada, Environment Canada and other partners. Regional activities will begin with Latin America and a Caribbean initiative.

UNFCCC, UNCCCD, CBD Joint Liaison Group[37]

A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD secretariats was established in 2001 with the aim of enhancing *collaboration* between the three Conventions. Through the JLG, the three *secretariats share information on the work of their Conventions and identify possible joint activities and any potential conflicts.* One of the first activities of the JLG, for example, was a joint workshop on forests and forestry, which was an area of common interest to the three Conventions.

Joint FAO/IAEA Division[38]

The creation of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture in October 1964 marked the beginning of what is considered a unique and good *practice of inter-agency cooperation within the whole UN family*[39]. The *aim* of setting up the *Joint Division* was to use the talents and resources of both Organizations for broadening cooperation between their member countries in applying nuclear science and technology in a safe, secure and effective manner for providing their people with more, better and safer food and other agricultural products while sustaining natural resources. Its uniqueness stems both from the nature of the technology itself and from the fact that all activities for applying it to food and agriculture within the UN system are conceived, planned and executed jointly by IAEA, FAO and their Member States only after scrutiny and approval by their Governing Bodies - implicitly providing a "nod of approval" from both the world's Ministries of Agriculture and the world's Atomic Energy Authorities. The Joint Division has responsibility for the technical and scientific direction of the Programme and for its co-ordination, to ensure that the technical services of both Organizations participate fully in the joint operations.

Joint UNEP - OCHA[40] (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit is a partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that serves as the integrated United Nations emergency response mechanism to activate and provide international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies. The role of the Joint Unit is to rapidly mobilize and coordinate emergency assistance and response resources to countries facing environmental emergencies and natural disasters with significant environmental impacts.

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36 http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/search/partnerships/1031.html

37 http://unfccc.int/resource/process/guideprocess-p.pdf

38 http://www.iaea.org/programmes/nafa/dx/index.html http://www.fao.org/ag/doc/0410.htm

39 http://www.iaea.org/programmes/nafa/dx/index.html http://www.fao.org/ag/doc/0410.htm

40 http://www.reliefweb.int/ochaunep/

United Nations Environment Programme – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development[41].

This joint programme was launched in 2000 with the aim of strengthening the capacity of countries, particularly those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to effectively address trade – environment – development issues.

UNDP Partnership for Principle 10[42].

UNDP has launched a partnership, linked to the Johannesburg Summit (WSSD) follow up that would promote the environmental governance, including better access to environmental information. This partnership builds on in turn an NGO project called the access initiative[43] and the results of the work so far are captured in two reports 1) "Closing the Gap" from 2002 and Decisions for the Earth (2002-2004).[44]

3. Knowledge Networks, Information Portals and Websites

International Waters (IW)[45]

The GEF hosts an institution-wide knowledge sharing mechanism concerned with international waters: IW: LEARN.[46] Water resource managers will find through this site pertinent information resources; discussion forums; project information and documentation; courses in water resources, project management, and information technology; new capacity building technologies; and community-wide news and upcoming events.

Capacity 2015 'Whos Who net[47]',

Whos who net is a multi-stakeholder platform created so that different groups can discuss and network on development issues. This platform is an effective approach to networking that allows a user or set of users to avoid redundancies and cross reference with other networks. Two users include 1). *OECD DAC SEA Task Team web forum*[48] task team members and other practitioners have the opportunity to engage in dialogue, exchange experiences, and share relevant resources. The forum is to facilitate the achievement of the SEA task teamwork.

Equator Net and Equator Knowledge Zone

This is an online, map-based knowledge management tool that presents best practice case studies of community work to reduce poverty and conserve biodiversity[49]. The Equator Initiative has led a major knowledge management agenda that has worked to disseminate information on poverty reduction and biodiversity and to network people interested in, and practitioners working on, these topics. These two tools, in particular have been developed to enable improved information transfer and networking – 'Equator Net' and 'Equator Knowledge Zone'. Equator Net is a dialogue tool that allows community

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41 http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/index.htm

42 www.pp10.org

43 http://www.accessinitiative.org

44 http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_pdf.cfm?PubID=3764

45 www.iwlearn.net

46 www.iwlearn.net

47 See www.capacitywhoiswho.net, http://www.seataskteam.net, www.cdmnetwork.org, http://www.energyandenvironment.net, http://pppue.undp.org/ (see GLN online discussions www.undp.org/capacity2015, www.undp.org/equatorinitiative, www.capacitywhoiswho.ne'

48 http://www.seataskteam.net/index.cfm

49 http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/EquatorNet/

members from around the world to communicate with each other, exchange information, and collaborate on projects.[50] Both Equator Net and Equator Knowledge Zone are still in experimental stages, and yet have already helped to improve access to information and to individuals involved in the poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation fields. By operating online, both tools are able to overcome national and other geographic boundaries to unite community members and other actors around the world.

BIOPLAN - An Electronic Mailing List for Biodiversity Planners

The Bioplan open-subscription mailing list was originally established by UNDP-GEF under the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme, a multi-donor initiative implemented jointly by UNDP and UNEP. The purpose of BIOPLAN was originally set up in order to facilitate worldwide communication and the exchange of ideas, methods and technologies among technical specialists, professionals and policy makers engaged in biodiversity planning in general, and the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans in particular. The list includes professionals associated with developing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, worldwide. Members include Biodiversity planners, Country Focal Points for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Environment Facility, and the CBD Clearinghouse Mechanism, Technical staff from the GEF Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and WB), Technical Staff from the CBD and GEF Secretariats, experts from other Organizations (IUCN, WRI, WCMC, WWF, and TNC).

INFOTERRA[51]

This is the global environmental information exchange network of the United Nations Environment Programme. The network operates through a system of government-designated national focal points, which at present number 177. An INFOTERRA national focal point is essentially a national environmental information centre usually located in the ministry or agency responsible for environmental protection. The primary function of each centre is to provide a national environmental information service. INFOTERRA received its mandate at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, which recommended the establishment of a mechanism for the exchange of environmental information and experiences among countries. In response to this recommendation, UNEP established the INFOTERRA network (initially known as IRS - International Referral System) and governments were requested to designate a national focal point to coordinate INFOTERRA activities at the country level. The 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) reiterated the importance of information for decision-making and requested the strengthening of the INFOTERRA network to improve information availability (Agenda 21, Chapter 40).

At the national level, *INFOTERRA* focal points provide a wide range of environmental information products and services including environmental bibliographies; directories of sources of information; query-response services; environmental awareness leaflets; and access to Internet services. The INFOTERRA secretariat at UNEP headquarters, Nairobi, supports the national focal points by providing technical services and publishing reference tools such as the EnVoc Multilingual Thesaurus of Environmental Terms; the International Directory of Sources; training manuals; sourcebooks; and promotional materials. A capacity building programme provides assistance to focal points in developing countries.

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50 http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/secondary/knowledge/index.htm

51 http://www.unep.org/infoterra/overview.htm

Small Grants Exchange Global Network SGP-Xchange[52]

The "SGP-Xchange," is an electronic network linking all country programmes and headquarters and contributes significantly to capacity building and global and country communications and outreach strategies. Launched in 1992, SGP and it global network support activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries towards climate change abatement, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation while generating sustainable livelihoods. There are 53 country offices and two regional offices, with day-to-day management by SGP National Coordinators. More than 4,000 grants have been awarded worldwide to date, with many benefiting multiple communities. SGP features decentralized decision-making about grant awards, based in strategic direction by a voluntary National Steering Committee in each participating country. A *small central programme management team based in New York facilitates information sharing between the project and programmes.* Five people staff this unit.

UNDP's Energy and Environment Practice Network (EENet)[53]

This is an internal UNDP electronic based platform currently hosting over 700 members (including a selected number of environmental professionals from UNDP's partner Organizations). Through EENet, policy advisers at UNDP headquarters and regional offices contribute to country/regional initiatives such as the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific's regional energy programme and the regional environmental governance programmes in the Regional Bureau of Europe and the Common Wealth of Independent States, Arab States and Asia and the Pacific. EENet also provides support for policy dialogue and knowledge sharing across the UNDP-GEF portfolio of energy and environment activities and to more effectively mainstream GEF operations within UNDP and at the country level. This facility was designed originally as an internal knowledge sharing mechanism that set rules on partner's participation. The facility is meant to be *a service* for country office staff working on the environment and energy portfolio.

UNEP GRID Networks[54]

DEWA~Europe/GRID-Geneva for example is one of UNEP's major centers for data and information management, with a unique, "value-adding" mandate in the handling of global and regional environmental data, which in turn supports the *environment assessment* and early-warning activities of UNEP and its partners. At the same time, DEWA~Europe occupies the niche of the francophone center for the global GRID network. DEWA~Europe/GRID-Geneva is supported by a "Partnership Agreement" between UNEP, the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) and the University of Geneva.

GRID-Arendal[55]

GRID-Arendal provides environmental information, communications, and capacity building services for information management and assessment. Established to strengthen the United Nations through its Environment Programme (UNEP), the focus is to make credible, science-based knowledge understandable to the public and to decision-making for sustainable development.

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52 http://sgp.undp.org/

53 Intra.undp.org/bdp/workspaces

54 http://www.grid.unep.ch/

55 http://www.grida.no/

Information Sharing Websites (open access)

SISEI = 'Environmental Information Systems on the Internet' [56]

The Environmental Information Circulation and Monitoring System on the Internet in Africa (SISEI), is a capacity development programme for the implementation of environmental information management tools using new information and communication technologies. This is a capacity development programme on the integrated management of data and information jointly conceived by national and sub regional entities (CILSS, UMA, IGAD). It is implemented jointly by ITU, UNITAR and OSS and is based on the principles of balancing supply and demand in respect of information. The SISEI concept responds to the needs expressed by a large number of decision-makers responsible for environmental matters in developing countries. As well as being a technological tool, it also seeks to encourage the various stakeholders involved in the management of natural resources and the environment to share their experiences. This approach aims at creating a synergy of both human and financial resources.

Global Biodiversity Information Facility[57]

The mission of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is to make the world's primary data on biodiversity freely and universally available via the Internet. The GBIF vision is that it will contribute to economic growth, ecological sustainability, social outcomes and scientific research by increasing the utility, availability and completeness of primary scientific biodiversity information available on the Internet. GBIF works cooperatively with and in support of several other international Organizations concerned with biodiversity. These include (but are not limited to) the Clearing House Mechanism CBD and the Global Taxonomic Initiative of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and regional biodiversity information networks. Participants in GBIF have signed the *Memorandum of Understanding*, and support *network nodes* through which they provide data. Functionally, GBIF encourages, coordinates and supports the development of worldwide capacity to access the vast amount of biodiversity data held in natural history museum collections, libraries and databanks. Near term GBIF developments will focus on species and specimen-level data. Technically, GBIF is evolving to be an *interoperable network* of biodiversity databases and information technology tools using web services and Grid technologies.

The Best Practices and Success Stories Global Network (BSGN)[58]

This is a powerful *database* based at UNEP for the collection, storage, and dissemination of best practices and success stories[59]. A web-based content management system ensures that non-technical staff can easily manage the database and its contents. The website and its services have been tested and successfully integrated into UNEP's web environment. The BSGN system works on a web-enabled database platform that contains environmental 'Best Practices' and 'Success Stories'. It is important to recognize that the BSGN is not a database in the sense that it is a *depository of information*; it is a *dynamic web-enabled tool* that will provide useful information and that can be accessed by anyone anywhere at any time.

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56 http://www.sisei.net/

57 http://www.gbif.net/portal/index.jsp

58 http://www.unep.org/bsgn

59 http://www.unep.org/desertification/successstories

Country Analytic Work (CAW) Joint Website[60]

This website was launched in 2001 at the World Bank. The website facilitates the sharing of analytic work by recipient countries and donors. A related aim is to improve the quality of analytic work, and thereby improve development impact and cost-effectiveness. In particular, the CAW site: (a) helps in accessing historical data as well as planned analytical work; (b) facilitates the exchange of information among experts in sector-specific fields; (c) provides users the opportunity to view standardized and customized toolkits; (d) addresses the objective of avoiding duplication and supporting client capacity building; and (e) contributes to donor cooperation initiatives. *26 Organizations are cooperating* in this initiative and UNDP has posted 41 out of 2,916 documents as of January 2004. Through an active exchange of information, all the participating partners stay up to date on development challenges and successes in a particular country or region with the benefit of common thematic activities and diverse opinions. The CAW website also provides a document library with access to project documents from partner agencies; contact points for the agency people with whom to communicate; its main products are toolkits for the main diagnostic products; procedures for conducting analytic work; and examples of best practices.

4. Clearinghouses

UNEP.net [61]

A *global internet portal* to environmental information based on themes and regions. UNEP.net was intended to provide a "clearinghouse" function but it is not limited to environmental capacity building. Providing a wide range of information for decision makers and the general public, UNEP.net is organized along thematic and regional portals. The thematic portals currently include climate change, freshwater, the GEO data portal, mountains, socio-economic, and the urban environment. Regional portals currently exist for the Arctic, Europe and Latin America. In addition, country profiles for 79 countries are available.

Small Island Developing States Network[62]

The global network for small island developing states is provided by the UN DESA. Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSnet) is a direct follow-up to the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA). SIDSnet connects 43 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific, Caribbean, Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and African island nations. SIDSnet's main goal has been to utilize information and communication technologies (ICTs) to link SIDS in supporting the implementation of the sustainable development objectives of the BPoA.

Convention on Biodiversity Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM)[63]

Article 18 (3) of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) requires the first Conference of the Parties to determine the *establishment of a clearing-house mechanism* to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation. Under this broad mandate, the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) seeks to facilitate access to information about the Convention and to support the thematic and crosscutting programmes of work by promoting international scientific and technical cooperation. The CHM is responsible for the maintenance of the Convention's website and in the creation of information portals and other information exchange systems. The CHM is thus set up within the framework of an

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60 http://www.countryanalyticwork.net / supported by Capacity 2015 UNDP

61 http://www.unep.net

62 http://www.sidsnet.org/index.html

63 http://www.biodiv.org/chm/default.aspx, http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/5 Information provided by Marcos Silva, Programme Officer, CHM

international agreement and seeks to further its implementation. In contrast to the Biosafety Clearing House (next section), Governments have no explicit legal obligation to provide data for the CHM.

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Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety Clearing-House[64]

At its first meeting (December 2000), the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP) recommended the development of a pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing- House (BCH) established by Article 20 of the Protocol. The BCH is characteristically linked to an international environmental agreement, with the main purpose of furthering implementation. This implies the creation of a system of national nodes with the main responsibility for providing information. The development of the BCH was indeed done through a consultative process with governments who assumed full responsibility for the collection and management of information. Significantly, states parties have a legal obligation under the Protocol to establish national nodes, which contributes to the effectiveness of the mechanism.

Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters Information Clearing-House[65]

The Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy is intended to collect, disseminate, and exchange information on laws and practices relevant to the rights of public access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making and public access to justice on environmental matters. The main objective of the Information Clearing-House is to further the effective implementation of the Convention through collection, dissemination and exchange of relevant information on the laws and good practices with respect to the public right to information, participation in environmental decision-making and access to justice on environmental issues. The clearing-house mechanism supports the functioning of the Convention's compliance mechanism, since the Compliance Committee would have direct access to national implementing legislation and practices

PEP Clearinghouse on Transport, Environment and Health[66]

THE PEP Clearinghouse is a project by the WHO/Euro and UNECE Secretariat. The PEP Clearinghouse is to facilitate the dissemination of information, good practices and capacity building under the priority area of 'integration of environmental and health aspects into transport policy'. It was established as a web-based 'clearing house' on Transport, Environment and Health. The PEP Clearinghouse is jointly administered by the WHO/Euro and UNECE secretariat, and expected to ensure effective coverage of relevant scientific, methodological and policy aspects, wide dissemination of information and good practices and maximize possible synergies with existing initiatives.

4. Information Sharing Workshops and Training (global, regional and sub-regional)

Inter-agency workshops and/or meetings (training, information sharing and networking) are the traditional medium for institutional sharing information on environmental capacity building. Workshops and conferences will be a component of any future institution wide information-sharing strategy. What may be lacking is a plan for EMG members to systematically piggyback on key annual UN workshops such as the UN DESA Partnership forum as part of a conceptual inter-agency networking strategy.

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64 : http://www.biodiv.org/biosafety/default.aspx.

65 http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/

66 http://unece.unog.ch/the-pep/en/temp.asp

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)[67]

Provides a unique opportunity for major groups and UN entities as well as non-UN actors to share information on best practices, case studies and lessons learned through mutual-stakeholder deliberations and a partnership fair and learning center organized by UN DESA/Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) during annual sessions of the CSD. The focus of the exchanges, however, is on "sustainable development", which also includes environmental aspects and capacity building dimensions.

UNU-International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)

This network offers annual training focused on mangrove ecosystems, which maintains an integrated approach towards the management of coastal ecosystems[68].

The Geneva Environment Network (GEN)[69]

The Geneva Environment Network (GEN) is a cooperative partnership between over 40 environment and sustainable development Organizations and units based in the International Environment House and elsewhere in the Geneva area, including United Nations offices and programmes, specialized agencies and NGOs. This network brings together UN Organizations, government agencies, NGOs and industry to cooperate on environment issues. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland, at the International Environment House. It hosts an array of services that support coordination such as an events calendar.[70]

The United Nations System-wide Earthwatch mechanism[71]

This is a broad UN initiative to coordinate, harmonize and catalyze environmental observation activities among all UN agencies for integrated assessment purposes. Through Earthwatch, UN agencies work together on global environmental issues, by exchanging and sharing environmental data and information. UNEP provides the Earthwatch secretariat. Earthwatch was established at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm and reinforced by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and its Agenda-21 chapter on Information for Decision Making.

5. UN INTER-AGENCY 'KNOWLEDGE' INITATIVES RELATED TO THE MDGS

Knowledge Sharing to Support the Achievement of the MDGs[72]

This project seeks to promote the growth of communities of practice within UNDP and with its *development partners*, and provide them with a series of enhancements that are expected to result in direct improvements in the effectiveness of development interventions as practiced not only by UNDP, but by all community members in support of the achievement of MDGs at the country level.

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67 http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm

68 http://www.inweh.unu.edu/inweh/Training/Mangroves.htm

69 http://www.environmenthouse.ch/

70 http://www.environmenthouse.ch/events.html

71 http://earthwatch.unep.net/

72 UNDP- GLO/03/201

DevInfo /UNDGO [73]

DevInfo v4.0 is a powerful database system being piloted by UNDGO, which monitors progress towards the *Millennium Development Goals*. It generates tables, graphs and maps for reports and presentations. DevInfo was developed in cooperation with the UN system and has been adapted from UNICEF ChildInfo technology. The database maintains indicators by time periods and geographic areas to monitor commitments to sustained human development.

6.Digital Libraries

Digital Library[74]

The field of digital libraries is broad and identifying an appropriate approach in any given context involves an assessment of the nature of information needs, available content, technical infrastructure, ongoing funding levels etc.

Accessible Information on Development Activities AiDA[75].

AiDA includes historical and current information on activities of the major international development donors and some civil society Organizations and private foundations. A continuing effort is under way to expand the coverage and ensure the timeliness and reliability of information in AiDA. In the current sources section, 117,318 records in AiDA show an ongoing status. AiDA is a common entry point for information found in websites of the Organizations that are participating in this initiative.

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73 http://www.devinfo.org/index.htm

74 http://www.dlib.org Title Index list, http://www.dlib.org/title-index.html, finds many online articles such as 'Access Management of Web-based services:
An Incremental Approach to Cross-organizational Authentication and Authorization'.

75 http://aida.developmentgateway.org/AidaHome.do

ANNEX 2 - Draft Terms of Reference for the Background Document on enhancing UN system information exchange on Environment Related Capacity Building

Introduction:

The present note is prepared to provide an approach/insight for developing a draft study on enhancing the UN system wide information exchange on Environment Related Capacity Building. It aims to propose ideas on the objectives, the content, the structure and the possible output of such a study with particular focus on the mandate and the potential role of the EMG.

The above task is being undertaken pursuant to the decision of the 8th session of the EMG (1st September 2004) on the possible role of the EMG in the area of capacity building and in view of its contribution to the Intergovernmental discussion on an intergovernmental strategic plan for capacity building and technology support (IGSP).

Background:

Guided by the WSSD Plan of Implementation, which emphasizes the importance of capacity building in all areas of sustainable development and calls for better resourced, more effective, coordinated and complementary capacity building activities in poverty alleviation and sustainable development programs, the EMG at its 6th session in February 2004 decided to focus on environment-related capacity building activities of its members to identify the needs and gaps and the potential for further synergies and cooperation among UN agencies and with the Secretariats of the MEAs and to define its role in furthering such cooperation. Particularly, the EMG has focused on defining its role as a facilitator for a more coordinated exchange of information and data on lessons learned, experiences and methodologies within the UN system and is exploring the possibility of establishing a resource library within the EMG framework.

In order to define the scope and the possible role of the EMG, the EMG Issue Management Group on Capacity Building, prepared a situation/needs analysis in two pilot areas of biodiversity and chemicals management capacity building, the first drafts of which were submitted to the 8th meeting of the Group on 1 September 2004. The two analyses contain mainly information on the existing cross agencies capacity building activities and initiatives, the lessons learned and experiences and the possible role of the EMG.

The EMG's work on environmental capacity building has also contributed to the implementation of UNEP GC decision SS.VIII/1 of 31 March 2004 on International Environmental Governance. The Group was requested to contribute to the High Level Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (IGSP), by providing a consolidated UN system input to the process. The EMG Secretariat has so far compiled the first draft outline of the UN activities and initiatives on environment related capacity building, which was submitted to the second meeting of the intergovernmental working Group (2-4 September 2004).

The two pilot analyses have so far provided a useful mapping of the UN system environmental capacity building activities and initiatives and will hopefully provide a review of the agencies experiences, lessons leaned and best practices in this area.

The Decision of the 8th EMG on the expected follow- up tasks

Having discussed the results of the two above surveys and bearing in mind the valuable information received from the UN agencies, the 8th meeting of the EMG on 1 September 2004, requested the EMG Secretariat to prepare a study which should explore if such information and knowledge are well disseminated and shared within the UN system to ensure an effective, informed, coordinated and balanced implementation of future capacity building activities. Such exercise would be useful as it could identify the possible needs and gaps in the area of information exchange and could propose possibilities for further inter-agency cooperation through strengthening/establishing effective cooperative frameworks taking into account the potential role of the EMG.

Objectives of the study:

The study should provide an insight on the UN system information exchange on activities, experiences and lessons learned in the area of environmental capacity building and to examine possibilities for further enhancing the UN system inter-agency cooperation in this area including through examining the potential role of the EMG.

An effective UN system-wide information exchange on environmental capacity building will reassure the Governments particularly in the framework of IGSP (IGSP), that the UN system is working together to address the capacity building needs in a balanced, coordinated and effective manner.

To that end, the content of the study should include information on the existing UN system information exchange networks on environment related capacity building, the needs and gaps, the lessons learned and the experiences. The paper shall suggest possible approaches or measures to strengthen such cooperative frameworks taking into account the possible role of the EMG.

It is hoped that on the basis of the information provided, the EMG Secretariat could produce the study called hereafter "a strategic vision on enhancing the UN system information exchange on environmental capacity building and the role of the EMG".

The next steps

The EMG Secretariat, in preparation of the next EMG meeting and in view of contributing to the last meeting of the IGSP in December 2004, should develop the Strategic Vision Paper.

A consultant who is familiar with the UN system capacity building networks will be hired to prepare in close consultation with the EMG Secretariat the fist draft outline of the Paper for consideration of the EMG Secretariat. The outline will then be discussed with the IMG members. When approved by the IMG, the consultant should develop the first draft study on the basis of the information collected from the IMG members as well as those already collected by the EMG Secretariat.

The first draft should be ready no later that 15 October. The draft will be then sent to the IMG members for review and comments. The consultant will continue to insert the received comments and to further develop the paper until the end of October.

The draft will then be sent to UNEP DPDL/OED for review, consideration and policy guidance. If approved, the paper will be distributed for advance consideration of the EMG as well as the last meeting of the IGSP.

The following questions are posed in order to stimulate further thought on the content and the structure of such strategic vision:

- *What are the existing information exchange networks on environmental capacity within the UN system?*

- *What are the challenges, gaps and lessons learned in working within such frameworks?*

- *What are the financial or other implications of such frameworks?*

- *Who are the beneficiaries? Can they be accessible to the countries?*

- *Can the NGO's or private sector join such frameworks?*

- *What are the legal implications in terms of the mandate of each cooperating Organizations/MEA's?*

What could be the role of the EMG?

To what extent such framework/s could respond to the objectives of the UNEP IGSP.

ANNEX 3 - Questionnaire – Gap analysis survey on Enhancing UN and MEA Information Sharing on Environmental Capacity Building

Directions

✓ **Means a very relevant question requiring an answer if possible.**

Instructions: Please reply with short and 'to the point' answers based on your personal interest, uses and knowledge. If the question is unfamiliar, you may leave it blank provided it does not have the correction sign next to it. For the purpose of assessing the possibility of designing a new information-sharing mechanism suited to the EMG members needs and to understand some of the costs implications, staff in your technical IT department (if your organization has one) can support this survey with any technical related answers in the second section below.

Content questions

✓ Please give your Organization's overall environmental capacity building (ECB) mandate and also **list** of thematic areas that are relevant to ECB that your Organization's work, i.e. water, energy, biodiversity, chemicals, conservation, etc?

How does your organization *define* a *'Best Practice'* in the context of environmental capacity building?

How *does* your organization *share 'Best Practices'* in the context of environmental capacity building?

✓ Does your organization have a '*Partnership*' strategy in the context of environmental capacity building? Is it useful? How? Who do you work with primarily in the UN system/ MEAs?

✓ Does your organization have an 'informal' **or a** *'formal'* (or both) mechanism for information-sharing with other UN agencies and the MEAs on environmental capacity building. Please elaborate. What is it? /are they?

✓ Does your organization *collaborate* with colleagues within the UN system on areas of common environmental capacity building projects or initiatives? Who and How?

✓ Does your organization implement '*field based'* projects and what is there significance for environmental capacity building?

✓ Does your organization have an internal '*policy design'* function or a *'think tank' that is relevant for environmental capacity building*? What informs your Organizations policymaking process?

✔ Do you think information is currently being shared **adequately** between the UN agencies and the MEAs on environmental capacity building? Why or why not?

✔ Do you have *suggestions for enhancing UN and MEA information sharing practices* or any other observations that you would like to share to support this study?

✔ Who is your main resource for your work on environmental capacity building? What type of information do you look for and for what reasons?

2. Technical/ IT Systems questions

✔ Does your organization have a taxonomy system for *indexing* information?

✔ Does your organization have a '*country office'* presence?

✔ How does your hq/Sec.'*communicate'* with project staff on policy or thematic substance?

✔ Does your organization conduct 'information *sharing workshops"*? Global, Regional or Local? Internal to the UN /External to the UN?

✔ Does your organization have a *Knowledge Management or Information Sharing* strategy? Internal /External/Both/None

Does staff in your organization participate with external professionals on thematic '*problem solving'* networks in the context of environmental capacity building?

✔ Does your organization have *'internal' knowledge* or *'information exchange'* e-mail networks working on environmental capacity building?

✔ Does your organization host a *search engine* for its *internal content*? What type?

✔ Does your organization have an *internal content /information repository for environmental capacity building information?*

✔ Does your organization participate in or host some form of '*clearing house' on environmental capacity building*? Where? Any examples?

✔ Does your organization host an *internal library* for your (ECB) documents and other information? Is it useful to you?

✔ Do you have access to *commercial information in the context of environmental capacity building*?

Annex 4: Interviews

Institution	Staff member	Dates/ Time	Meeting medium	EMG Member or Other Position
IMG –Various Institutions represented	IMG members	Friday, October 1, 2004 9:30 am	Conference Call	➢ Hossein Fadaei EMG ➢ Nelson Sabogal CBD ➢ Charles McNeil UNDP ➢ Mohammed Reza Salamat UNDESA ➢ Marcos Silva CBD ➢ Monika Linn EMG ➢ Erie Tamale CBD ➢ Mike Campbell IAEA
CBD-Montreal	Marcos Silva	Monday, October 4, 2004 4 pm	Telephone	Programme Officer, CHM
UNEP WCMC	Peter Herkenrath	Monday, October 4, 2004 11 am	Telephone	Consultant
Capacity 2015 NY	Erik Davis	Tuesday, October 5, 2004 12 pm	In person	Environmental Focal point
UNDP/ Bureau for Development Policy/ Knowledge Project	Cory Brandt	Thursday ,October 7, 2004 12 pm	In person	Content Manager, Knowledge Management Systems Development
UNEP NY	Adnan Amin	Friday, October 8, 2004 11 am	In person	Director, NY Office
UNDESA NY	Mohammed Reza Salamat	Friday, October 8, 2004 2 pm	In person	Senior Programme Manager UNDESA
UNEP NY	Peter Janus	Monday, October 11, 2004 3pm	In person	UNDG Focal point UNEP
UNDP Biodiversity EEG NY	➢ Charles McNeill ➢ Gelila Terrefe	Tuesday, October 12, 2004 5 pm	In person	➢ Senior Programme Officer ➢ Programme Officer
UNDP EEG NY	Alvaro Umana	Tuesday, October 12, 2004 6 pm	In person	Director Energy and Environment Programme
UNITAR Geneva	Achim Halpaap	Wednesday, October 13, 2003 9 am	e-mail	Senior Manager

UNDP GEF	➢ Yannick Glemarec ➢ John Hough	Wednesday, October 13, 2004 3 pm	In person	➢ Deputy Director GEF/ New York ➢ Senior Biodiversity Focal point
UNDG NY	Jesper Moller	October 15, 2004 12 pm	In person	Focal point for work on UN common databases
UNDP GEF	Bo Lim	October 19 12 pm	Telephone	Senior Officer GEF Climate Change Enabling Activities
UNFPA NY	➢ Francois Farah ➢ Rene Desiderio ➢ Ann Pawliczko	Monday, October 18, 2004 12:30 pm	In person	➢ Chief, Population and Development Branch, Technical Support Division ➢ Focal point for Sustainable Development ➢ UNFPA Manager Sustainable Development
UNEP Nairobi	Levis Kavagi	October 13, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	Capacity building focal point UNEP
EMG Geneva	Hossein Fadaei	October 18, 2004 9 am	e-mail/telephone	EMG
UNITAR Geneva	Annie Bonnin Roncerel	October 18, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	Senior Programme Coordinator Climate Change Programme
UNDP Knowledge Project NY	➢ Cory Brant ➢ Steve Glovinsky	October 19, 2004 2 pm	In person	➢ Content Manager Knowledge Project UNDP ➢ Director Knowledge Project
UNDP /GEF -NY	Mr. Andrew Hudson	October 22, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	International Waters Focal Point
UNU NY	Jessica Green	October 20, 2004 3pm	In person	Project Manager Sustainable Development Governance Institute of Advanced Studies United Nations University
WHO Department of Protection of the Human Environment Geneva	Eva Rehfuess	October 20, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	Protection of the Human Environment Section
Montreal Protocol UNDP NY	Jacques Van Engel	October 21, 2004 11 am	In person	Senior Programme Manager, Knowledge Management Focal Point
Capacity 2015 NY	Terence Jones Dalita Balassanian	October 27, 2004	In person during equator initiative programme and via questionnaire	Director of Capacity 2015 UNDP Programme manager at Capacity 2015
World Bank D.C.	Steve Goran	Thursday, October 27, 2004 9am	Telephone interviewed followed by e-mail	GEF Executive Coordinator and Team Leader POPs/MP operations Environment Department
Ramsar Secretariat	Peter Bridgewater	October 29, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	Secretary General Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

IAEA	Mike J. Campbell	October 22, 2004	Replied to the questionnaire survey	Analytical Chemist (EMG member)
UNEP OCHA Geneva	Rene Nijenhuis	October 13, 2004	Contributed via e-mail reply	EMG
Ramsar	Dwight Peck	November 2, 2003	UNFCCC, UNCCCD, CBD Joint Liaison Group meeting	EMG
UNFCC	Mr. Kevin Gross Mr. Sergey Makarov	November 2, 2003	UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD Joint Liaison Group meeting	Knowledge Management Focal point Technical specialist
Humboldt Institute Colombia	Dr. Fernando Gast Harders	November 2, 2003	UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD Joint Liaison Group meeting	Director General Humboldt Institute
WMO	Mr.Yinka Adebayo Soobasschandra Chacowry	November 28, 2004	Sent response to research questionnaire	EMG
UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC)	Dr. Ian Crain	November 2, 2002	UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD Joint Liaison Group meeting	