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**Medium-term strategy, programme of work and budget, and
other administrative and budgetary issues: proposed
programme of work and budget for the biennium 2018–2019**

Programme of work and budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report sets out the proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2018–2019, reflecting the outcome of consultations with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme. Without prejudice to further work that might be undertaken by the Committee of Permanent Representatives on this matter, the proposed programme of work and budget are being submitted to the United Nations Environment Assembly for its consideration.

* UNEP/EA.2/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hereby submits the programme of work for the biennium 2018–2019 for approval by the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP at its second session, in May 2016. The programme of work is guided by the medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021, which was submitted for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives separately. Whereas the medium-term strategy provides a long-term perspective (through outcomes mapped to 2030, with a strategic focus on the 2018–2021 period), the programme of work for the biennium 2018–2019 provides the detailed elements of what UNEP will deliver and how performance will be measured for the first half of the period covered by the medium-term strategy. The documents are therefore part of the same overall package and should be reviewed as such.

A. Overall orientation

2. UNEP is responsible for leading and coordinating action on environmental matters within the United Nations system. The mandate for UNEP derives from General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII). The governing body of UNEP further clarified the mandate of UNEP in its decision 19/1, setting out the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in the annex to its resolution S/19-2 in 1997, and further reaffirmed by resolutions 53/242 in 1999 and 66/288 and 67/213 in 2012.

3. UNEP will, within its mandate, promote environmental sustainability while contributing to a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In September 2015, in resolution 70/1, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The synthesis report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda “The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet”, points to a strategic shift in sustainable development for a “truly universal and transformational course”. This strategic shift also acknowledges the integrated nature of the challenges that countries face (e.g., gender equality, unemployment, income inequality, social exclusion, lack of environmental safeguards) and defines a new paradigm for sustainable development in which the environment is no longer treated in a silo.

4. The medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021 builds on the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”,¹ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015. The medium-term strategy puts people at the centre of sustainable development, promoting human well-being and meeting the needs of present and future generations without degrading the environment or exceeding the planet’s regenerative capacity. Science is fundamental in providing answers to address some of the most pressing sustainability issues of the twenty-first century. Strengthening the science-policy interface to inform society of the risks as well as the opportunities of new developments is therefore at the heart of the work of UNEP and embedded across the Programme. The medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021 provides a stepping stone towards a vision of 2030 in which men, women and children live on a healthier planet.

5. In order to achieve this ambitious 2030 vision, UNEP will, as the leading global environmental authority, promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serve as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. UNEP will also meet the particular needs of regions and countries by tailoring work to address their diverse environmental challenges, from addressing their varying vulnerability to climate change and disasters to improving ecosystem health, resource efficiency and air quality. Such activities will also help countries in implementing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the multilateral environmental agreements and the plans, resolutions and decisions of their conferences of the parties, as well as internationally agreed global environmental goals.² The medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021 also takes into account regional priorities and emerging issues identified through global and regional forums;³ the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process and other assessments; the

¹ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

² These are also known as global environmental goals. The compilation of these goals is ongoing and is available at <http://geg.informea.org>.

³ Including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, Vienna Programme

UNEP environmental foresight process; and consultations with major groups and stakeholders. The strategy aims to make the most of the comparative advantage of UNEP, which is to provide an environmental lens through which to view, understand and advise on sustainable development.

6. UNEP will deliver this work within the context of seven priority areas for the biennium 2018–2019:

- (a) Climate change;
- (b) Resilience to disasters and conflicts;
- (c) Healthy and productive ecosystems;
- (d) Environmental governance;
- (e) Chemicals, waste and air quality;
- (f) Resource efficiency;
- (g) Environment under review.

B. Overview of resources

7. The proposed overall budget, comprising the Environment Fund, earmarked funding, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust funds, programme support costs and the regular budget of the United Nations is \$784.3 million. The budget for 2018–2019 proposes a reduction in staff costs under Environment Fund resources of \$3.8 million compared to the 2016–2017 budget. This will enable UNEP to deploy more Environment Fund resources to activities and stay within the approved ceiling of \$122 million for staff costs under the Environment Fund.

8. The proposed budget provides for increases in earmarked funding of \$79.6 million and GEF funding of \$21.6 million. The projected increases align with historical trends in income that enabled UNEP not only to deliver on its mandates but also to exceed many targets in the previous biennium. Thus, the level of ambition of the programme of work for the biennium 2018–2019 represents a more realistic alignment between the expected income and income to be realized over those years. The projected increase in earmarked funding will generate additional programme support resources of \$10.1 million, which will cover the additional operational costs required to support the management of these funds.

9. Table 1 (a) shows the high-level budget by funding source. The figures for the regular budget appropriation have been revised in line with General Assembly resolution 70/249 A-C, which allocated UNEP \$35.3 million for the 2016–2017 biennium. This level of appropriation factored in the strength of the dollar as well as the decision to apply a vacancy factor of 50 per cent to the 21 newly approved positions. While a 50 per cent vacancy factor cannot be applied in 2018–2019, the same level of regular budget appropriation is assumed for the 2018–2019 biennium as the United Nations Secretariat has not issued determinants of recosting.

Table 1 (a)
Total financial resource requirements by funding category: 2016-2017 and 2018-2019

<i>Category</i>	<i>Financial resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>2016-2017</i>	<i>Changes</i>	<i>2018-2019</i>
A. Environment Fund			
Post	122 000	(3 800)	118 200
Non-post	135 000	3 800	138 800
Fund programme reserve	14 000	-	14 000
Subtotal A	271 000	-	271 000
B. Trust and earmarked funds			
Trust and earmarked funds	225 427	79 573	305 000
Subtotal B	225 427	79 573	305 000
C. GEF trust funds			
GEF trust funds	118 376	21 624	140 000
Subtotal C	118 376	21 624	140 000
D. Programme support costs			
Programme support costs	22 885	10 115	33 000
Subtotal D	22 885	10 115	33 000
E. Regular budget			
Post	31 400	-	31 400
Non-post	3 900	-	3 900
Subtotal E	35 300	-	35 300
Total (A + B + C + D + E)	672 988	111 312	784 300

Notes: Recasted as a result of General Assembly resolution 70/249 in December 2015.

Figures may vary slightly due to rounding off.

10. Table 1 (b) provides information on projected staffing by funding sources. The figures for 2016–2017 are those approved by the United Nations Environment Assembly, except for the regular budget appropriation figure, which has been revised in the light of General Assembly resolution 70/249.

Table 1 (b)

Total human resource requirement by funding category: 2016–2017 and 2018–2019

Category	Staffing resources (number of posts)		
	2016–2017	Changes	2018–2019
A. Environment Fund			
Post	450	(24)	426
Non-post			
Fund programme reserve			
Subtotal A	450	(24)	426
B. Trust and earmarked funds			
Trust and earmarked funds	145	50	195
Subtotal B	145	50	195
C. GEF trust funds			
GEF trust funds	62	-	62
Subtotal C	62	-	62
D. Programme support costs			
Programme support costs	64	12	76
Subtotal D	64	12	76
E. Regular budget			
Post	116	-	116
Non-post			
Subtotal E	116	-	116
Total (A + B + C + D + E)	837	38	875

11. Overall, the budget will increase by \$111.3 million (16 per cent) in 2018–2019 over 2016–2017. The Environment Fund budget remains at \$271 million but various changes have been made to the budget components. The major budget increases are expected from earmarked funds – from \$225.4 million to \$305 million in 2018–2019 – as well as from GEF trust funds – by \$21.6 million, to bring the new total in 2018–2019 to \$140 million. Previously, GEF trust funds were budgeted for subprogrammes and there was no separation of the programme management and support elements. In line with increased transparency in budgeting, UNEP has identified the staff members who are engaged in programme management and support, including the operation of the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel for which UNEP provides the secretariat. The amount budgeted for this element stands at \$3.4 million (see table 2, subtotal E).

12. Notably, the budget for the Office for Operations and Corporate Services will decrease by \$1.2 million under the Environment Fund in line with the benefits realization and efficiency gains from the new enterprise resource planning system Umoja. It also reflects the realignment of the Environment Fund to more programmatic activities and less programme management and support. The bills for programme support for the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Geneva are budgeted at the same level on the basis that the inflationary effect should be offset by equivalent efficiency gains. UNEP continues to maintain the programme reserve fund at \$14 million in order to provide flexibility for additional programmatic needs arising in the course of the biennium.

13. In late December 2015, in its resolution 70/249 A–C, the General Assembly approved an appropriation totalling \$35.3 million for UNEP for the biennium 2016–2017. In addition, 21 out of 35 proposed regular budget posts were approved as part of the second tranche of funding to strengthen UNEP in line with General Assembly resolution 67/213.

14. Table 2 presents UNEP overall resource requirements and changes by funding source and by budget component for the 2018–2019 biennium, and comparisons with the approved 2016–2017 budget

Table 2
Resource requirements by budget component: UNEP
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>Environment fund</i>		<i>Trust and earmarked funds</i>		<i>GEF trust funds</i>		<i>Programme support cost</i>		<i>Regular budget</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>	<i>2016–2017</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>
A. Policymaking organs	1 700	1 700	–	–	–	–	–	–	800	800	2 500	2 500
B.1. Executive direction and management	7 800	7 800	540	600	–	–	306	400	4 700	4 700	13 346	13 500
B.2. United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation	–	–	338	400	–	–	–	–	1 400	1 400	1 738	1 800
Subtotal A + B	9 500	9 500	878	1 000	–	–	306	400	6 900	6 900	17 584	17 800
C. Programme of work												
1. Climate change	42 000	32 300	52 677	112 600	32 154	29 500	1 323	3 200	3 200	3 200	131 354	180 800
2. Resilience to disasters and conflicts	20 500	21 500	23 478	24 600	–	–	991	2 400	2 300	2 300	47 269	50 800
3. Healthy and productive ecosystems	40 000	41 800	39 645	39 600	66 877	80 500	1 408	3 400	4 100	4 100	152 030	169 400
4. Environmental governance	25 000	35 900	29 020	32 800	–	–	998	2 400	6 900	6 900	61 918	78 000
5. Chemicals, waste and air quality	36 000	32 300	33 231	38 400	10 136	24 300	1 009	2 400	2 600	2 600	82 976	100 000
6. Resource efficiency	49 000	39 600	33 322	41 000	–	–	983	2 300	2 900	2 900	86 205	85 800
7. Environment under review	19 000	29 300	12 200	14 100	5 946	2 300	410	1 000	4 600	4 600	42 156	51 300
Subtotal C	231 500	232 700	223 573	303 100	115 113	136 600	7 122	17 100	26 600	26 600	603 908	716 100
D. Fund programme reserve	14 000	14 000	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	14 000	14 000
Subtotal total programme of work (C + D)	245 500	246 700	223 573	303 100	115 113	136 600	7 122	17 100	26 600	26 600	617 908	730 100
E. Programme management and other												
Office for Operations	8 100	6 900	976	900	3 263	3 400	13 457	13 500	1 800	1 800	27 596	26 500
UNON/UNOG bills	6 650	6 650	–	–	–	–	2 000	2 000	–	–	8 650	8 650
After-service health insurance provision	1 250	1 250	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1 250	1 250
Subtotal E	16 000	14 800	976	900	3 263	3 400	15 457	15 500	1 800	1 800	37 496	36 400
Total (A + B + C + D + E)	271 000	271 000	225 427	305 000	118 376	140 000	22 885	33 000	35 300	35 300	672 988	784 300
Percentage of the total	40.3	34.6	33.5	38.9	17.6	17.9	3.4	4.2	5.2	4.5	100	100

Notes: In General Assembly resolution 70/249 A–C, the appropriation to UNEP was restored to \$35.3 million due to the strength of the dollar and to the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that a 50 per cent vacancy factor be applied for all new regular budget funded posts for the entire United Nations secretariat. Figures may vary slightly due to rounding off.

Results-based budgeting

15. In order to set and achieve realistic targets in the programme of work, and to ensure that resources are appropriate for the level of ambition, UNEP has applied a results-based budgeting approach in drafting its Environment Fund budget for the biennium 2018–2019.⁴

16. Through the application of results-based budgeting, UNEP envisages achieving improvements in its management processes:

(a) Budgets are clearly aligned to results that are internally and externally visible, so providing increased transparency, both internally and externally, with regard to how budgets are formulated and implemented;

(b) Results-based budgeting strengthens accountability. With the deployment of Umoja and the consequent changes (associated with the enterprise resource planning) in the business culture of UNEP, accountability for deliverables will be embedded in the system, with the responsible managers clearly identified in the system.

17. The implementation of results-based budgeting will also improve the project management skills of the responsible managers, leading to a more efficient use of resources. The 2016–2017 budget figures are not comparable to those in 2018–2019, given that the latter was developed using a revised approach, as set out below.

18. The starting point for developing the budget was to identify the mandates of UNEP, the results required to fulfil those mandates and the historical trends in income and expenditure, in order to achieve results with extrabudgetary and GEF funding, per subprogramme. This planning included any strengthened or new mandates, priority areas or renewed emphasis, such as air quality or the Paris Agreement. The next step was to plug in regular budget funding for core staff positions that focus on substantive issues, as determined by the General Assembly and the Environment Assembly. These include: coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system, at both global and regional levels; advice, as appropriate, to intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, and, upon request, to Member States (especially in developing countries); effective cooperation, with relevant scientific and other professional communities worldwide; medium-range and long-range planning for UNEP programmes; administration of the Environment Fund; and reporting on environmental matters to the Environment Assembly. Previous approvals by the General Assembly also provided part of the resources required for servicing the governing body of UNEP, direction, management and administration, including coordination.

19. The above-mentioned elements were mapped into the existing human resource and capability structure, allowing the Environment Fund ratios for each subprogramme to be determined for the level of ambition and within the scope of the UNEP mandate. A review of alignment of existing staffing to the subprogrammes based on the staff workload was carried out. For the first time, the Umoja enterprise resource planning system enabled UNEP to allocate staff time and costs across multiple subprogrammes to more accurately reflect the matrixed way in which UNEP operates. The Programme's previous accounting system would only allow for a one-to-one relationship between a staff member and a subprogramme. Thus, UNEP did not use 2014–2015 or 2016–2017 budget figures as a reference but created a new baseline based on the work that staff members currently have to do against each subprogramme. This increased accuracy and transparency is observed in shifts of staff numbers across the subprogrammes when compared to the 2016–2017 budget, as well as in absolute values.

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