



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Policy Statement **by Achim Steiner**

**United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the
United Nations Environment Programme**

**At the opening of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum
at its Eleventh Special Session**

Bali, Indonesia

24 February 2010

Bali, 24 February 2010 — It was your ambition as ministers responsible for the environment — working through your Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum — that has set the reform direction for UNEP over the past 12 months and indeed the past four years.

It has been the ambition of the secretariat to translate that into developing UNEP as a key entity within the UN system better able to meet your requirements for the challenges of the 21st century.

Today in this policy statement I would like to outline what the UNEP Secretariat has achieved on your behalf in terms of realizing what I have termed the UNEP+ agenda.

This has involved evolving UNEP onto a higher level of performance by better utilizing and focusing the existing mandate and programme of work.

Your ambition of making the environment more relevant and central to policy-making is indeed emerging at the national, as well as at the global and regional level.

I would also like to reflect on the shared ambition for this GC/GMEF here in Bali.

Finally I would like to outline some thoughts on the future as we collectively look to this year's review of the Millennium Development Goals and the first Rio plus 20 preparatory meeting in May 2010 in advance of the conference in 2012 in Brazil.

The next two years may well represent a defining moment for the GC/GMEF and the way it wishes to inform the discourse within the UN's General Assembly.

A defining moment too in terms of the ambition you and the world have for the influence and performance of the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

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It was in 2007 that you requested a Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and in 2008 swiftly authorized its use. As of 1 January 2010 the implementation of the MTS is underway.

This, allied to a review procedure, has formally brought into existence the vision and direction covering this institution's current work programme and cycle.

Let me underline my personal commitment to this direction you have given and the adjustments that are now in train.

The MTS, which runs to 2013, has six cross cutting themes.

- Climate Change
- Disasters and Conflict
- Ecosystem Management
- Environmental Governance
- Harmful substances and hazardous waste
- Resource efficiency — sustainable consumption and production.

It is supported by four evolving pillars upon which the reform of UNEP towards a UNEP+ organization has stood.

- Results Based Management backed by a quality assurance management system
- UNEP within the UN
- The Bali Strategic plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building
- Sound science

Let me touch on all these facets, all of which are interlinked and interwoven, to see where we have collectively reached.

Let me also flesh out some of the key areas where the MTS and the four pillars are finding expression within UNEP and on the ground.

Member states expressed a desire for UNEP to deliver more at the national level and to also work more closely with UN partners and others.

Much of what I have to report underlines how this request is also being taken forward.

The Bali Strategic Plan

- UNEP and the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Poverty and Environment Initiative is now operating in some 22 countries, up from seven initially.
- UNEP and UNDP's new joint Memorandum of Understanding has identified and agreed on areas for joint programming in climate change.
- UNEP has supported the review and/or preparation of Common Country Assessments/UN Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAFs) in 34 countries.
- We are now also part of 15 country-specific Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund joint programmes.
- UNEP and the UN Industrial Development Organization have established Cleaner Production Centres in 40 plus countries.
- UNEP has also played a lead role in the UN Development Group's (UNDG) "Guidance Note on mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the UNDAFs which was endorsed by UN Development Group in October 2009 — a milestone in UNEP's support towards mainstreaming environment in the work of the UN System.
- UNEP is currently engaged in a similar effort to develop a Guidance Note on integrating climate change considerations in CCA/UNDAFs.
- A Policy and Inter-Agency Affairs Unit has been established to improve coherence of our activities in the UN system and our alignment at the country level.
- With UN partners including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, we have carried out, are undertaking or are planning to undertake, Post-Conflict Needs Assessments, Post-Disaster Needs Assessments in 8 countries including Haiti, which commenced within 24 hours following the tragic earthquake in January.

UNEP historically has offered support to all developing countries as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

And via the Multilateral Fund for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

This continues:-

- The OzonAction initiative is now assisting well over 100 countries with a total of 1,000 projects.
- Our current portfolio of GEF-funded activities is just over 480. These are supporting partners in more than 160 countries.
- In terms of overall quality of supervision of UNEP-GEF projects, latest figures show this has risen from 36 per cent to over 70 per cent from 2006 to 2008.

There are similar positive developments across all UNEP's activities. The 2008/2009 Evaluation Report of UNEP noted that:-

- 95 per cent of UNEP projects are rated as “satisfactory” or above, up from 78 per cent for 2007, for the last biennium.

UNEP is also stepping up its responsiveness to country needs by enhancing the staffing, mandate and resources of its Regional Offices.

During the biennium Regional Offices were allocated additional staff and resources for supporting UNEP's engagement in UNDAFs and UN Delivery as One as well as Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) technical advisors to support MEA activities at regional and country level.

For the current biennium an additional allocation of \$4 million has been made to Regional Offices to invest in specific country and regional services to member states.

The EMG — A specific example of UN-wide cooperation

As mentioned, there are flourishing partnerships between UNEP and a widening range of stakeholders.

This is also highlighted through a more reinvigorated, focused and effective vehicle for UN-wide collective action: the Environmental Management Group (EMG) which UNEP hosts and funds.

The EMG is chaired by the UNEP Executive Director and a special focus over the past few years has been on climate change and a lower carbon footprint.

- In 2007, the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board decided to move the UN system towards climate neutrality.

The EMG facilitated the first ever inventory of emissions for 49 agencies, funds and programmes.

From 2010 onwards it will coordinate the move towards a common approach on emission reductions backed by strategies and targets for each UN institution.

- In September 2009, the EMG also adopted in addition to sustainable procurement three key agendas for its forthcoming work — Green Economy, biodiversity and land degradation.

Further Key Partnerships — UN and Beyond

UNEP has also been forging partnerships on many other parts of our Programme of Work.

- In December 2009, the total membership of the Climate Neutral Network stood at over 200, ranging from nation states to corporations and mega cities to large-scale music and sport events.
- A partnership on Green Jobs with the International Labour Organization.
- A partnership with the World Trade Organization that in 2009 led to a landmark joint report on climate change and trade.
- The UN-REDD programme (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) was established in 2008 with a joint secretariat hosted by UNEP; the Food and Agricultural Organization and UNDP.
- Within a few months, UN-REDD fast tracked assistance to nine countries to prepare for REDD projects with more countries requesting support and in the pipeline.

UN-REDD also involves working closely with the World Bank and its Forest Carbon Facility.

Approval for financing REDD was one positive outcome of the UN climate convention summit in Copenhagen.

- 100 countries have set time-lines for cutting sulphur levels in fuels to 50 parts per million under the UNEP Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles — building on its successful phase-out of lead in petrol.
- The “50 by 50” Global Fuel Economy Initiative — a UNEP; International Energy Agency; FIA Foundation and International Transport Forum partnership to reduce fuel consumption per kilometre of 50% by 2050.
- New partnerships on sports and the environment including with the Indian Premier League for cricket; the Commonwealth Games and the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

There are many more examples including ones with the UN World Tourism Organization on ecotourism and the Global Mercury Partnership.

For a more comprehensive list please see the UNEP annual report available here at the GC/GMEF.

Sound Science — Sound Climate Policy

Science underpins much of UNEP's activities and has been further cemented by the appointment of the Chief Scientist.

A central role is in early warning and assessment including in respect to climate change.

Part of science's role is to push the knowledge boundaries, pinpoint new directions and illuminate opportunities for action that hitherto may have been overlooked or for which answers are only just emerging.

- *In September 2009, we published the Climate Change Science Compendium in advance of the Copenhagen climate meeting.*

- *In the same month, UNEP published an assessment of the impacts but also the benefits in terms of climate, health and agriculture of tackling non-CO₂ gases and pollutants.*

This in part builds on our work on the Atmospheric Brown Cloud and emerging science on the win wins for the ozone layer but also the climate from phasing-out chemicals such as refrigerants and fire retardants.

UNEP's work on climate adaptation has also built a strong focus on ecosystems which was also reflected in further consolidating the current state of knowledge and science including their mitigation role.

- *On World Environment Day 2009, UNEP and partners published The Natural Fix? report on nature's role in carbon sequestration*

It illuminated the carbon stocks and carbon capturing potential linked with forests but also other land-based ecosystems such as peatlands and grasslands.

- Last year UNEP; the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization and UNESCO's International Oceanographic Commission also launched the Blue Carbon report. on the sequestration potential of the marine realm.

It estimates that marine ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes may be absorbing pollution equal to half the world's transport emissions.

- A new initiative on Blue Carbon will be announced with the Government of Indonesia this week.

Sound science, also allied to smart economics, is also increasingly defining UNEP's work.

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