

**Input from Major Groups and Stakeholders**  
**Comments on “Options for Broader Reform of International Environmental Governance:  
Background Paper by the Executive Director,” UNEP, 17 May 2010**

Compiled and submitted by Dr. Maria Ivanova, North American Civil Society Representative  
([maria.ivanova@environmentalgovernance.org](mailto:maria.ivanova@environmentalgovernance.org)), 17 June 2010

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Members of global civil society welcome the invitation to provide input to the consultative process on international environmental governance facilitated by the UN Environment Programme in accordance with decision SS.XI/1 of the 11<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum. This paper summarizes the input from major groups, regional civil society representatives and stakeholders with the purpose to provide targeted suggestions for the Ministerial discussions set to take place on July 7-9, 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. Contributions were received from four of the nine major groups (Children and Youth, Local Government, NGOs, and Women), from the regional representatives and/or organizations in five of the six UNEP regions (Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, and West Asia), and from other stakeholders (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, Public Awareness Education Programs, and individuals). See Appendix for full list. The main goal of this overview is to present the core points emphasized by a majority of major groups and stakeholders as important in the governance discussions and offer concrete suggestions both in terms of substance and process. Since the paper summarizes various views and voices, it is not a consensus document. For more information, all submissions can be accessed in their entirety at [www.environmentalgovernance.org](http://www.environmentalgovernance.org).

Civil society contributions highlighted several key areas which demand attention as the consultations among governments progress, provided suggestions for concrete action and models that could be emulated, offered a systematic categorization and prioritization of the reform options outlined in the background paper, and proposed an analytical assessment framework for these options. This paper is structured along the three dimensions where civil society input adds significant value to the intergovernmental process:

1. Analysis of the options in the Background Paper and proposed mechanisms for delivery
2. Categorization and prioritization of options by type (process, structure and network) and timeline (necessary and feasible in the short, medium and long term)
3. Additional or complementary reform options and cross-cutting delivery mechanisms

***Options Analysis***

The options for broader reform of international environmental governance outlined in the Background Paper by UNEP’s Executive Director identify many of the major needs for improvement in the current system and propose possible actions to address them. Major groups and stakeholders agree with the systemic deficiency analysis in the background paper and emphasize the need to address the weak science-policy interface, fragmented and uncoordinated policymaking, ineffective fundraising and resources utilization, poor implementation and institutional capacity, inadequate technology development and transfer mechanisms, and unproductive accountability allocation instruments. Many of the contributors, however, see the presentation of options as too limited and restricted. They identified the following main deficiencies of the proposed options for reform as described in the Background Paper:

1. Current discussions on sustainable development governance, reform of finance and monetary architecture, and global governance in connection with environmental concerns are absent from the Background Paper creating a sense of isolation for international environmental governance reform efforts;

2. Proposals fail to take full advantage of the potential of *global* environmental governance, especially through participation by major groups and stakeholders and through the development of norms applicable to private actors;
3. Many options omit consideration of the institutional location of the intergovernmental bodies which would be assigned the specified task, making it difficult to appraise the feasibility of the proposals;
4. Proposals lack both an implicit and explicit accountability system;
5. Proposals do not form a clear overall blueprint for practical, timely, and resource efficient changes of the international environmental governance architecture.

Reform of international governance structures is not confined to the environmental arena. Serious rethinking of institutional structures and performance is taking place among a large and diverse group of individuals and institutions. In the course of 2009, the World Economic Forum facilitated a global, multistakeholder dialogue on the future of international cooperation – **Global Redesign Initiative** – under the patronage of the Governments of Qatar, Singapore, Switzerland and Tanzania and involving 1,200 experts working in interdisciplinary Global Agenda Councils to identify gaps and deficiencies and to formulate specific proposals for improvement on over 50 global challenges in nine thematic areas (including sustainability). The purpose has been to stimulate a strategic thought process among all stakeholders about ways in which international institutions and arrangements should be adapted to contemporary challenges. The international environmental governance reform deliberations facilitated by UNEP could connect to, draw on and learn from this process, which has now produced a [comprehensive report](#) and underscored that “efforts of all stakeholders are needed to adapt the international system to an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.”

Virtually *all* contributions by major groups and stakeholders emphasized the critical roles that civil society performs in environmental governance from the local to the global level. **Public participation, transparency and accountability** are core principles upon an effective system of international environmental governance should be built. Contributors offered concrete suggestions for better civil society engagement across the proposed options and emphasized the importance of building these elements into the reform options under consideration, since so many environmental and sustainable development problems arise out of private, not governmental, conduct. Contributors also pointed to models of such engagement in other international institutions that could be adapted in the environmental and sustainability arena. The modalities for participation and engagement and the models are reflected in *Table 1. Options Assessment: Participation Rationale, Modalities and Models*.

Broader linkages between the inter-state environmental governance system and other components of the international economic system as well as other actors in global environmental governance need to be explored when determining the **institutional location of the proposed intergovernmental processes, structures and networks**. Some of the suggestions include:

1. A new Committee of the General Assembly could be established based on terms of reference recommended by the Rio+20 Conference, which would form a link to sustainable development and the G-192 government membership;
2. All UN governing bodies whose organizations impact the global environment could be instructed to report to the new GA Committee, which would form an intergovernmental link to all the relevant UN bodies and MEAs;
3. The new GA Committee could create a new format for engaging directly with international civil society, the scientific community, the international business community, and the organizations of the UN system, WTO and relevant regional organizations. One arrangement for directly engaging all these constituencies could be by establishing policy houses for each constituency.

These four houses could then designate an equal number of participants to serve on the decision-making GA Committee, creating a dynamic link to the other de-facto actors in environmental global governance.

**Accountability** is a necessary component of any properly functioning system of governance and requires mechanisms that can hold institutions and officials to appropriate standards, including reporting, review, and potential sanctions. Given the fragmented and overpopulated institutional landscape and unclear lines of institutional authority within the international environmental governance system, revisiting roles and responsibilities would be critical. Given that many of the actions that contribute to environmental degradation and undermine sustainability are carried out not by governments but by private actors (businesses or otherwise), it is important to go beyond a pure intergovernmental approach and envision innovative mechanisms for involving relevant stakeholders at various stages of an international regulatory process.

Finally, major groups and stakeholders noted that while the options outlined in the Executive Director's Background Paper address some of the key objectives and functions of the IEG system, in their current presentation, they **do not form a clear blueprint** for practical, timely, and resource efficient changes of the environmental governance architecture. Moreover, the proposed options under each objective are not clearly connected to the five broad options described at the beginning of the Background Paper: 1) enhancing UNEP; 2) a new umbrella organization for sustainable development; 3) a specialized agency such as a World Environment Organization; 4) possible reforms to ECOSOC and the Commission on Sustainable Development; and 5) enhanced institutional reforms and streamlining of present structures. Contributors suggested the use of tools such as a decision matrix (see Table 2) for assessing the different options and emphasized the importance of openness to new ideas and options. Contributors also engaged in a systematic assessment of the options in the Background Paper through a categorization and prioritization framework.

### ***Categorization and Prioritization Framework***

Major groups and stakeholders undertook a systematic assessment of the proposed options with the purpose of putting them into an overall strategy and plan. To this end, the options were categorized by type – as process, structure or network creation – and by timeframe for these actions – short, 1 to 2 years; medium, 2 to 5 years; and long, beyond 5 years. *Table 2. Options Matrix* presents the outcome of this analysis. It shows the most urgent options in terms of processes to launch, structures to establish, and networks to initiate. Major groups and stakeholders thus recommend that governments begin with the launch of **processes** such as an environmental change assessment, a UN system-wide medium term strategy for the environment, a mechanism for widening the donor base, and linking environmental policymaking and global financing. The **structures** considered urgent include an independent environmental sustainability research institute, a mechanism for MEA secretariat clustering, the development of funding mechanisms for the Bali Strategic Plan, and the creation of country operational offices. In terms of **networks**, contributors noted the need for a global information network and a framework for capacity building and technical assistance. This systematic prioritization of the proposed reforms could serve to focus attention on issues of urgency, resource intensity, and redundancy and complementarity of the institutional options so as to guide discussions on short-term actions and long-term vision. It could also assist in linking current options or generating ideas for alternative scenarios.

### ***Additional Options and Cross-Cutting Delivery Mechanisms***

Major groups and stakeholders offered for considerations options that go beyond the ones proposed in the Background Paper as well as delivery mechanisms that could be employed in several of the outlined options. Contributors emphasized that the necessary changes in the world system of governance go far beyond what can be generated through the international

environmental governance process alone and that a **holistic approach and a bold vision** are needed. As contributor put it, “to ensure a truly sustainable global future, we must address the total bio-physical balance between what humans and other species demand of nature, and what nature can provide. Creating and preserving an appropriate macro demand vs. supply balance is a critical requirement of sustainability.” **Sustainability** was suggested as the new paradigm that would encompass and go beyond economic growth as the defining principle of prosperity. National sustainability strategies, evaluations and reports could provide the tools through which a global sustainability vision could be devised.

Any agreement – environmental or otherwise – would only be effective if it is implemented. To this end, major groups and stakeholders are indispensable but need to be aware and involved in the policymaking process employing to the fullest their comparative advantage and value added. Then they are more likely to be engaged in implementing solutions as well. Collectively, contributors suggested six initiatives that would deploy the power of civil society in creating a more effective, equitable, and efficient system of governance:

1. **Performance Assessment Project** involving civil society in all regions for the assessment of international organizations, suggestions for improvement and action in implementation;
2. **Social Media Campaign** aiming to increase awareness and mobilize action. Initially, it would target youth and harness their capabilities. The campaign could build on a governance translation project interpreting and presenting the international environmental governance (and subsequently others) agenda and documents for a broad public in different regions (thus involving translation in terms of both concepts and language);
3. **Growing Governance Capacity Initiative** going beyond the traditional financial assistance model to capacity creation through innovative technical, legislative, and educational assistance and involving major groups and stakeholders from all regions in productive partnerships;
4. **Online Governance for Sustainability Library** of resources for various audiences available at no cost, including two online platforms: Practices of Public Participation and Governance Documentation Depository. The first online database and interactive platform will feature best practices in different UN bodies and MEAs with the ability for comparison and the launch of twinning projects among agencies and civil society in different regions. The second will allow for electronic submission of documents by governments and civil society with an online catalogue and easy access.
5. **Global Environmental Governance Research Initiative** engaging faculty and students in universities worldwide in collaborative research and in a global governance ideas contest to ensure continuity of knowledge generation and advancement and to foster the imagination of both seasoned experts and young people for innovative models and mechanisms;
6. **Online Conferencing** employing new technologies that allow for reduced travel and increased efficiency of meetings of governments as well as of major groups and stakeholders.

### ***Conclusion***

The international environmental governance system would function effectively and efficiently – i.e. solve problems and address country needs in a timely manner – when the majority of its key functions are successfully performed, and the system is capable of evolving in accordance with changing environmental, political, and socio-economic circumstances. Contemporary global problems call for unprecedented collaboration among governments and major groups and stakeholders in all regions. The consultation process on international environmental governance initiated by the UNEP Governing Council is critical to building the foundation for such collaboration. We, members of various civil society organizations, welcome the efforts by UNEP and governments engage us in this process and look forward to contributing further.

**Table 1. Options Matrix: Participation Rationale, Modalities, and Models**

Option	Participation Rationale and Modality	Possible Models
a.1 - Establish an <b>intergovernmental body for governing the environmental science policy interface</b> .	A credible and accessible science base and policy interface requires explicit mandate to promote public awareness. The intergovernmental body should also include eminent international experts and promote public participation in decision making.	
a.2 - Create an <b>intergovernmental environmental change assessment process</b> .	The intergovernmental process should also include eminent international experts and promote public participation.	UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) process, IPCC. IPCC could be expanded to address 'global environmental change' as well as climate change
a.3 - Create a <b>global information network</b> for environmental review and early warning; web based facility for sharing of "live" information and support from an interagency cooperation arrangement.	Civil society will be a critical part of such a network as they often hold relevant factual information, policy and legal argumentation, and can mobilize expertise effectively and efficiently.	Multiple non-governmental organizations provide hubs for information networks.
a.4 - Establish an independent, international <b>environmental sustainability research institute</b>	Such an option will by definition rely on civil society and especially academia.	Examine the work of UNITAR, UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program, UN University and others
b.1 - Create a <b>body to set minimum global standards on global environmental issues</b> and regional standards for regional issues.	Participation, engagement and partnerships should be integral features of an international standard-setting body to develop an authoritative global voice for environmental sustainability. An independent mechanism for auditing and compliance assessment would also be necessary and could benefit from the expertise in major groups and stakeholders.	OECD-peer review procedure and increasing inclusion of NGOs, business and labor to contribute information and assessments <sup>1</sup> ILO-peer review procedure and notable role for civil society in the form of a Committee of Experts <sup>2</sup>
b.2 - Establish an <b>intergovernmental review mechanism for national implementation of MEAs and other international environmental obligations</b> .	Such a mechanism should include public participation when reviewing implementation to enhance transparency, accuracy and accountability in the implementation process. Participation, engagement, and partnerships should be considered as integral features in the development of an authoritative global voice for sustainability.	OECD-review procedures of national implementation
b.3 - Establish a <b>global policy organization with universal membership</b> to set, coordinate, and monitor the global environmental agenda.	Participation, engagement, and partnerships are especially important in a global policy organization. For the very same reasons universal membership is necessary--enhanced leadership and authority, increased representation, and sense of ownership of the issues and institutions--the inclusion of civil society is necessary for such a global organization. An Environmental Council or General Assembly could be considered as institutional frameworks.	OECD and ILO-see option b.1 above

<sup>1</sup> <http://213.253.134.43/oecd/pdfs/browseit/0103083E.PDF> , <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/41/37922614.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/global/What\\_we\\_do/InternationalLabourStandards/ApplyingandpromotingInternationalLabourStandards/CommitteeofExperts/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/InternationalLabourStandards/ApplyingandpromotingInternationalLabourStandards/CommitteeofExperts/lang--en/index.htm)

Option	Participation Rationale and Modality	Possible Models
b.4 - <b>Link global environmental policy making with global environmental financing.</b>	The alarming gap between commitments and actions needs to be bridged through targeted funding and engagement in implementation. A systemic governance mechanism directing environmental funds in response to policy priorities should include public participation, engagement, and partnerships as it is major groups and stakeholders who can deliver and mobilize action in countries around the world.	GAVI-civil society and private sector actor participation in policy-making and norm-setting to ensure financial commitments. Providing grants for developing country governments to facilitate civil society organizations participation and collaboration Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-civil society and private sector actors participation in policy-making and norm-setting to ensure financial commitments, requiring developing countries seeking funding to create Country Coordination Mechanisms. <sup>3</sup> World Bank Environment Strategy 2010
b.5 - Develop a general <b>agreement for environmental sustainability</b> with a common framework and under the authority of a single conference.	Such a treaty could go beyond environmental sustainability to sustainability more broadly, encompassing sustainable development and other, broader planetary concerns. Public participation, transparency, and accountability clauses and mechanisms would be critical.	
c.1 - Establish a <b>mechanism for clustering</b> MEA secretariat functions and common services.	Public participation, transparency, and accountability would be critical in a clustered secretariat mechanism so as to ensure greater legitimacy and faster delivery in countries around the world.	
c.2 - Create a member driven ' <b>coordination council</b> ' for MEAs composed of a representative group of countries and comprising committees based on MEAs issue clusters.	A Coordination Council should not be limited to MEAs. This option could be linked to and attained in tandem with option b.3 and include a broader array of actors. It will be important that this work engages the regions and broad segments of civil society.	
c.3 - Establish <b>UN system-wide medium term strategy for the environment.</b>	This is a critical option, which will rely primarily on governmental commitment and action.	
d.1 - <b>Widen donor base</b> , e.g. establish mechanism for receipt of private/philanthropic donations.	Broadening the donor base should be a systematic and continuous effort. In addition to the financial role played by private actors, major groups and stakeholders should be included as participants in the policy-making and norm-setting process to ensure financial and other contributions.	GAVI and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-see option b.4 above
d.2 - Establish a <b>joint management mechanism for all major trust funds for the environment</b> with equal roles for project selection, appraisal and supervision...	A joint management mechanism for all major trust funds for the environment would benefit from increased transparency and accountability in how funds are managed, and in the selection process for project funding.	GAVI and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-see option b.4 above UN REDD-policy committee

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.gavialliance.org/about/in\\_partnership/index.php](http://www.gavialliance.org/about/in_partnership/index.php) , <http://theglobalfund.org/en/board/?lang=en>

Option	Participation Rationale and Modality	Possible Models
d.3 - Provide <b>budget with assessed contributions</b> from member states.	This is a matter for governmental decisions. Civil society could perform a watchdog function for commitments and delivery of resources.	
d.4 - Establish <b>one funding organisation for global environment and sustainable development</b> work with the authority to allocate and track use of resources according to environmental needs across the UN system.	One funding body for environment and sustainable development (or for sustainability) would allow tracking of resources according to the needs of the system. A global funding organization would need solid mechanisms for transparency and accountability in how funds are managed, and in the selection process for project funding. Civil society expertise and capacities will be critical in this respect.	GAVI and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-see option b.4 above UN REDD-policy committee
d.5 – Set, monitor and review a <b>global standard committed percentage of GNP</b> that each country would exercise nationally <b>for environmental sustainability</b> .	This option will require significant involvement from major groups and stakeholders as public opinion in countries around the world will be critical for governments to commit a percentage of GNP to sustainability.	Campus sustainability funds and governance arrangements could be a useful model where a certain percentage of funds is earmarked to sustainability.
e.1 - Develop a <b>dedicated fund or facility to implement the Bali Strategic Plan</b> .	Needs urgent attention and strong public support will be important. This, however, will entail greater public awareness and engagement – an area where civil society will be important.	GAVI and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-see option b.4 above
e.2 - Establish <b>country operational offices</b> for environment in developing countries.	This is an important option that needs urgent attention.	
e.3 - Establish <b>environment-development country teams</b> in existing intergovernmental offices in developing countries.	This is an important option that needs urgent attention.	
e.4 - Establish <b>regional committees of developing countries representatives</b> with a plenary body providing technical expertise for integrated implementation. Country representatives would bridge the gap between the regional offices and the national environment ministries within member states.	This option should not be limited to involving government representatives only. In the regions, major groups and stakeholders perform very valuable roles and need to be involved formally in decisionmaking in order to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.	
e.5 - Create an <b>independent organization for capacity-building, funding, and compensation</b> .	Such an independent organization should involve public participation and transparency in the process of prioritizing countries and environmental issues that will receive funding and capacity building. Major groups and stakeholders should be involved in financing-related reform options for an independent capacity-building mechanism.	GAVI and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria-see option b.4 above

**Table 2. Options Matrix: Reform options categorized and prioritized**

	<b>Process</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Network</b>
<b>Short term (1-2 years)</b>	<p>a.2 – Create an intergovernmental <b>environmental change assessment process</b>.</p> <p>b.4 - <b>Link global environmental policy making with global environmental financing</b>.</p> <p>c.3 - Establish <b>UN system-wide medium term strategy for the environment</b>.</p> <p>d.1 - <b>Widen donor base</b>, e.g. establish mechanism for receipt of private/philanthropic donations.</p>	<p>a.4 - Establish an independent, international <b>environmental sustainability research institute</b>.</p> <p>c.1 - Establish a <b>mechanism for clustering</b> MEA secretariat functions and common services.</p> <p>e.1 - Develop a <b>dedicated fund or facility to implement the Bali Strategic Plan</b>.</p> <p>e.2 - Establish <b>country operational offices</b> for environment in developing countries.</p> <p>e.3 - Establish <b>environment-development country teams</b> in existing intergovernmental offices in developing countries.</p>	<p>a.3 - Create a <b>global information network for environmental review and early warning</b>; web based facility for sharing of “live” information and support from an interagency cooperation arrangement.</p> <p>e.6 - Develop an overarching <b>framework for capacity building and technical assistance</b> for the operational activities of MEAs, UN agencies and IFIs.</p>
<b>Medium term (2-5 years)</b>	<p>b.2 - Establish an intergovernmental <b>review mechanism for national implementation of MEAs</b> and other international environmental obligations.</p> <p>b.5 - Develop a general <b>agreement for environmental sustainability</b> with a common framework and under the authority of a single conference.</p> <p>d.3 - Provide <b>budget with assessed contributions</b> from member states.</p> <p>d.5 – Set, monitor and review a <b>global standard committed percentage of GNP</b> that each country would exercise nationally <b>for environmental sustainability</b>.</p>	<p>a.1 - Establish an <b>intergovernmental body for governing the environmental science policy interface</b>.</p> <p>b.1 - Create a <b>body to set minimum global standards on global environmental issues</b> and regional standards for regional issues.</p>	<p>c.2 – Create a member driven '<b>coordination council</b>' for MEAs composed of a representative group of countries and comprising committees based on MEAs issue clusters.</p> <p>d.2 - Establish a <b>joint management mechanism for all major trust funds for the environment</b> with equal roles for project selection, appraisal and supervision of environment-related activities, in accordance with the respective spheres of expertise.</p> <p>e.7 - Establish a <b>SS/NS technology transfer centre</b> based on a clearing house system.</p>
<b>Long term (5+ years)</b>		<p>b.3 - Establish a <b>global policy organization with universal membership</b> to set, coordinate, and monitor the global environmental agenda.</p> <p>d.4 - Establish <b>one funding organisation for global environment and sustainable development</b> work with the authority to allocate and track use of resources according to environmental needs across the UN system.</p> <p>e.5 - Create an <b>independent organization for capacity-building, funding, and compensation</b>.</p>	<p>e.4 - Establish <b>regional committees of developing countries representatives</b> with a plenary body providing technical expertise for integrated implementation. Country representatives would bridge the gap between the regional offices and the national environment ministries within member states.</p>

## APPENDIX

### **Contributors to International Environmental Governance Consultative Process Comments on “Options for Broader Reform of International Environmental Governance: Background Paper by the Executive Director,” UNEP, 17 May 2010**

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#### **Major Groups**

##### **Children and Youth**

General Input submitted by Children and Youth Representative Sara Svensson  
Specific Input submitted by Children and Youth Representative Sara Svensson

##### **Local Authorities**

Input submitted by Susanne Salz, ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability

##### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

Input submitted by NGO Representative Daniel Magraw, Director, Center for International Environmental Law

##### **Women**

Input submitted by Women Representative Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future

#### **Stakeholders**

Input submitted by Joy Muller, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Input submitted by Hans F. Schwensberg, President, Public Awareness Education Programs (PAEP)

#### **Regional Representatives**

##### **Africa**

Input submitted by African Regional Representative Robert Bakiika

##### **Europe**

Input submitted by European Regional Representative Karine Danielyan, Chairperson, “For Sustainable Human Development”/UNEP National Committee

##### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Input submitted by Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Representative Alida Spadafora, Directora Ejecutiva, Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ANCON)

##### **North America**

Input submitted by North American Regional Representative Maria Ivanova, Director, Global Environmental Governance Project and Assistant Professor, College of William and Mary  
Input submitted by Kenneth W. Abbott, Professor of Law and Global Studies, Arizona State University

Input submitted by Ed Barry, Director, Sustainable World Initiative

Input submitted by John Coe, Green Cross Canada

Input submitted by Harris Gleckman, Director, Benchmark Environmental Consulting

Input submitted by Adele Morris, Harvard Project in International Climate Agreements, Brookings Institution

##### **West Asia**

Input submitted by Habiba Al Marashi, Chairperson, Emirates Environment Group