



French Memorandum on the United Nations Environment Organisation (UNEO).

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1. The UNEO and the United Nations reform agenda.

The New York consultations on environment held under the aegis of President Eliasson have revealed :

- A common negative assessment of the current situation;
- A very broad consensus as to the inability of the United Nations to deal with the deterioration of the environment;
- The identification of various possible reform options, including a UNEO;
- The interest and willingness of the participants to carry on the discussions.

2. UNEO : a necessary reform.

- The current system is unsustainable :

Environment is, in a way, victim of its own success: there are currently more than 500 multilateral environmental agreements and numerous international organizations addressing environmental issues without coordination: UNEP, FAO, UNDP, the World Bank, CSD, UNESCO. Despite such efforts, we have not been able to reverse the environmental degradation. The situation has become unmanageable and very costly.

- The reforms in progress are both ineffective and inadequate :

We support the Cartagena programme for UNEP reform. However, UNEP has neither the mandate nor the means to implement it. The results achieved are very disappointing, especially with respect to the Bali plan on capacity building in developing countries.

In addition, strengthening UNEP would not improve the overall coherence of the system since the development of environmental norms and actors has mostly happened outside UNEP.

- There is an urgent need to consider a global and ambitious UN reform for environment.



3. UNEO added-value

- A genuine ambassador for the environment

A UNEO would enjoy a greater authority than a mere Programme for ensuring that the 'voice' of the environment is heard. By integrating the environmental dimension into development policies, it would strengthen the principles of sustainable development. Time has come to give environment the institutional anchor it deserves, on an equal footing with the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

- Greater funding mobilization capacity

One of the most compelling argument for setting an Agency for environment is that a stronger institution would play a crucial advocacy role for stronger financial commitments (involvement of private sectors, non-UN organizations, IFIs...), thus strengthening and enlarging the international environment funding base.

- Rationalisation of the current system

The transformation of UNEP into a UNEO would enable greater coordination, efficiency and economies of scale in promoting synergies between the Conventions, while preserving their legal autonomy. The resources so freed up would be effectively devoted to the protection of the environment.

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