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Comments on background paper by the executive director for options for broader reform of the International Environmental Governance.

Assessing the existing international environmental governance system through addressing broader reforms in the context of sustainable development is now a subject for international consideration. In the perspective of defining options for broader reforms, one need to know the diversity that exists in this World. For example a family of 5 can survive without earning daily income in Uganda yet in other regions, this cannot happen. Various environmental problems have been labeled in different parts of the World from oil spills, desertification to as far as solid waste management.

As we deliberate on possible broader reforms, I find this a challenge because what we might opt to work in a certain region can totally fail in the other region.

Back to business, I have read the proposed reforms and I find some urgently needed to be operationalised. However, I am shocked to see that most of the possibilities talk about establishing and creating more committees, bodies and so on. I am wondering whether establishing more of the so many communities will provide an answer to a local man fishing in a polluted lake, cultivating in a desert and observing the last green part surrounding him.

The following are comments on the suggested broader reforms;

a) Creating a strong, credible and accessible science base and policy interface

- ✓ Establishing an intergovernmental body is urgently needed however this should take note of already existing science –policy interface in the regions such as Inter University Council of East Africa¹.
- ✓ On creating an intergovernmental and scientifically credible assessment similar in structure and procedures to that of IPCC, I find this to be a long term initiative basing on the already existing structures, since we have the GEO, AEO and IPBES that is based on regional balance, there might be much duplication of work
- ✓ I find creating a multi-scaled and thematic global information network to be a long term and highly resource intensified. Coordinating the already existing regional networks could be a short term and working approach.
- ✓ Establishing an independent environment research institute is a long time initiative and highly resource intensified. Why doesn't UNEP compliment efforts between UNESCO's Man and Biosphere and UNITAR's research programme².

¹ Inter-University Council for East Africa was established in 1980 by three East African partner states (Kenya Tanzania and Uganda). The IUCEA exists to facilitate, coordinate and promote sustainable and competitive development of universities in the region by responding to the challenges facing higher education, and helping universities to contribute to meeting national and regional development needs.

² UNITAR has three programmes grouped within its Environment Unit that provide the backbone of environmental training activities i.e. chemicals and waste management programme; climate change programme and environmental governance programme

- b) Developing a global authoritative and responsive voice for environmental sustainability
- ✓ Creating a standard setting body is urgently needed though it should be based on already existing regional structures such regional committees.
 - ✓ On establishing an intergovernmental review mechanism on national implementation of MEAs and other international environmental obligations, I find this totally broad for UNEP to achieve. Basing on its funding modalities, many countries might not wish to be reviewed, if some have not ratified some important conventions till to date. Some countries are domesticating already existing environmental obligations which I think is a better possibility. Even with the existence of the human rights council, human rights are still highly abused.
 - ✓ Establishing a global policy principles based organization is a long term process and its resource intensity is high though it still remains a better idea. However, is it possible to have an Environment council that can report directly to the GA without ECOSOC's filtering and deletions as with UNEP.
 - ✓ Linking global environmental policy making with global environmental financing is an urgent intervention. For example \$4.25 Billion³ was agreed among all the donors to GEF – reflecting the importance place of the global environment, the World Bank is working on the Environment strategy for 2010, if a coordinating body was in place then global environment financing would be realized. However different funds have different modes of operation and donor contribution conditions such as ceilings. Therefore this still largely remains an issue of donor countries to decide.
 - ✓ Developing a general agreement for environmental sustainability is a medium term intervention and should be based on evident research that the existing agreements have failed. Otherwise having so many agreements that even we do not recall, might end up making others redundant.
- c) Achieving effectiveness, efficiency and coherence within the United Nations system
- ✓ Establishing a mechanism for global overall coordination among existing MEAs is a matter of urgency, however the way the synergies are projected should and must be carefully scrutinized otherwise one might become weak/redundant whereas the others turn out to be work. However MEAs such as those on marine ecosystems need urgent attention.
 - ✓ Creating a member driven coordination council composed of representative group of countries is a medium term intervention though limiting it to MEAs is more of weakening it. As earlier suggested, this council should have a similar procedure to that of the Human Rights Council.
 - ✓ Establishing UN system-wide medium term strategy for the environment is a short term intervention and seems to be the backbone to the reforms, however a strategy cannot execute the coordination function. A similar but strong board to that of environment coordination should be built but with much more powers to involve specialized agencies and funds.
- d) Securing sufficient, predictable and coherent funding
- ✓ Establishing mechanisms for receipt of private/philanthropic donations, establishing joint mechanisms for all major trust funds for environment, providing budget with both assessed contributions from member states and setting global standard committed

³ GEF statement on Commission for Sustainable Development high level segment on May 13, 2010 in New York at UN.

percentage of GNP can all be realized through coordination and having the powers similar to Human rights council to present directly to the GA. These are long term reforms that have to follow a chain. You cannot have predictable funding without authority.

- e) Ensuring a responsive and cohesive approach to meeting country needs
- ✓ Developing a dedicating fund or facility to implement Bali Strategic Plan is a short term intervention that needs urgent attention.
 - ✓ Establishing country operational offices for environment in developing countries is a short and urgent intervention. This is because different developing countries have different environment problems based on scale, severity and capacity to address the problem at hand. This is justified by the low consideration of environment within the UNDAF. Secondment of officers to countries as in kind contribution from donors will not yield any service simply because environment is a wide subject that needs its country office just like development with UNDP.
 - ✓ Establishing country teams or desks is more of a project cycle that after working on the problem mandated by the team, then it will have no any other business. I still recommend country operational offices if we are to realize environmental governance.
 - ✓ Establishing regional committees of developing countries representatives with plenary body providing technical expertise for integrated implementation of policy guidance is more of duplicating efforts. For example, Africa has already established and functional committees such as the African Union⁴, NEPAD and other subsidiary committees such as ECA, ECOWAS, SADC and COMESA.
 - ✓ Transferring the task of capacity building, funding to an independent organization sounds to be a short term intervention however its independence might undermine the sovereignty of a country. I suggest already existing strong mandated region organizations can do the work for example in Africa, given the required necessitates, the African Union can do the work better.
 - ✓ Establishing an overarching policy framework to support capacity building and technical assistance is an urgent matter and less resource intensified.
 - ✓ Establishing a south south/north south technology transfer center based on a clearing house is a short term, with limited resource intensity that needs immediate intervention.

⁴ African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization established on in 201 as a successor to the organization of African Unity consisting of 53 African states. AU is made up of both political and administrative bodies with the Assembly being the highest decision making body. Other institutions of the AU include the Executive Council, permanent Representative Committee and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, a civil society consultative body. ECA, ECOWAS, SADC and COMESA are regional intergovernmental organizations.