

# Chapter 6

## Conclusion

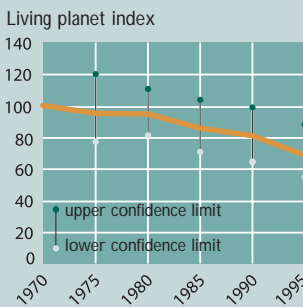
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Beyond merely recognising each other's relative strengths and weaknesses, UNEP and civil society have to keep in mind that there are very real issues to be addressed: Environmental trends are of great concern. In 2002, in its GEO3 report, UNEP stated that the net loss in forest area was estimated at 9.4 million ha/ year (the size of France and England over some ten years) in the 1990s; the rate of biodiversity loss had never been higher and greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, continued to increase.

### Global biodiversity reduced by 30% between 1970 and 2000



The Living Planet Index system is based on the estimates of population size of individual wild species in the scientific literature. The index is calculated as a percentage of the population size estimated at 1970. The mean value of the index is calculated as an average of all the species included in the assessment at each time interval.

#### Box 11

From UNEP Global Environment Outlook 3, page 122

All concerned parties agree that there can be no real change in these environmental trends without a corresponding improvement in the living standards and situation of many millions of people around the world. This is especially relevant with respect to developing countries, where most of the world's poor are currently living.

### 1,2 billion peoples survive on less that US\$ 1 a day



More than 1.2 billion people – one in every five on Earth – survive on less than US\$1 a day. During the 1990s the share of people suffering from extreme income poverty fell from 30 to 23%. But, with a growing world population, the number fell by just 23 million – a small fraction of the progress needed to eliminate poverty. And excluding China, the number of extremely poor people actually increased by 28 million.

#### Box 12

From UNDP Human Development Report 2003, page 5

According to the *UNDP Human Development Report 2003*, soil degradation is damaging the livelihood of up to 1 billion people living on drylands; 1.7 billion people – a third of the developing world's population – live in countries facing water stress; up to a fifth of the disease burden in poor countries may be linked to environmental risk factors; and some 900 million poor people depend on natural products for much of their livelihood.

Civil society and UNEP have to work together in order to achieve positive change. UNEP will take into account the broader trends of the world development agenda in order to foster the meaningful participation of civil society. The goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration shape the overall framework of this engagement.





## The Millennium Development Goals

The global environment and humanity are faced with the great challenge of alleviating widespread poverty and developing the planet in a sustainable manner. All concerned parties agree that there are certain crucial, minimal steps that must be taken to improve the living conditions of millions of people across the world. Central to this are the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ([www.un.org/millennium](http://www.un.org/millennium)). The MDGs consist of a series of pledges by the Governments of the world, to be effected by 2015.

Of particular importance for UNEP is Goal 7 "To ensure environmental sustainability", which has three main targets:

- Integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- By 2015, halve the proportion of peoples without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- By 2020, have achieved a significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Box 13

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Governments agreed on mechanisms to implement Agenda 21. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation stresses the importance of partnerships (section 3.3.2.) and regional dimensions of the implementation (chapter 4).

The regional component of UNEP's work is increasingly important. At the WSSD, the UNCSD asserted its role to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21 at national and regional levels. The emergence of regional action plans (such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development), are fostering policy engagement of civil society within the regional processes.

At the beginning of this new millennium, civil society has emerged as a true partner both at the global governance level and in the implementation of programmes. Governments have made several declarations and decisions, which underline their commitment to see direct civil society engagement in both governance (chapter 2) and implementation (chapter 3) of UNEP's work programme.

Clear channels for civil society engagement are necessary conditions for this to be realised. Effective UNEP interdivisional civil society coordination, use of Internet-based technologies and this guidebook are three available instruments. The Internet in particular, will be explored further: it is a cost-effective tool to



By 2020, have achieved significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

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support networks of CSOs, enables UNEP to provide information to a wide audience, and facilitates the flow of information.

At the governance level, there is a clear need for civil society to have meaningful input towards intergovernmental debate. UNEP can help build bridges between Governments and civil society.



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Importance of the new communication technologies

Existing mechanisms, such as the multi-stakeholder dialogues established by the UNCSD, as well as the current reform in the UN system could serve as examples in this regard. At the implementation level, the challenge is to effectively mainstream civil society participation in all programmes and activities. UNEP should be creative in coming up with new ways of forming links with civil society, to broaden the scope and the type of CSOs interacting, and to include all the Major Groups.

To conclude, as a lead UN agency in intergovernmental environment governance, UNEP can facilitate and promote synergies among all the actors involved. This is already under way: the UNEP Environmental Management Group (UNEP/EMG) seeks to enhance cooperation and joint action within and beyond the UN system, including the World Bank, the WTO and civil society. The EMG draws its membership primarily from specialized UN agencies and multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP provides the secretariat for both the EMG ([emg@unep.ch](mailto:emg@unep.ch)) and the Geneva Environment Network. The Geneva Environment Network, [www.environmenthouse.ch](http://www.environmenthouse.ch), seeks to increase the effectiveness of environmental action through closer collaboration and improve synergies among UN organizations and international CSOs. ■

