

UNEP
24 November 2005

Committee of Permanent Representatives to
the United Nations Environment Programme
Subcommittee I
Nairobi, 24 November 2005

**INPUTS BY ACCREDITED INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
TO THE UNEDITED ADVANCE ENGLISH COPY OF DOCUMENTS OF THE NINTH
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

The secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has the honour to submit herewith, the inputs to the unedited advance English copy of documents UNEP/GCSS.IX/5 (Environmental emergency response, as well as disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early-warning systems: Report of the Executive Director) and UNEP/GCSS.IX/7 (Mid-term progress report on the implementation of the long-term strategy on engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues: Report of the Executive Director), submitted by the following international non-governmental organizations accredited to the Governing Council: Day Hospital Institute, Development Alternatives, EarthCorps, International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH), Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (NESDA), and Water Environment Federation (WEF).

Dear Ms Miller,

I am attaching the inputs on the progress report. The gist of inputs are in bold.

With regards

Sincerely

Col V Katju
Senior Advisor (Environment)



Development Alternatives UNEP.doc

UNEP – SAARC HQ & Information exchange

South Asia with nearly 1/5th of the world's population, having a huge number below the poverty line is faced with mind-boggling environmental problems. Major issues which need addressing are drinking water quality and quantity, solid waste management, loss of green cover and biodiversity, children's health related issues and environmental management in urban areas. The magnitude of environmental degradation needs urgent attention. To cope up with this situation it is not only essential but imperative to set up a UNEP –SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Headquarters in one of the countries, preferably in New Delhi, to oversee the TUNZA programme in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan. Once a decision is taken in consultation with the respective countries, the issue of financial sustainability can be taken up with the governments and contributions made from budgets of the ministries of Environment & Forest and local corporate sectors for setting up a corpus for funding various Tunza activities. This would also enable the SAARC countries to disseminate information in the numerous regional languages for a wider readership of millions of children and youth and facilitate information exchange to the "one world" of the future.

Awareness building

Although a large network of 12,000 organizations has been created it is not enough. In developing countries there is ample scope to reach out to millions of youth and children who do not have the facilities of ICT (Information and Communication Technology – like computers and internet). To cope with these shortcomings local governments can be asked to assist in disseminating information either through internet or print media which will lead to awareness building. They could also publish documents in local languages. A number of international youth and children conferences have been organized but participation has been minimal due to financial constraints. For awareness building all presentations/papers/documents should be circulated to the members of the network.

Youth in decision making process

Involving youth in advising UNEP on environment issues is laudable. Youths are the future citizens of the world and engaging them at an early age on the important aspect of environment would bode well for the future. Our experience in the CLEAN-India (Community led Environment Action Network) programme and formulation of a State Environment Report of South Asia-Youth Version indicates that youth have an open mind and care more for the environment than the elders. They have fresh and novel ideas and these must be tapped. Minutes of the Youth Advisory Council Meetings should be circulated to all members. Also, keeping in view the population, the number of South Asian members should be increased proportionately. Such meetings to be fruitful should have a planned agenda, earmarked objectives, activities with milestones and desired outcomes.

Capacity Building

On the aspect of capacity building a planned training curriculum should be formulated at the UNEP level. Such internships should be organized at a large scale and conducted by member organizations on various subjects. They should also include locale specific issues which are excellent means of disseminating them to all those involved. However, this training does not rest here. In order to avail full benefit of this capacity building, a database should be developed and those who have been trained should be utilized for training and implementation of the programme. This process would enable the benefits to trickle down, leading to multiplication and sustainable development. Capacity building should lead to large scale creation of livelihoods, especially for the weaker sections of the society.

Resources for implementation

Financial resources are always at a premium. At the lower level it is always difficult to get a sponsor or motivate the government to spend the yearly allocation on worthwhile and lasting environmental activities. The UN and its agencies are most suited for getting financial resources. Even the corporate sector is willing to contribute when a project or programme has a stamp of approval of the world body. The regional and local partners can help identify potential funders and once an arrangement in principle is reached they can be delegated to liaise with the funding agency to put the project on track.

Challenges

Besides the financial resources as discussed in the previous paragraph, governments have to be fully involved in this programme. This can only be active if favorable results are made evident to the government. Once they are convinced, a formal commitment can be obtained. No government is short of finances if the money solicited is perceived for use in the best manner possible. For wider circulation of the Tunza programme a formal South Asian HQ must be set up which would promote discussion of the activities in local languages. The use of local language will also act as incentive for local governments to generously support the programme.

Dear Mr. Miller

I have reviewed the document UNEP/GCSS.1X/7 about the implementation of the long-term strategy on engagement of young people in environmental issues. I admired very much the activities & the Tunza program. We as Day Hospital Institute for R&D were very interested in the issue and we organized in Egypt several workshops for the youth , also we had a competition for youth aged 15-25 years broadcasted from Cairo Greater Radio Station which was 30 questions about chemical pollution, health & the environment during Sep 2004 every day there was a question, we have 3000 right answers & prizes were given. As I was navigating in the TUNZA web and in the state of environment (climate change,biodiversity, ozone..) I didn't find chemicals and I would like to suggest adding Chemical as one of the issues of the state of environment. We as NGO would like to help and provide materials specially in Arabic , English ,exchange information and share activities. We have this experience as we are the middle east / Arab HUB for IPEP project which is mainly concerned with POPs & Implementing Stockholm Convention But this is a gate way for the broader long term goal of 2020 having a world free from harmful chemicals. I will in the near future send Mr. Theodore Oben pictures & document about our work with Youth.

Yours,

Dr. M. El Banna
Chair of the board of Day Hospital Institute
Director of the Middle east Arab HUB for IPEP project.

Dear Ms. Miller:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the "Mid-term progress report on the implementation of the long-term strategy on engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues". In response to the needs addressed by UNEP I would like to introduce you to EarthCorps and our current exchange program for youth leaders from other countries.

Since 1993 EarthCorps has offered a 6-month training course in Seattle, Washington, USA that brings together young representatives (18-25 years of age) of international organizations to learn the basic fundamentals of environmental restoration, volunteer management, and youth empowerment.

EarthCorps training is ideal for any organization that works with:

- Community empowerment
- Reforestation
- Ecotourism development
- Youth outreach

EarthCorps alumni apply their skills on projects in their home countries. For example, Suzana Paz (2004 alumna) is now a project manager for United Nations in Honduras. Her experience at EarthCorps gave her the confidence to apply for this position and to stand out above a pool of over 100 other applicants. Suzana is now working with youth to build their skills and find jobs when they leave the school system.

With demonstrated success in its international focus EarthCorps is looking to expand its reach and partner with organizations that are interested in sponsoring young professionals to participate in EarthCorps.

We are excited for the opportunity to work with you and your network of organizations. If you have any questions about EarthCorps, please contact me at the information below. Visit our website at http://www.earthcorps.org/join_international.php to learn more about EarthCorps!

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mark Howard
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International Coordinator
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www.earthcorps.org

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for sending us a copy of the above captioned draft report.

Having read your reports, we have found it well cover all major activity of UNEP and other related agencies. While we do not have any specific comments to make at this stage, we will circulate a copy of your email with the attachments to those directly concerned and involved with environment -related issues in our Association.

Under the circumstance, our Association will be closely monitoring further development of the subject UNEP has been addressing with keen interest.

Yours sincerely,

Satoshi Inoue

Secretary-General, International Association of
Ports and Harbours (IAPH)

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Dear Beverly Miller

Please find below NESDA's comments on the draft documents on the long-term strategy on engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues, and the Environmental emergency response, as well as disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early-warning systems report.

Sincerely,

Bora Masumbuko

General comment on the two drafts:

The documents do not draw lessons from the implementation of the activities of the programme of work, nor the problems that may have been encountered, etc. It would be very interesting indeed to know what lessons can be drawn at this stage, notably regarding the collaboration UNEP has established with the other UN agencies.

Specific comments:

On the Environmental emergency response, as well as disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early-warning systems report

- Items 37 and 38: given the locusts invasion of last year in West Africa and the serious consequences on food security thereafter (especially in the Sahel region), capacity building activities in West Africa in collaboration with some regional institutions such as CILSS (Permanent Interstate committee on drought in the Sahel) and OSS (Observatoire du Sahara the du Sahel) should be considered.

On the mid-term progress report on the implementation of the long-term strategy on engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues:

1. Information exchange: if a strategy has been put in place to get feedback from the readers of all these publications, follow-up of the survey is very critical so that one is aware of the readers' views.

2. Item 12. Is there any particular reason why the teacher's guide has not been distributed in some other French speaking countries such as: Chad, Niger, Cameroon (part of), Republic of Congo, Mali, Central African Republic, Guinea at the same time? Furthermore, we guess that the promotion of the French version will be organized as well some time within the next three years of the implementation strategy.

3. Challenges: One way to get the support from the Governments, Policy makers and other national bodies would be to launch the GEO-for-Youth, AEO-for-Youth and other Youth related publications at the country levels as well.

4. In addition to the Youth publications that are being produced by UNEP, suggestion is made to have a glossary of environment be elaborated and published. The definitions would be phrased so that they can be easily understood by children and youth. Some of these definitions are already stated in the existing Youth publications, but having them compiled in an easy-to-carry way (booklet) would be most appropriate and very useful.

5. Suggestion is also made to have at least one of these publications translated into an (or several) African language (s), for example Kiswahili, Wolof or Yourouba (spoken in parts of West Africa). Indeed the strategy is called "Tunza", which is a kiswahili word but we are not aware of any publication in kiswahili while there are some in Catalan, Basque, etc. which are not UN official languages either. This is important given that, in rural areas thorough Africa, oral communication remains an important mean (not to say the most important) of information sharing, and a publication in an African language, could be read to children and young people who do not have the opportunity to attend school. This would be another way to sensitize the very grass root level community.

Bora Masumbuko
Projects Officer / Chargée de Projet
Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa
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Via Electronic Mail to Beverly.miller@unep.org
November 18, 2005

Ms. Beverly Miller
Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
United Nations Environmental Programs (UNEP)
Number #2, United Nations Plaza
Room DC2-83
New York, NY 10017

RE: UNEP Draft Report on Environmental Emergency Response, et.al.

Dear Beverly:

Thank you for your email of November 11, inviting the Water Environment Federation (WEF), as an accredited non-governmental organization of the UNEP Governing Council, to provide comments on the fourth set of unedited working documents of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which are being developed for both the upcoming meetings of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (February 7-9, 2006 - Dubai, UAE).

The UNEP is to be commended for the comprehensive nature of these documents, particularly the substantive and wide ranging series of activities to improve environmental emergency response and disaster prevention, preparedness and response. You and UNEP staff are to be congratulated for tracking, reporting and sharing information on its endeavors: information sharing being essential to promoting the coordination of responses to these complex issues and avoiding duplication of efforts.

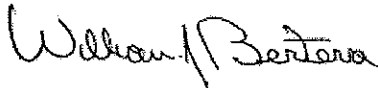
WEF finds the number of activities that focus on building capacity in disaster prevention and mitigation encouraging. Examples of these include activities that cover coastal zone management for disaster risk reduction and others that cover early warning measures. The approach suggested by the report -- involving identifying effective practices and providing both technical assistance and training to support implementation -- appears sound.

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The link between environmental management, particularly coastal zone management, and disaster risk has tragically been highlighted in 2005. The report suggests that UNEP has responded to this with several measures. Efforts to integrate disaster risk concerns into UNEP programs and to include environmental experts in disaster mitigation planning appear to hold promise. We look forward to learning more about these and other efforts.

WEF stands ready to assist you and UNEP staff in the furtherance of these documents, and look forward to participating in the Dubai meetings next February. With best regards,

Sincerely,



William J. Bertera
Executive Director
WATER ENVIRONMENT FEDERATION (WEF)

cc (electronic mail):
Mr. Denis Ruysschaert (denis.ruysschaert@unep.org)

