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Policy issues: coordination and cooperation with major groups

**Implementation of the long-term strategy on the engagement and
involvement of young people in environmental issues**

Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The Executive Director has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, a report on the implementation of the long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues for the six-year period of the strategy from 2003 to 2008, for the information of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fifth session. The report is being circulated without formal editing.

* UNEP/GC.25/1.

Annex

Implementation of the long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues

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I. Conclusion

1. The UNEP Governing Council decision 22/18II adopted a long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues – the “Tunza”¹ programme – for a period of six years from 2003 to 2008. The decision recognized the work of UNEP in promoting the participation of young people in environmental issues and reinforced UNEP’s mandate in working with young people.

2. Six years since its adoption, the Tunza programme has generated extensive interest from children and youth organizations and from a variety of UN and international partners as well as the private sector. As a result, UNEP has expanded its network, increased the frequency and substantive base of its processes for young people and has signed several partnership agreements with international children and youth organizations. UNEP has also increased the frequency and regularity of its conferences and publications for children and youth. Tunza conferences for young people were held every year (one year for children and the next year for youth) and annual sub-regional and regional conferences and workshops for all UNEP regions were organized. The Tunza magazine was published on a quarterly basis, and UNEP initiated a series of Tunza environmental storybooks for children, of which seven were published during the implementation of the strategy.

3. To ensure the implementation of the Tunza programme and meet the need to engage young people in all corners of the world, the number of staff in the Children and Youth Unit was slightly increased. UNEP received substantial funding for the Tunza programme from Bayer. From 2004 to 2007 the company provided one million Euros annually and 1.2 million Euros from 2008 to support children and youth environmental activities, most of which were UNEP led activities. Nevertheless, full implementation was hampered by inadequate financial resources.

II. Background

4. The present document presents a final report on the implementation of the long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues which was adopted by the Governing Council (GC22/18II) in February 2003. It contains information on efforts undertaken by UNEP during the six-year period of the Tunza strategy and on major challenges faced in the implementation of the strategy. The document also makes recommendations for further actions.

5. This section will report on the four focus areas of the strategy, namely: information exchange; awareness building; youth in decision-making processes; and capacity building.

A. Information exchange

6. Following the adoption of the strategy, UNEP introduced a new range of information materials and Internet services for children and youth.

7. UNEP launched its *Tunza* magazine - a flagship publication for young people - in June 2003. The magazine is published quarterly and focuses on topical environmental issues. *Tunza* is aimed at young people from 15 to 24 years of age. The contributors are also mainly from within that age group and from all regions of the world. From 2003 to 2008 23 issues of the magazine were published with distribution of 22,000 copies per issue. The online version of the magazine also attracted, on average, over 100,000 readers monthly. A review of the magazine in October 2008 indicated that the youth welcome the magazine and found it educative and informative. They recommended that the magazine should include more stories on environmental best practices by young people, cover personal interviews, include a further reading page and revamp the cover page. *Tunza* is published in English, French and Spanish. In addition, partners in China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea also publishing language versions of the magazine.

¹ “Tunza” means “to treat with care or affection” in Kiswahili, a subregional language in Eastern Africa with links to other languages. It was chosen as the brand name for UNEP’s long-term strategy for engaging and involving children and youth in its activities.

8. UNEP launched *Tunza: Acting for a Better World*, a state of the environment report for and by young people, in 2003 at the first Tunza International Youth Conference in Dubna, Russia. Based on the UNEP publications *Global Environment Outlook-3 (GEO-3)* and *Taking Action: An Environmental Guide for You and Your Community*, the publication carries information on the state of the environment as seen by young people. It provides tips on what young people can do to address environmental problems in their communities and lists best environmental practices by young people. Partners in China and the Republic of Korea have published the Chinese and the Korean language versions of the publication.

9. In 2004 UNEP launched a new illustrated environmental series for children. Seven storybooks have been published since then and the topics covered include climate change, forests, plastics, water and desertification. Each issue depicts an environmental problem through a child character who goes out seeking for solutions to the problem.

10. In 2004 UNEP developed an information folder for Governments, major partners and potential sponsors and with information on the range of activities offered by UNEP to young people around the world.

11. The UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information also worked with UNEP divisions and regional offices the development of publications for young people and the environment particularly with the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation and the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics which launched the global Ozzy Ozone Campaign to create awareness amongst Children to protect the ozone layer which includes an animated video "Ozzy Ozone", a series of Cartoon Books, radio spots, TV spots, board game and education packs for primary and secondary schools to spread information about the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation to children. The materials have been translated in more than 32 languages.

12. A Tunza web site for children and youth was launched in 2004 (<http://www.unep.org/Tunza/>). The web site provides information on UNEP products and activities for children and youth and facts on topical environmental issues. UNEP has developed chat facilities for youth to discuss various environmental issues in their communities and regions. The chat facilities provide chat rooms and e-dialogue pages for information sharing with children and youth and their organizations. The facilities are also used to discuss UNEP's activities with members of the Tunza Youth Advisory Council² and the Junior Board³.

13. Since 2003 with the UNEP-UNESCO youthXchange programme that is managed by the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) has become an innovative toolkit for education on sustainable consumption, as a very good example of inter-agency collaboration. The toolkit consists of a paper guide (translated in 18 languages and disseminated in over 500,000 copies), a bilingual website (French/English) and related pedagogical resources on sustainable consumption designed to provide teachers and young people with resources to illustrate the complex concept of sustainable consumption with a very simple language and concrete examples.

14. At the local level, the training activities are implemented through a large network of very motivated partners who have engaged in the project by translating the guide at their own costs and delivering trainings in their localities. YXC contributes to the Marrakech Process for Sustainable Consumption and Production and more specifically to the Marrakech Taskforce on Education for Sustainable Consumption (MTF on ESC) and the Marrakech Taskforce on Sustainable Lifestyles (MTF on SL).

2 The Tunza Youth Advisory Council is a group of 28 youth leaders elected at the Tunza International Youth Conference to advise UNEP on better ways of engaging youth and to represent youth in international environmental negotiations. Each region is represented by 4 youth leaders and indigenous youth organizations are also represented by 4 representatives.

3 The Junior Board is a group of six children elected at the Tunza international Children's Conference to advise on the preparations and organization of the next children's event.

B. Awareness building

15. UNEP's network for children and youth organizations continues to grow. The network now has over 30,000 organizations from over 180 countries who regularly receive environmental information from UNEP. Apart from the traditional network, UNEP has developed electronic networks (list-servers) for information sharing with children and youth organizations.

16. Following the adoption of the Tunza programme, UNEP established a consistent sequence of Tunza children and youth conferences. Starting with the Tunza International Youth Conference in Dubna, Russia, in 2003, and the Tunza International Children's Conference in New London, Connecticut, USA, in 2004, other conferences have been held in Bangalore, India (October 2005), Putrajaya, Malaysia (August 2006), Leverkusen, Germany (August 2007) and Stavanger, Norway (June 2008). Sub-regional and regional Tunza conferences and workshops were also organized in all regions. Five annual sub-regional conferences and workshops were organized annually in Asia and the Pacific in 2004 and 2005. Ten annual sub-regional and one regional Tunza conferences and workshops were organized in 2006 and 2007 in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa and 13 sub-regional and regional conferences and workshops were organized in all six regions in 2008.

17. The Tunza conferences and workshops provided opportunities for young people from around the world to share environmental information and increase their involvement in environmental actions. These conferences also provided young people with opportunities to develop joint strategies to address environmental problems in their communities and an opportunity for young people with similar environmental activities to maintain contact with each other and help improve respective environmental activities. The conferences and workshops also result in the development of bulletin boards for sharing of information and actions being implemented by participants.

18. UNEP successfully launched Plant for the Planet, a children's tree-planting campaign at the twenty-second session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2002. Since the launch, over 400,000 trees have been planted in Kenya. The Campaign which initially started as a children's initiative was used by UNEP as a launch pad for the Billion Tree Campaign which aims at encouraging individuals, communities, business, industries, Governments and civil society to plant up to 7 billion trees by the end of 2009.

19. UNEP and Volvo signed an agreement in 2004 on a recognition programme for children. The Volvo-UNEP adventure programme provides an opportunity for schools to register their projects in a competition and compete for top prizes of US \$10,000, \$6,000 and \$4,000 for the best implemented projects.

20. UNEP in collaboration with the Japan-based Foundation for Global Peace and Environment, Bayer and Nikon Corporation organized an International Children's Painting Competition. The theme for each competition was aligned to that year's World Environment Day theme and prizes for winners of the competition were awarded during WED commemoration. The Children's Painting Competition attracted, on average 12,000 paintings from over 100 countries each year. From 2008, the originals of the best paintings will be exhibited and auctioned, and proceeds from the auction are donated to UNICEF to support climate change activities for children.

21. The first exhibition and auction took place at the UN Headquarters in New York on 25 October 2008 and was attended by over 200 guests from the private sector, governments, UN representatives and the media. The event was the launch pad for the *Unite to Combat Climate Change* Campaign which is a call for governments, industry and major stakeholders to back a post Kyoto unified agreement on climate change. 26 original paintings from a total of 200,000 submitted by child artists were auctioned raising over US Dollars 21,000 for UNICEF's emergency relief for children in areas affected by climate change disasters.

22. UNEP also has an ongoing public lecture series that is organized in collaboration with student groups and environmental clubs in universities. This year, five such lectures on environment-related issues such as Climate Change and other UNEP priority areas have been held. Such events have also been utilized to distribute UNEP publications to university students.

23. Since the adoption of the long-term strategy, UNEP has strengthened and forged partnerships with a number of UN entities and international organizations. Among these partners are UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, World Organization of the Scout Movement, with more than 28 million members worldwide and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts with 12 million members.

C. Youth in decision-making processes

24. The Tunza Youth Advisory Council continues to play an active role in advising UNEP on better ways of engaging young people. The first Council was elected at the first Tunza International Youth Conference in Dubna, Russia, in August 2003. The 12 Council members has participated in both regular and special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Jeju, Republic of Korea (2004), Nairobi (2005), Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2006), Nairobi (2007), and Monaco (2008). Children were also given the opportunity to convey a message to the opening plenary session of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2007.

25. The Tunza Youth Advisory Council and the Junior Board were given the responsibility of making decisions on the themes of the discussions and prepare outcomes at the Tunza conferences and other youth processes.

D. Capacity building

26. UNEP has continued to implement a strong internship programme and an average of 20 young people participating annually in this programme in the Children and Youth Unit. The interns, who are drawn from various parts of the world, are given opportunities to gain experience with UNEP and to provide inputs to the work of UNEP with young people. The interns are also given valuable opportunities to coordinate some of processes of UNEP for young people. Countries represented so far are as follows: Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia France, Finland, Germany, Kenya Norway, Sweden, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

27. UNEP has continued to support the nature and sport camp in Kenya. This leadership training programme for children from underprivileged communities provides basic training on sport and the environment. The first camp, which was launched in Kenya in 2001, has provided leadership training to over 10,000 children.

28. The UNEP/Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Programme for young people has continued to support the exchange programme for outstanding youth leaders to have the opportunity to experience first-hand the environmental practices from Germany, the host country, and learn from other participants from over 50 countries. The environmental envoys share their experiences with their organizations and communities.

29. UNEP as part of the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities partnerships (MESA) has in collaboration with the Centre for Sustainability at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHsustainability) jointly organized in November 2007 the Africa Youth Encounter for Sustainability (YES) Course to build capacity and equip African university students with the knowledge, skills and methodology to serve as change agents for environmental sustainability and poverty reduction in Africa, as well as form a student component of MESA..

III. Resources for implementation

30. The number of staff members of the Children & Youth / Sport & the Environment Unit remains four (two professionals and two general service staff). The Unit also benefits from a team of interns. With the growing needs to engage young people in all parts of the world, limitation of the capacity of the Unit has been a major constraint for the implementation of the strategy, resulting in activities largely driven by funding possibility and resource availability as opposed to the needs of young people

31. In terms of fundraising, UNEP signed a major partnership agreement with the German-based chemical and healthcare company, Bayer for an annual contribution of 1 million Euros for youth and environment programmes for 3 years from 2004 to 2007. The contribution from Bayer was increased to 1.2 million Euros for a further 3 year period (2008 to 2010). Over half of the funds from Bayer is used for UNEP-led environmental activities while the rest of the funds are used for Bayer-led youth activities in the regions with support from UNEP.

IV. Challenges

32. A major challenge for the Tunza programme is related to the limited resources available for implementation. The budget allocated from the Environment Fund of the Division of Communications and Public Information is not sufficient to support many of the activities and implementation of the strategy relies heavily on external support. The Bayer funding supported the implementation of some key activities of the programme, however additional external funding was required to ensure a full implementation of the strategy.

33. The Tunza programme provides an opportunity to engage young people all over the world and inspire them to take action for the environment. There is therefore a strong need to expand the outreach potential of the programme and to engage children and youth organizations in all parts of the world. However, to be able to do this, UNEP will require additional support of Governments to create links with children and youth organizations in their countries.

34. UNEP information materials are often published only in English or infrequently in French and Spanish and a few other UN official languages. To be able to reach out to many more young people, it is important to produce UNEP information materials in at least all six official UN languages, for which additional support is required.

V. Recommendations

35. A new strategy has been developed. It should be endorsed and fully supported by Governments to enable UNEP to reach out to many more young people in their countries. To successfully implement the strategy, UNEP requires additional support from Governments and other donors to finance the activities of the programme.

36. UNEP also requires support from Governments and other donors to translate, print and distribute UNEP information materials to young people in their respective countries and to host exchange programmes for youth leaders from other countries.
