

Summary report

Multilateral Environmental Agreements Dialogue

Held at the Margins of the 57th GEF council

16 December 2019

Overview

The GEF Secretariat organized a dialogue with Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) at the margins of the 57th GEF Council. The aim of this dialogue was to discuss the **“2020 super year”**: **where do we stand less than a month ahead and what can be done to deliver on its promises?**

The 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15), to be held in October 2020, is expected to adopt a new global framework for biodiversity with the ambition to reshape our relationship with nature in the coming decade. During the same month, the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) is to take a crucial decision on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste framework beyond 2020. Parties to the Paris Agreement are also preparing to submit new or updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) by 2020, while a new multilateral agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the high seas could also be reached this year. Hence, 2020 has the potential to be the coveted watershed moment to reframe and spur unprecedented collective action to address the climate, biodiversity and sustainable development crises, with the prospect of an agreement to adopt a new deal for nature and people.

The dialogue was chaired by Ms. **Naoko Ishii**, GEF CEO and Chairperson, and attended by the following representatives from the MEA Secretariats:

- Ms. **Elizabeth Mrema**, Acting Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Ms. **Rossana Silva-Repetto**, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury
- Mr. **Franck Moser**, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm (via video)

Mr. Basile van Havre, co-chair of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework also participated in the panel discussion, which was co-facilitated by Ms. **Chizuru Aoki**, Lead Environmental Specialist and Mr. **Jurgis Sapijanskas**, Senior Biodiversity Specialist of the GEF Secretariat.

Introduction and Panel

Ms. **Naoko Ishii** opened the meeting by recalling the important multilateral processes that are to come to fruition in 2020. Acknowledging the challenges faced during the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25) in Madrid in December 2019, she stressed the need to promote systematic transformation from a linear and fossil fuel-based economic model to a circular and natural capital-based model. In this respect, she highlighted the GEF’s primary role in demonstrating pathways for such systematic change. She recognized the year 2020 could be a good

chance to address all environmental issues and create collaborative pathways to work together by maximizing efforts to one direction.

The Acting Executive Secretary of CBD, Ms. **Elizabeth Mrema**, presented the Convention's view on the super year 2020 and the ongoing process to develop the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. She emphasized that a wide range of views exists on the shape and substance of the post-2020 Framework but one early consensus was that it should be not just for the CBD, but also for all biodiversity-related and sister conventions. She highlighted four points to make the result in MEAs' joint efforts becoming greater than the sum of individual actions by each of these conventions:

- a) Growing the pie of GEF Trust Fund for every convention, that is raising more funds in future replenishments, through collective advocacy and action from the conventions;
- b) Revitalizing the GEF partnership by harnessing GEF agencies' ability to deliver coordinated and synergistic implementation of various MEA and by building on United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) mandate to promote coordination between different conventions;
- c) More strategic guidance from conventions and GEF replenishment programming, including by improving their consistency over time and considering longer timelines as currently discussed for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;
- d) Focusing on national implementation and pursuing GEF's effort to ensure synergies across conventions at the national level as well.

Ms. **Rossana Silva-Repetto**, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, emphasized that 2020 was an opportunity for all MEAs. She stressed that not only a joint vision was needed but also concrete actions framed within the context of 2030 Agenda and internationally agreed goals and targets, with a view to guide and bring together commitments from all sectors and stakeholders. She highlighted that synergies can be derived from: joint programming, such as the Plastic Waste Partnership under the Basel Convention; UNEP cross-cutting programmes, such as the Global Partnership on Marine Litter or the 5th Montevideo Programme; coordination among national MEA focal points; multi-stakeholder platforms, like the Global Mercury Partnership; and, finally, the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). She underlined that Illegal trade was a topic that cuts across many MEAs, from wildlife to chemicals, and could be an area of further collaboration. She further outlined the following important avenues for enhancing policy coherence, coordination and cooperation: targets, knowledge, implementation, infrastructure, resources, awareness, capacity-building, and leadership.

Reflecting on these introductory remarks, Ms. **Naoko Ishii** concurred with the need for leadership to break sectoral silos and highlighted the call for increased funding in future replenishments and an even more strategic approach to their use.

Mr. **Jurgis Sapijanskas** of the GEF Secretariat gave an overview of the 2020 super year's milestones under the climate change, chemicals and waste, ocean and biodiversity international regimes ([see timeline](#)). He stressed the challenge of creating a coherent political momentum throughout 2020 to give rise to outcomes that are successful under each individual regime but also mutually supportive.

Mr. **Basile van Havre**, co-chair of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group (OEWG) on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, shared the overarching principles, external process from partners

and the past and up-coming negotiation schedule for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (see [presentation](#)) The ambition was to design a Framework for all, engaging not only governments but also multilateral institutions, indigenous people and local communities, civil society, business and NGOs for more inclusive participation. He also shared the proposed theory of change for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which is expected to link all environmental conventions with common goals and be more integrated at national levels. The first public draft was to be released on January 13th in all UN languages.

Mr. **Franck Moser**, Programme Officer of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions seconded Ms. Rossana Silva-Repetto in pointing plastics, notably the Plastic Waste Partnership, as a good topic for collaboration and UNEA as a good platform to foster coordination. The Basel Convention would continue discussion on plastic waste in 2020 and try to bring people and actions into practice. He reported on the results of the 8th COP of the Stockholm convention, which notably highlighted the links between chemicals and waste and food security.

Interactive discussion

A representative from the Netherlands reemphasized the importance of cooperation among MEAs and of avoiding overlaps and cacophony in the messages emerging from the different conventions and players. He underscored the risks of what appeared an overloaded agenda in 2020 and, referring to the Global Pact for Environment and to plastics, called for a focus on action rather than on the development of new conventions. Mr. van Havre conveyed the message that the first OEWG expressed a clear need for more integrated solutions, for instance nature-based solutions, to achieve climate change and other goals. He also agreed that action was urgently needed, but action and negotiation of new frameworks were not mutually exclusive. Mr. Moser recommended learning from discussions and implementation of other MEAs could help foster further cooperation. The Basel and Rotterdam Conventions, which do not count with a financial mechanism like the GEF, have been working with the Stockholm Convention on funding for POPs control and reduction which also generate co-benefits for their goals and targets. The Stockholm Convention was also working on synergies between POPs management and climate action.

A representative from the African Development Bank indicated it was contemplating the development of a new instrument to help countries access GEF funding and contribute to a range of MEAs.

A representative from Ecuador inquired about the private sector engagement strategy from conventions and asked for guidance on how to articulate national strategies with the new frameworks to be adopted in 2020. Ms. Mrema recalled the launch of the “Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People” at CBD COP14 and, together with Mr. van Havre, emphasized the role of non-state stakeholders in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Mr. van Havre hoped to see more than State representatives on the podium for the adoption of the Framework at COP15. Ms. Silva-Repetto also agreed that private sector engagement in MEAs is critical, especially for the implementation of the two annexes of the Minamata Convention banning manufacturing and imported products containing mercury. The Global Mercury Partnership was another good example of private sector engagement related to the Minamata Convention.

Ms. Chizuru Aoki of the GEF Secretariat asked all MEA participants how the GEF could help the MEAs, and how the MEAs could help the GEF to help them deliver on the 2020 super year promise. Ms. Mrema

emphasized a Framework remained a mere document unless it was implemented. She called on the GEF Secretariat and GEF agencies to enable a swift implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and avoid delays between adoption next October and action on the ground. Too much time was lost in the translation of the 2011-2020 strategic plan for biodiversity into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Mr. Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programs of the GEF Secretariat pointed out that CBD COP 15 will be the last COP to inform the GEF-8 Replenishment. The GEF Secretariat was to actively engage in the discussions on resource mobilization for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which will start with a dedicated workshop in January 2020 and will directly contribute to shaping GEF-8. The January workshop on resource mobilization was indeed important according to Mr. Van Havre, who noted that the purpose was to mobilize funding from all sources. The post-2020 process would also be informed by a parallel evaluation of the financial needs, of the cost of ambition and would set up tools and models to meet these needs. Mr. Moser further invited the GEF Secretariat to produce strong needs assessments. As it was done for the development of GEF-7, he also called for meetings with technical advisories from MEAs to prepare GEF-8. Ms. Silva-Repetto invited the GEF to organize more frequent MEA dialogues and called on MEA Secretariats to help convening these as well. Such dialogues would greatly help GEF replenishment discussion.

Conclusion

Mr. **Gustavo Fonseca**, Director of Programs of the GEF Secretariat, thanked the participants for their active participation. He stressed the challenge of coordinating the many processes and meetings that will unfold in 2020. The GEF was to pursue its engagement with MEAs and promotion of synergies to the best of its mandate and capacities. The discussion on the 2020 super year was to continue during the Council and next year.