



CEB High-Level Committee on Programmes

CEB/2014/4

Annex III

HLCP Working Group on Climate Change 2014-2015 Work Programme

I - Background

1. Several major interrelated policy processes on climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development are expected to culminate in agreements in 2015. These include a legally-binding climate treaty under UNFCCC, the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and a universally-agreed global development agenda, reflected in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. A key challenge for Member States over the next two years is to reach agreements that reconcile two interrelated objectives: to advance development in a way that decouples growth from emissions and makes societies more resilient; and to take the bold climate actions needed to safeguard for future generations a living planet which allows for dignity and prosperity for all.
3. Concerted and ambitious action at all levels is needed to achieve these objectives. The science is unequivocal that current consumption and production patterns will result in levels of global warming that would undermine all development efforts. Still, addressing climate change continues to rank low among citizens' and decision makers' priorities, and is often seen as incompatible with their development aspirations.
4. The years 2014 and 2015 will be critical for overcoming any perceived dichotomy between climate action and development. The UN system has a crucial role to play in supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve an ambitious climate agreement and a "climate-smart" sustainable development agenda, and in building confidence that both are doable and desirable.
5. The HLCP Working Group on Climate Change, under the CEB, provides a unique platform for bringing together a decentralized, diverse UN system to speak with one voice and fashion an important joint contribution to the climate and development agenda. This document outlines the Work Programme of the Working Group for 2014 and 2015 and suggests a way forward beyond 2015.

II - Objectives of the Group and the 2014-2015 Work Programme:

6. Throughout 2014 and 2015, a number of inter-governmental meetings will be held to build support for global climate and sustainable development agreements in 2015. In relation to the climate agenda, key 2014 events include the Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2014; the Secretary-General's Climate Summit on 23 September 2014; and the UNFCCC COP-20 in December 2014 in Lima, Peru. Intergovernmental consultations on a post-2015 development agenda have already commenced and are expected to accelerate during the 69th session of the General Assembly. There are in addition a number of other relevant

processes and events that provide a platform for highlighting climate-related issues in the context of sustainable development.¹

7. All of these events will allow the Working Group to bring to bear the UN system's diverse operational, technical and normative support to climate action in a coherent and coordinated manner, demonstrate the system's ability to effectively support Member States at this critical moment, and help ensure a convergence of the climate and sustainable development agendas.
8. Through this Work Programme, the Working Group seeks to effectively mobilize and communicate the collective climate-related knowledge and services offered by the UN system **in order to achieve the ultimate objectives of generating momentum for an ambitious climate agreement and fostering sustained climate action on the ground.**

III - Overview of the 2014 – 2015 Work Programme:

9. In 2014 and 2015, the Working Group seeks to achieve the objectives of generating momentum for an ambitious climate agreement and fostering sustained climate action on the ground through the following activities:
 - **Strengthening joint communication to generate support for climate action**
(focusing on the need for an ambitious climate agreement and the development benefits of climate action; targeting Member States)
 - Joint messages on climate change and sustainable development
 - A joint publication for the Climate Summit and COP-20
 - Building broad support for a climate agreement
 - Supporting the Secretary-General's Climate Summit
 - **Making the UN system's support for climate action more accessible**
 - Streamlined UN presence at COP
 - List of UN system reports and publications shared through a central portal
 - Directory of UN system services in support of climate action
 - Strengthened collaboration with UNDG to support UNCTs
 - **Informing the formulation of climate-sensitive SDGs**
 - **Identifying strategic issues and priorities for system-wide action on climate change**
 - **Ensuring fitness for purpose**
 - Drafting TORs for the Working Group
 - Drafting a proposal for a UN system-wide climate change strategy
 - Reviewing the CEB Climate Change Action Framework

¹ These include thematic and regional conferences such as the Fifth Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation, to be held from 1 to 3 June 2014 in Bonn, Germany; the First Global Conference on Health and Climate Change, to be held 27 to 29 August 2014 in Geneva at WHO Headquarters; the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa; several thematic conferences as part of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 Review; and the Third World Conference on DRR in 2015 in Japan. This list is not exhaustive and could be completed by members of the Working Group and developed into a calendar of events.

HLCP Working Group on Climate Change
2014-2015 Work Programme:

A. Strengthening joint communication to generate support for climate action

Political will for a global agreement on climate change is generated at the national level. Countries and communities have to translate global agreements into climate action on the ground. To this end, governments, citizens and business need to understand the socio-economic value of climate action, as well as the risk and cost of inaction, i.e. that national, personal or corporate interests cannot be successfully pursued if climate change is not addressed. While many inspiring examples of climate action exist throughout the world, more attention needs to be given to climate change at country level.

Strengthening the UN system's ability, including at the country level, to build confidence in Member States that climate action and socio-economic interests can indeed be achieved in conjunction, and in fact be mutually supportive, is critical for creating the political will required for an ambitious climate agreement and a sustainable development agenda that supports climate action. The UN system also has an important role in helping governments understand and manage the opportunities and challenges related to climate action, as well as the costs of action versus the costs of inaction.

To this end, the Working Group will develop joint communication products that effectively articulate the climate change urgency – in terms of mitigation and adaptation – as well as the development co-benefits that stem from low carbon and climate resilient growth. This effort will support the objective of encouraging an ambitious climate agreement in 2015 and helping ensure that climate change is considered by all stakeholders and in all processes and decisions related to development – not as a competing issue, but as an integral part of all aspects of development. The development of a joint narrative will entail the following, interrelated deliverables:

- **Joint messages on climate change and sustainable development**

In collaboration with the Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team (CCST) and the UN Communication Group (UNCG), the Working Group will draft strategic and visionary UN system-wide messages on climate change and sustainable development in early 2014. These messages will be action- and solutions-oriented and structured around key changes that need to happen in different areas of development and/or consumption and production that matter to people and governments (potentially structured around emerging SDGs) in order to ensure that sustainable development objectives are both achievable and supportive of climate action. These messages will guide the UN System's organizations' individual communication strategies on climate change and related matters, in order to ensure system-wide coherence. They will also serve as the foundation of other deliverables.

- **A joint publication for the Secretary-General's Climate Summit and COP-20**

This publication, comprising about 20 pages, will be aligned with the Secretary-General's communication strategy, which seeks to focus the climate change narrative towards solution-focused messages and to highlight the economic dimension of climate change action. The publication will encourage an ambitious climate agreement, and demonstrate that the actions needed to address climate change through this agreement will also promote sustainable development. It will outline why certain changes need to happen (stressing the socio-economic benefits of such changes); how they can happen (demonstrating solutions and success stories, and describing the supportive role of the UN system, including joint initiatives); and what the cost of these actions are – compared to the cost of inaction. It will be published in time for the Climate Summit in September 2014, and will be distributed also at COP-20 as well as other subsequent thematic or regional events. Information contained in this publication can also be shared through social media and various web-based platforms.

- **Building broad support for a climate agreement**

In order to generate political will for a climate agreement among a broad range of stakeholders, including ministries of finance and key economic sectors, in addition to informing the respective constituencies of UN system organizations, the Working Group will explore the possibility of organizing technical briefings for Member States at major UN locations (New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna etc.), and in the context of major “non-climate” thematic or regional events, focused on the socio-economic benefits of climate action.

The Working Group will also explore with UNDG the possibility of strengthening UN country teams’ ability to provide assistance to Member States in addressing climate change and in raising their ambition. This may include the development of “country briefs” ahead of the Summit and COP-20, in close collaboration with UNDG and CCST. Those country briefs could highlight ongoing climate actions and their socio-economic impacts; identify further needs and opportunities for climate action; and estimate the costs of various options for closing the emission’s gap and the adaptation deficit – and their benefits, also in terms of development.

To support Parties at the COP, joint issue briefs and technical briefings on issues of relevance to the negotiations may be organized under the leadership of one or more technical UN agencies and in consultation with UNFCCC.²

- **Supporting the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit**

The activities of the Working Group in 2014 are aligned with the objectives and key messages of the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit and are aimed at supporting Member States ahead of the Summit in making informed, ambitious commitments. The Working Group will continue exploring with the Secretary-General’s Climate Change Support Team how the UN System could further support the Summit.

B. Improving access to the UN system’s climate-related knowledge and expertise

The Working Group will seek to make the broad range of the UN system’s climate-related knowledge and services more accessible to the negotiating Parties, governments and UN staff, by coordinating and streamlining its support to the negotiations and presence at the COP; by compiling all relevant UN system publications and resources as well as services offered by the system to countries and UN staff in one (virtual) space; and by engaging more closely with UNDG to identify the needs of UN country teams in terms of guidance material.

- **Streamlining UN presence at the COP**

Since its establishment, the Working Group has been instrumental in coordinating the engagement of the UN system in UNFCCC COP meetings. The coordination of UN system side events and the organization of a CEB high-level event will continue to be an important area of work for the Group in 2014 and 2015.

In addition, to facilitate Parties’ interaction with the UN system, and to increase the system’s visibility, the Working Group will explore in 2014, in consultation with UNFCCC, the possibility of a further streamlined UN presence at the COP through common visuals, co-located booths, and a dedicated space for side events and briefings (“UN Day”, “UN Pavilion”).

- **Compiling a list of UN system publications on climate change**

In order to more effectively communicate the climate-related knowledge and expertise of the UN system, the Working Group will compile, maintain and regularly update a list of relevant UN system reports and publications. This will be made available to UNFCCC, Member States and the UN system in digital form and on-line.

² For example, the Working Group’s Climate Knowledge sub-group could provide regular briefings to SBSTA; likewise, the Technology Transfer sub-group could provide support to the work of the Technology Executive Committee.

- **Producing a directory of UN system services in support of climate action**

In 2015, the Working Group will compile a directory of UN system services in support of climate action, including programming tools and guidance, such as the UNDG guidance notes; analysis and assessments that can inform climate action; as well as information on UN system programmes and pilot projects that could be expanded to other countries (capitalizing also on the inputs provided by the UN system to CCST's mapping exercise for the Climate Summit). Such a directory is intended to help Member States as well as UN staff at country level to better understand opportunities and requirements related to the implementation of mechanisms established under UNFCCC, including climate finance, technology transfer, etc.

- **Strengthening collaboration with UNDG on climate-related matters**

The Working Group will explore with UNDG how the Group could inform and foster climate action at the country level – both in support of Member States and of UN staff and their local partners. This may include the provision of country-specific information – serving as a “knowledge broker”; readiness to provide technical guidance to inform programming at the country level; and exploring how climate change can be addressed most effectively as part of sustainable development in future UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), given that the UN system will strategically reposition itself in a number of countries by formulating new UNDAFs over the next three to four years.³

C. Informing the formulation of “climate-sensitive” sustainable development goals⁴

To help inform the intergovernmental consultations on a post-2015 development agenda, the Working Group, under the guidance and leadership of DESA, will look at the emerging SDG's through a climate lens and formulate suggestions to factor climate change systematically into all relevant goals and targets. This exercise will be closely related to the joint messages on climate change and development and could be done in two ways: analysing the potential climate impact of proposed SDGs, and analysing how climate change could undermine proposed SDGs. The Working Group may also consider using this paper to provide inputs to several reports of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda.⁵

D. Identifying emerging issues that call for joint initiatives

One of the agreed areas of work of the Group has been the generating of ideas and the promotion of joint programming of interagency climate initiatives (as an “incubator of ideas”). Working Group members will continue this exchange and systematically share information on innovative programmatic approaches, best practices and lessons learned and further explore opportunities for broadening partnerships and collaboration. In addition, the Group will aim for playing a greater role in using the collective knowledge of the Group to identify research and programming needs that could be addressed by joint UN initiatives, or to identify issues that should be brought to the attention of HLCP and CEB. The Group could also serve as the “antenna” of the UN system by listening to the advice and concerns of Member States, experts and civil society in relation to climate change. Through closer engagement with UNDG, the Group would be in a better position to hear more on the

³ UNDAF/ISF ROLL-OUTS 2013 -2016:

<http://www.undg.org/docs/13088/UNDAF%20ROLL%20List%20for%20Publishing%202013-2016%20as%20of%2019%20August%202013.pdf>

⁴ A similar exercise has been undertaken by the UN Inter-Agency Group (IAG) on Disaster Risk Reduction, which developed “Common Messages for Risk Sensitive SDGs”.

⁵ This includes his *Synthesis report*, which will bring together the full range of inputs to the discussions on a post-2015 development agenda, including the report of the OWG and that of the expert committee on a financing strategy for sustainable development. The report provides an important opening for the UN system to plant its final recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda at a critical juncture. It is envisaged that the report benefits from the expertise across the UN system by drawing on dedicated coordination mechanisms. Another option is the *Secretary-General's annual report*, which will report on progress in the implementation of the MDGs and make recommendations for further steps to advance the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

needs of UN country teams for policy and programming guidance, assist UNDG in providing such guidance as needed.

E. Ensuring fitness for purpose

- **Drafting Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Working Group**

In order to support the implementation of this Work Programme, once endorsed by HLCP, the Working Group will draft TORs that outline the mandate, objectives and working modalities for the Group, including responsibilities of the Chair and Members of the Group.

- **Drafting a proposal for a post-2015 UN System climate change strategy**

Looking beyond the UN system's support to an ambitious climate agreement in 2015, the pressure for climate action will significantly increase over the coming years. As the effects of climate change are felt worldwide, impacting also every UN system organization, there is growing need for a common and shared strategy on collective UN system support to Member States in implementing climate action.

To initiate the discussion on this issue, the Working Group will draft a proposal for a longer-term strategy on strengthening collective, UN system-wide efforts to support Member States in the implementation of a climate agreement and a low-carbon and climate resilient post-2015 development framework. The proposal would address questions such as: how the UN system will contribute to the implementation of UNFCCC agreements; how it will scale up its support to Member States for climate action on the ground; what role the UN system is in ensuring that the sustainable development agenda as well as other processes effectively pave the way towards the implementation of the climate agreement in 2020; and whether the adoption of a universal development agenda may imply a changing role of the UN system vis-à-vis developed and middle income countries in their efforts to address climate change. The Working Group will also review how the UN system addresses climate change at the institutional, management, policy and operational levels. In this regard, it will be important to ensure coherence between policies and programmes (HLCP) and the operational/country level (UNDG) in the area of climate change.

- **Reviewing the CEB Climate Change Action Framework**

Within this context, the Working Group will also review and update, as appropriate, the CEB Climate Change Action Framework, developed in 2008. Six years on, while some focus areas of the framework may continue be relevant, others may benefit from a revision, and new ones may have to be added. There have also been considerable developments within current focus areas, often towards taking a more holistic approach, such as the shift towards a landscapes approach within the agriculture and forestry communities. It may also be pertinent to align the climate change framework with the emerging post-2015 agenda, for example by addressing nexus areas such as climate and energy, or by addressing different aspects of sustainable consumption and production.
