



**FBOMS**  
Fórum Brasileiro de ONGs  
e Movimentos Sociais  
para o Meio Ambiente  
e o Desenvolvimento



**PANEL CALL:  
CIVIL SOCIETY VIEWS FOR A STRENGTHENED UN SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENT  
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**First Update, 15 January 2007**

**Background**

On 9 November 2006, the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, Environment released its report *Delivering As One*. In July 2006, Stakeholder Forum (SF), the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development (FBOMS) and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN NGLS) organized the only civil society discussion with the Panel on sustainable development. Building on this work, the coalition initiated a Call for Input on 9 November 2007 to gather submissions from civil society. The aim of the Call for Input is to develop a civil society response to the Panel's recommendations in the area of environment and sustainable development, for consideration by UN Member States and other actors.

To date, we have received a number of submissions from organizations all over the world. We would like to thank those organizations who have sent in their inputs. We would also like to encourage other organizations that have not yet submitted inputs to please do so. The Panel's report and the upcoming discussions of the recommendations in the General Assembly provide a crucial focal point for civil society to focus its push for much needed reform of the UN's environment and sustainable development architecture.

For organisations who have not yet submitted input, we are extending the deadline to 22 January 2007. Please send your submissions to [jpeer@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:jpeer@stakeholderforum.org) by this date. Below are some questions to help guide reflections on the High Level Panel's recommendations in the area of environment and sustainable development. While the focus of the Call for Input is on these recommendations, organizations are welcome to make submissions regarding any of the panel's recommendations.

**Questions for consideration**

A submission on the High Level Panel could (but is not limited to) consider one or some of the following questions:

**Panel Report**

- Do the recommendations on environment do enough to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development?
- And would the recommendations on sustainable development yield an institutional framework capable of elevating the status of SD in the UN?

- Given the implementation gap that exists concerning environmental commitments, should UNEP be playing more of a catalytic role here? Or are we happy with such a separation of roles between UNEP and UNDP?
- What role should UNEP have at the country level?

### **Implementation at the country level**

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of international actors in the area of environment (UNEP, UNDP, other UN entities, the World Bank, the MEAs) in supporting environmental objectives in your country your area of activity in terms of scientific knowledge, normative/policy advice and operational support?
- According to your national priorities, what activities should be developed in your country regarding scientific knowledge, normative/policy advice and operational support?
- How can interaction between your country and the different entities as well as among these entities be improved at country level?
- What is your assessment of the advancement of the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and other elements of the Cartagena outcome and how can implementation be improved?
- How can countries be better supported in their effort to integrate environmental objectives into development planning and operations as well as in economic policies? How can environmental objectives be better addressed in situations of natural disasters and complex emergencies?

### Enhancement of global governance: recommendations for the different actors at a global level

- What are your conclusions, in the light of experiences at country level, with regard to the cooperation of UNEP and UNDP, UNEP and the MEAs, MEAs among themselves, UNEP and other UN entities, UNEP and the WB?
- How can cooperation and coordination mechanisms be improved within the UN system and globally?
- Can a strengthened UNEP effectively and fully fulfill its mandate as the environmental pillar of the UN system?
- What practical measures within existing mandates could be implemented in order to enhance the effectiveness of the UN activities on environment? Are changes in mandate for the different entities necessary?

### **Funding for UNEP**

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of present funding schemes in terms of the timely availability of sufficient funds? How can improvements be achieved?

**Commission on Sustainable Development:** The CSD is widely recognized as being insufficient to its task of acting as the highest level forum within the UN for sustainable development.

- Should the CSD be reformed to focus on implementation as the Panel Report suggests? If Yes why? If no why?

- The Panel suggests moving the normative role (policy making) and shifting some of that responsibility to ECOSOC (the higher body) What do you think?
- What level in the UN should Sustainable Development be at:
  - a) General Assembly level
  - b) Economic and Social Council Level?
  - c) A Commission of the Economic and Social Council (the present level)?
  - d) Other proposals

**The Global Environment Facility:** The Panel recommends that the GEF should be strengthened as the major financial mechanism for the global environment.

- Is the GEF the right body to act as the major financial mechanism for the global environment?
- If so, what governance reforms would we like to see for such a strengthened GEF, in light of some of the criticisms surrounding the balance of power between developed and developing countries?
- And what kind of engagement with civil society should be envisioned for a larger GEF?

**The Sustainable Development Board:** The panel wants to merge the existing joint board of UNDP and UNFPA with the boards of UNICEF and WFP into one strategic body, the UN Sustainable Development Board.

- At the moment, it doesn't seem clear that there is a role for UNEP within the SD Board.
- How should the terms of reference be drafted to ensure that environmental issues are adequately reflected?

#### **Partnerships**

- What is your view of present partnerships to implement Johannesburg?
- What could be done to improve the likelihood of partnerships:
  - a) Being successful?
  - b) Being replicated?

## The Panel's recommendations on Environment and Sustainable Development

As we all know, environment was addressed as one of the core elements of the report, while sustainable development was addressed as a cross-cutting issue, along with gender equality and human rights

On **environment**, the Panel recognizes the following problems:

- The inadequacy of the current system is a result of having outgrown its original design.
- At the national level, little progress made in integrating the environment in development strategies at the country level, or in implementing internationally agreed goals
- Fragmented institutional structures do not offer an operational framework to address global issues, including water and energy
- Developing countries are unable to cope with the extensive reporting and participation requirements of the current multilateral environmental structure, which has depleted expertise and resources for implementation

The Panel recommends:

- IEG should be strengthened and more coherent in order to improve effectiveness and targeted action of environmental activities in the UN system.
- Upgrading UNEP with a renewed mandate and improved funding
- An upgraded UNEP should have real authority as the “environment policy pillar” of the UN system
  - backed by normative and analytical capacity and
  - with broad responsibility to review progress towards improving the global environment
    - UNEP’s technical and scientific capacity should be strengthened as the early-warning mechanism of the int’l community
    - Capacity should be built to promote the implementation of international commitments
    - UNEP should take the lead in assisting countries to quantify enviro costs and benefits and incorporate in policy making
- UN agencies, programmes and funds with responsibilities in the area of the environment should cooperate more effectively on a thematic basis and through partnerships with a dedicated agency at the centre
  - Strengthened Environmental Management Group
- Efficiencies and substantive coordination should be pursued by diverse treaty bodies to support effective implementation of major multilateral environmental agreements
- The GEF should be strengthened as the major financial mechanism for the global environment
- The SG should commission an independent and authoritative assessment of the current UN system of ieg

On **sustainable development**, the Panel recognizes the following problems:

- The international community is still falling short in implementation and needs to improve the institutional framework for sustainable development
- The CSD (UN’s highest level forum on SD) has not been effective in ensuring that the promise of integrating environment and development is fulfilled.

The recommendations address the need to elevate the status of sustainable development in the UN institutional architecture and in country activities

The Panel recommends:

- A stronger partnership between UNEP (normative) and UNDP (operational) should build on their complementarities.
- Sustainable Development should be mainstreamed into the work of the UN's ECOSOC
  - A “sustainable development” segment should be instituted in the UN's Economic and Social Council
  - The reform of the CSD should be further pursued by focusing on implementation, including approaches for integrating environmental and social concerns into economic planning, and for identifying and sharing best practices