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Funding base of the United Nations Environment Programme

Concept note for the fifth structured funding dialogue

The present document contains the concept note prepared by the Secretariat for the funding dialogue under agenda item 8, entitled "*Funding base of the United Nations Environment Programme*", during the 13th annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

The Committee is invited to take note of the views presented by the panel, engage in the discussion, as well as provide guidance on collective actions that the Secretariat and Member States should take to secure the sources the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) needs to maximize the delivery of its programme of work with impact.

1. Background

The *fifth structured funding dialogue* between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (the Committee) is taking place amid an increasingly complex environmental, political and financial landscape. Geopolitical tensions, fiscal pressures, shifting national priorities and ongoing conflicts continue to place pressure on the environment and multilateral cooperation. These challenges underscore the need for strong collective environmental action and a well-resourced UNEP. And today, more than ever, UNEP represents a strong value add that responds to Member States' needs for greater security, stability and ensuring that the world environment situation is kept under review, especially in the context of an increasingly complex world marked by conflict, indebtedness and instability.

The Environment Fund, UNEP's core fund, provides the flexible resources that enable the organization to convene Member States and other partners, advance science-based solutions, address emerging issues and support environmental multilateralism and collective action globally. A strong, predictable and adequately funded Environment Fund is essential to UNEP's ability to deliver on its mandate, as guided by the Medium-Term Strategy (2026-2029) and its Programmes of Work and budget approved by Member States while being responsive to emerging issues and Member States' needs. It also underpins transparency, accountability and effective oversight by Member States.

The fifth structured funding dialogue builds on the recommendations and guidance provided by Member States through previous funding dialogues and the progress made by the Secretariat in implementing them. The key issues raised and actioned throughout the dialogues are summarised here.

- Since the [first structured funding dialogue](#), and its [recommendations](#)¹, Member States have consistently reaffirmed the **importance of the Environment Fund as the cornerstone of UNEP financing** and urged Member States that do not yet contribute to the Environment Fund to do so, **recognising the shared responsibility for funding UNEP's mandate**.
- In response to Member States emphasizing the **importance of broadening UNEP's funding base and reducing reliance on a limited number of contributors**², the Secretariat has continued to organize dialogues and expand its outreach to Member States on funding at global, regional and national levels.
- Member States have reaffirmed that the **voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC) remains a useful tool** and requested the Secretariat to continue explaining its rationale especially to Member States that do not yet contribute their full share in accordance with the VISC. The Secretariat has taken action accordingly.
- The Secretariat continues to **strengthen the narrative on UNEP as a "partner of choice"** and **demonstrate the results achieved** from core funding including through strengthened storytelling, publications and reports, as recommended and commended by the Member States, e.g. during the third structured funding dialogue³.

¹ See [Annual Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, Ninth Meeting, Final Chair's Summary, paras. 37–39](#).

² See [outcome of the second structured funding dialogue](#) paragraphs 56-58 and related [concept note](#) and [presentation](#).

³ See [Outcome of the third structured funding dialogue](#) paragraphs 45-47 and [related concept note](#) and [presentation](#).

Building on these recommendations, the fourth structured funding dialogue, focused on the leveraging power of the Environment Fund. Through case studies such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury - [VIDEO](#) and a Planet Gold Explainer 2020 - [VIDEO](#), the Secretariat demonstrated how flexible **core funding enables UNEP to translate science into policy, action and impact**, while catalysing resources and partnerships for larger-scale interventions.

- Member States have requested for and commended the Secretariat's efforts to **increase the visibility and appreciation of contributors of core funding**, including those that [provide their full share in accordance with the VISC, provide multiyear funding, and/or are among UNEP's top contributor](#)⁴.
- The Secretariat has prepared an **updated Resource Mobilization Strategy for 2026-2029** in consultation with the members of the Committee, which explains how UNEP is positioning itself to the new funding realities, including widening its funding base further.
- Finally, Member States have welcomed the record number of contributors in 2024, which was subsequently surpassed in 2025, and encouraged UNEP to continue its outreach to broaden participation, thereby strengthening the predictability and sustainability of core funding, while noting the heavy reliance on the top 15 funding partners.

The actions taken by UNEP Secretariat and Member States to strengthen UNEP's funding have clearly yielded positive results, yet the organization continues to face challenges in securing sufficient core funding from a broad base of contributors. This fact and the rapidly changing global funding landscape, call for a deeper re-examination of the factors that motivate or challenge Member States to contribute to UNEP and its core fund, the Environment Fund. It also calls for reflection on whether the direction of action built on previous recommendations remains relevant in the current global financial and political landscape, and whether new opportunities to strengthen core funding can be found. The session will provide Member States with an opportunity to reflect on these questions and discuss the collective action needed to secure stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP from a wider base of funding partners.

2. Proposed programme

a. Panel discussion

The Secretariat will convene a panel discussion to explore the factors that motivate or challenge Member States to honour their commitments to provide secure, stable, adequate and increased funding for UNEP, in particular to the Environment Fund, UNEP's financial backbone. The discussion will be moderated by the Executive Director joined by Member States representatives as panellists, followed by questions and answers to the panel by the members of the Committee and other stakeholders.

b. Exchange of views and open discussion by the Committee

Following the panel discussion, the members of the Committee and other stakeholders will be invited to raise any further issues and to provide guidance on possible joint actions that the Secretariat and Member States could take to secure stable, adequate and increased funding for UNEP, including by strengthening predictability, flexibility and broader participation in support of the Environment Fund.

⁴ See [Outcome of the fourth structured funding dialogue](#), paragraphs 28-30.