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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Agenda item 5: Development of a medium-term strategy for the period 2026-2029 and a draft programme of work and budget for the period 2026-2027

This note, entitled *"Synthesis Report - Informal Dialogue Session with Major Groups, Private Sectors and Multilateral Environmental Agreement Secretariat on the Development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029"* has been developed by the Secretariat to inform Member States and stakeholders on key messages gathered from informal dialogues with Major Groups, the Private Sector, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and the Children and Youth Major Groups (CYMG) regarding the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for the period 2026-2029.

Synthesis Report

Informal Dialogue Session with Major Groups, Private Sectors and Multilateral Environmental Agreement Secretariat on the Development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029

Introduction

This report synthesizes key messages gathered from informal dialogues with Major Groups, the Private Sector, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and the Children and Youth Major Groups (CYMG) regarding the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2026-2029. The dialogues were held as follows: the Major Groups dialogue on 26 November 2024, the Private Sector dialogue on 28 November 2024, the MEA dialogue on 11 December 2024, and the Children and Youth Major Groups (CYMG) dialogue on 23 January 2025.

I. Key messages from the "informal dialogue" with the Major Groups and stakeholders, 26 November 2024

Key Message 1: The MTS should incorporate lessons learned, integrate a robust science-policy interface, promote data transparency, and establish impartial monitoring systems to ensure it is evidence-based, inclusive, and action-oriented while reflecting the visions of major groups and stakeholders.

- Integrate insights from previous strategies, UNEP's evaluation reports, and global best practices to improve its outcomes and enhance effectiveness.
- A robust science-policy interface should guide decision-making on the development of the MTS, ensuring that the MTS is inclusive, evidence-based, and action-oriented.
- Establish neutral and impartial systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its initiatives, particularly in addressing environmental challenges.
- Promoting data transparency and open access to government and corporate data will help build trust and create a shared foundation for decision-making.

Key Message 2: The MTS should emphasize inclusivity and multi-stakeholder collaboration, ensuring equitable representation of marginalized groups, grassroots contributions, and continuous engagement processes to build broad stakeholder ownership and alignment with UNEP's objectives.

- Ensure equitable representation of all stakeholders in the new MTS, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities.
- Foster inclusive, coherent, and meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement processes and increase MGS involvement in decision-making and implementation through continuous and regular consultations.
- Actively engage local organizations, communities, citizens, Indigenous Peoples, and faith-based groups to integrate grassroots contributions to implementing the MTS.

Key Message 3: The MTS should emphasize capacity building, education, and intra/intergenerational equity by integrating modern and traditional knowledge systems, including Indigenous perspectives while leveraging digital tools and platforms.

- Incorporate intra/intergenerational equity, ensuring that the needs of current and future generations are considered alongside UNEP priorities.
- Align policies with scientific insights and traditional knowledge to bridge gaps between science, policy, and diverse knowledge systems.
- Focus on capacity building, environmental education, and the clear communication of critical concepts, such as the crisis of climate change; the crisis of land degradation and nature loss; and the crisis of pollution and waste.
- Leverage the GEO report and related platforms to address critical knowledge gaps and facilitate the integration of diverse knowledge systems in policymaking.

Key Message 4: The MTS implementation should consider diversified and inclusive funding mechanisms that foster trust, collaboration, and effective resource mobilization.

- Consider expanding the role of the private sector beyond financing to include the co-implementation of resolutions and programs, while addressing the trust deficit between the private sector and NGOs.
- Secure a defined budget, mobilize private sector funding, and integrate financial literacy training into Major Group consultations to empower stakeholders.
- Leverage UNEP's convening power to mobilize funding where it is most needed while mitigating risks of greenwashing and reinforcing stakeholder confidence.

Key Message 5: The MTS should address cross-cutting issues like poverty eradication while tackling emerging challenges like new pollutants, supported by multi-stakeholder dialogues and rapid response mechanisms.

- Consider poverty eradication and reducing inequalities as core principles for UNEP.
- Integrate targeted measures for vulnerable groups to address the disproportionate impact of climate change, chemical pollution, and waste.
- Prioritize cross-cutting issues such as land degradation, droughts, water, agriculture, and invasive species while showcasing success stories like community-led adaptation.
- Tackle emerging challenges, such as new pollutants, solar radiation management, and environmental impacts of conflicts, through robust multi-stakeholder dialogues and enhance UNEP's rapid response capacity.

II. Key messages from the "informal dialogues" with the Private Sector, 28 November 2024

Key Message 1 - The MTS should address upcoming environmental legislation, like carbon taxes, by strengthening science-policy interfaces, aligning policies, and offering capacity-building programs to help businesses manage global supply chains, fragmented regulations, and traceability demands.

- Support the private sector in adapting to carbon taxation by providing technical guidance, promoting best practices, and facilitating engagement with high-carbon sectors.
- Strengthen science-policy interfaces, providing businesses with actionable guidance on compliance and adaptation.
- Assist countries in aligning national policies with global frameworks to create regulatory consistency for businesses.
- Promote capacity-building programs for circular economy adoption in regions facing significant barriers such as fragmented regulations and traceability demands.

Key Message 2: The MTS should promote sustainable practices and climate risk strategies to help businesses address raw material shortages and enhance resilience to climate change impacts.

- Encourage businesses to enhance resilience by adopting sustainable practices, protecting ecosystems, and investing in alternative materials and renewable energy sources.
- Support the development of early warning systems and climate risk assessments for vulnerable industries.
- Foster partnerships to invest in climate-resilient technologies and practices, particularly for resource-dependent sectors like agriculture.

Key Message 3 – The MTS should promote global cooperation and advocate for the integration of climate, nature, and pollution considerations into business strategies and government policies to address the challenges of a fragmented regulatory landscape.

- Promote harmonized regulations via multilateral cooperation and policy advocacy.
- Support Member States in aligning their national policies with frameworks like the Paris Agreement and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Facilitate dialogues integrating climate, nature, and pollution objectives into global, regional, and national strategies.

Key Message 4 - The MTS should promote innovative financing models to address the complex capital-intensive nature of environmental challenges.

- Partner with the private sector and financial institutions to develop innovative financial tools that drive sustainable investments.
- Build the capacity of private sector and financial institutions to manage climate, nature, and pollution action.
- Support governments in incentivizing sustainable investments through favorable policies, tax breaks, subsidies, and other incentives that accelerate the development of green technologies.

Key Message 5 - The MTS should emphasize the importance of biodiversity and pollution as critical focus areas for businesses, encouraging them to integrate conservation and pollution reduction strategies into their operations and decision-making processes.

- Provide guidance on biodiversity metrics and pollution reduction targets tailored to various industries.
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder collaborations to share best practices and scale successful initiatives to drive collective impact.
- Highlight the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity conservation in global policy dialogues to strengthen commitments by businesses to sustainable practices.

Key Message 6 - The MTS should address the challenge of scaling sustainability in emerging markets with tailored through targeted skill development, technical support, and policy alignment.

- Offer technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives to equip SMEs with tools to implement effective sustainability measures.
- Collaborate with governments to tailor local regulatory frameworks that incentivize sustainability for small businesses.
- Promote knowledge-sharing platforms that connect SMEs with larger corporations for resource and expertise support.

Key Message 7 – The MTS should support businesses in effectively balancing consumer expectations with the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring they remain competitive while advancing sustainability and meeting global priorities.

- Promote public awareness campaigns to educate consumers on sustainable consumption.
- Encourage businesses to develop sustainable supply chains through technical expertise and policy advocacy.
- Support innovation in product design and materials to reduce environmental footprints without compromising profitability.

Key Message 8 – The MTS should emphasize UNEP's role in aligning environmental policy frameworks to drive systemic change and coordinate global environmental action.

- Act as a bridge between policy and practice, ensuring coherence across global, regional, and national initiatives.
- Leverage its convening power to align stakeholder efforts and accelerate coordinated actions.
- Focus on improving monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanisms to track progress and drive global environmental action.

III. Key message from the "Informal dialogue" with Multilateral Environmental Agreement, 11 December 2024.

Key Message 1 - The MTS should build on lessons learned and continue to be forward-looking, addressing emerging issues and promoting means for effective environmental governance while facilitating their integration or implementation under the MEAs.

- Incorporate lessons from the current and previous MTS cycles and focus on achieving tangible results.
- Facilitate industry-wide engagement across value chains to promote sustainable development and advance global commitments, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Global Framework on Chemicals, ensuring these frameworks are prioritized and integrated.
- Prioritize digital transformation and innovation, supporting MEAs in designing and utilizing digital tools, improving access to scientific data, and encouraging adoption.
- Promote investment in research and innovation to accelerate decarbonization, green economy transitions, and sustainable public-private partnerships, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Key Message 2 – The MTS should emphasize critical environmental and social issues, ensuring alignment with global UN efforts.

- Prioritize the environment-human rights nexus by advancing the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (UNGA resolution 76/300) and address inequality, injustice, and poverty through inclusive, bottom-up engagement with all stakeholders including relevant special bodies under the MEAs.
- Highlight the issue of critical and precious metals, deep-sea mining, and the global energy transition, connecting with the broader landscape of efforts by the UN system and accounting for relevant social considerations.

Key Message 3 – The MTS should promote alignment with MEA priorities, including regional priorities and recent COP decisions or outcomes, to enhance mutually responsive results.

- Strengthening the connection between regional and global MEAs, ensuring better alignment.
- Building on and supporting regional specificities while retaining a connection with the broader global environmental governance landscape.
- Clarify strategic areas across MEAs where UNEP has a comparative advantage in delivery and where the mandates of the MEAs end, which UNEP can complement.

Key Message 4 – The MTS should enhance UNEP's role in governance, partnership, and strategic focus.

- Highlight UNEP's role in promoting best governance practices that respond to a "whole of government and whole of society" approach supportive of MEA implementation.
- Reflect the relevance of land loss and desertification issues, building on recent UNCCD developments, recognizing this is already fully captured in the current MTS under the strategic objective area of nature and land loss.
- Explore new partnerships and collaborations to amplify these efforts further, including with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and other MEAs, mobilizing resources for combating desertification and promoting land restoration.

Key Message 5 - The MTS should promote cooperation and synergies among MEAs and between UNEP and the MEAs.

- Present a vision that complements the mandate of the MEAs and emphasizes enhancing synergies and cooperation efforts.
- Promote a more integrated approach to maximize synergies and effectiveness, emphasizing key shifts that ensure resources and efforts are directed where most impactful.
- The Programme of Work can also provide the framework to ensure that the work of the MEAs is meaningfully integrated into the MTS from a programmatic perspective, highlighting synergies and the transformative role of the MEAs.
- Enhance UNEP's support for MEA Parties by improving cooperation, aligning agendas, and clarifying roles to strengthen effectiveness and impact.

Key Message 6 – The MTS should strengthen UNEP's role in capacity building, resource mobilization, and policy integration.

- Provide capacity-building support to help Member States identify priority areas for synergies, implement the most effective institutional arrangements and processes for seamless collaboration and coordination, and address related gaps to promote policy coherence.
- Foster stronger collaboration between UNEP, UNEA, the MEAs, and the broader UN system agencies while enabling access to funds to support MEA implementation.
- Position UNEP as an interface to help MEAs, including regional ones, mobilize resources and access global funds, leveraging UNEA resolutions to enhance synergies and support implementation.
- Continue to facilitate the inclusion of MEAs in discussions held at key regional meetings and events, including regional ministerial fora for the environment.

IV. Key messages from the "informal dialogue" with the Children and Youth Major Groups (CYMG), 23 January 2025

Key Message 1 – The MTS should be more specific in addressing youth priorities, be inclusive, and consider the delivery model to achieve such goals.

- Incorporate more specific and concrete goals and timelines for 2029, including clear pathways for young people to contribute to change. Developing a youth action plan would help guide targeted efforts and track progress.
- Prioritize youth, with a focus on marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, individuals, Indigenous youth, and displaced people, while addressing language barriers. Emphasize the 'Reaching the Furthest Behind' narrative rather than 'Leaving No One Behind.'
- Develop a dynamic, evolving document that young people can engage with and steward to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
- Focus on core issues important to youth, including youth rights, employment in the sustainable green economy, and access to national legislative support. Strengthening UNEP's impact on the ground by engaging youth at the local community level, particularly in Africa.

Key Message 2 – UNEP should invest financially in meaningful youth engagement and capacity-building.

- Provide resources to mobilize youth programming that empowers youth to engage in environmental activities.
- Scale up investment in youth-related programmes and accommodate more budget flexibility and technological support for young people.
- Focus on strengthening capacity-building and environmental education and emerging issues for children and youth.
- Add educational transformation as an enabling sub-programme (along with digital transformation and economic and financial transformation).
- Focus on supporting and giving voice to local communities, fostering a greater understanding of the impacts of climate change, and facilitating the creation of local solutions.

Key Message 3 – The MTS should focus on how UNEP can better communicate its work to youth audiences.

- Leverage online platforms to engage youth, reaching many children and young people unaware of UNEP's work.
- Key UNEP reports should be adapted for youth audiences, including translations to all official UN languages as well as local languages, such as the GEO-6 report for youth and the Global Waste Management Outlook (GWMO) youth summary.
- Refine its narrative to emphasize how addressing the crisis of climate change; the crisis of land degradation and nature loss; and the crisis of pollution and waste protects nature and generates socioeconomic benefits, demonstrating its role in supporting sustainable livelihoods and long-term resilience.
- Maximize the role of youths as ambassadors for the environment given the prominence of social media and their key role as knowledge brokers.

Key Message 4 – The MTS should strengthen young people's access to and involvement in decision-making processes and should institutionalize youth engagement and participation.

- Ensure meaningful youth engagement throughout the decision-making process, from the design to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.
- Support Member States in leveraging youth connections for policy decisions and inclusion of youth in national programs more frequently.
- Strengthen cooperation with youth organizations and networks in key areas, ensuring efforts are region-specific and monitored through robust evaluation systems.
- Recognize the global Youth Environment Assembly in the next MTS and PoW and institutionalize CYMG's role.

Key Message 5 – The MTS should address cross-cutting and core issues as well as emerging challenges and ensure it is tailored to local needs.

- Acknowledge and address the interconnectedness of environmental issues, such as food security, agriculture, and human health.
- Consider the UN 2.0 agenda - Quintet of change: data, digital, innovation, and behavioural sciences. To capitalize on using AI and tech systems that can enable long-term solutions.
- Ensure the Pact for the Future remains an enabling framework for all priority areas of work.
- Recognize the importance of addressing land degradation, desertification, droughts, and water, tailored to the needs of specific regions and local communities.
- Eradication of poverty and inequality must be a priority in the new MTS.
- Place young researchers and people at the heart of scientific work and strengthen collaboration with the Chief Scientist Office.

Annex 1:
Number of participants per "informal dialogue."

Group	Number of participants
Major Groups	33 participants representing 9 major groups
Private Sector	19 participants representing 11 sectors
Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA)	21 participants representing 17 MEAs
Children and Youth Major Groups	35 Participants representing 15 entities