



Meeting report n. 3

Third meeting of the IBC on Environment and Climate Change

4 September 2020 (10:00-11:30, Geneva time) – MS Teams

The primary purpose of the third IBC meeting was to (a) give an update on actions undertaken since the launch of the IBC; (b) give an update on key environment and climate change processes and milestones; and (c) report on the activities of the 11 task teams.

Representatives of the following organizations, members of the IBC, were present: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNOPS, WHO and WMO, and a CCA/UNSDCF Officer from the RCO team.

The meeting was opened with welcoming statements by the three co-chairs: Ana Luiza Massot Thompson-Flores, Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe; Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE; and Bruno Pozzi, Director, UNEP Europe Office.

Bruno Pozzi, Director, UNEP Europe Office gave an update on key environment and climate change processes and events at the global and regional level.

- Besides the UN Biodiversity summit, all essential high-level conferences, including the Climate COP 26, have been postponed to 2021 but the work in 2020 remains critical for making progress on the environment and climate change;
- A full-scale in-person fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5) in early 2021 will not happen. The UNEP Governance Affairs Office is working on a list of alternate options for consideration and discussion by member states;
- Regarding the key regional processes, the Environment for Europe ministerial conference, which was scheduled to take place in November 2021, is expected to be postponed to 2022 (as in November 2021 it would have coincided with the new dates of the Climate COP). The exact dates will be discussed by the Committee on Environmental Policy, which will hold its meeting in November this year;
- The COP of the Industrial Accidents Convention will not take place in December in Germany, as initially planned. The UNECE Secretariat is working on alternatives;
- More information on the international environmental negotiations agenda is available on the GEN website <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/news-dates-for-major-environmental-negotiations/>



Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE gave an update on actions undertaken since the launch of the IBC:

- a. three IBC meetings since its launch in March 2020;
- b. three subregional meetings with Resident Coordinators to gather information on their needs and expectations;
- c. a survey issued to the Resident Coordinators to gather information on their priorities;
- d. A note issued by co-leads on sound management of waste in the context of COVID-19;
- e. a website with a calendar of activities and a collection of resources on COVID-19, the environment and climate change provided by all IBC members;
- f. two water-related webinars, the first on the World Water Development Report on Water and Climate Change and the second one on transboundary water cooperation, based on examples from Drin and Drina river basins in South-eastern Europe;
- g. *"Preliminary responses to queries posed by Resident Coordinator Offices on the impact of COVID-19 on the environment"* issued by the co-leads;
- h. a survey to IBC members on leading or contributing to actions, which served as the basis for creating task teams that focus on the key topics for environmental and climate sustainability;
- i. a set of recommendations for pathways for a more inclusive, environmentally sustainable and resilient COVID-19 recovery, issued and shared with the Resident Coordinators, UNCTs and other partners working on the recovery plans and assessments of the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic;
- j. continued participation of the co-leads in Regional UN System meetings and reporting of the IBC activities.

The 11 task teams established under the IBC will deliver a variety of products and services by making use of the expertise within the member organizations. The activities undertaken or planned were presented by the task team leaders with reactions and expressions of interest by IBC members reflected in the summary below.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

UNDRR is taking forward a policy brief for end of the year, it will build on the August 2020 guidance on integration into UNSDCFs. The task team will meet soon to better coordinate and to identify actions to implement.

UNEP, supported by UNFCCC, suggested that the task team - as a short-term action on the Climate stream - to consider outreach to RCs and countries on the readiness to submit revised NDCs for which the deadline is this year. There are some 14-outstanding revised NDCs in the



region still to be communicated, not counting the EU. Support to its' Parties on NDC enhancement is paramount for the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Biodiversity & nature-based solutions

The task team presented the key themes for biodiversity mainstreaming. The proposed activities (2020–2021), acknowledging the CBD processes and timelines, are: a) a webinar (Nov./Dec. tbc) on the "Year of Biodiversity" focused on CBD processes and their application to the Europe and Central Asia region; b) a situation analysis or document on biodiversity targets in the region; and c) a brief on "*Why biodiversity mainstreaming makes social and economic sense?*". The task team will meet in September to further discuss the proposed activities.

Socioeconomic assessments and post pandemic recovery strategies (build back better, with a green and circular economy)

The objective of this task team is to identify practical measures for a more inclusive, environmentally sustainable and resilient COVID-19 recovery. During September-October UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO plan to draft a guidance document detailing measures for different economic areas with the support of an expert consultant. Each measure will be accompanied by a description, costs and benefits, related SDG targets, key agencies, reference to guidance materials and, as appropriate, a case study. Other IBC members will be invited to contribute and provide information. The set of measures could be expanded subsequently in response to feedback from RCs and UNCTs, subject to the availability of resources.

UNFCCC encourages all parties to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation criteria into their recovery plans, and to ensure coherence with enhanced NDCs.

Air pollution

A small survey was conducted in order to brainstorm between agencies in the task team on possible actions and themes. The outcome of the survey resulted in the following recommendations: a) webinars for subregions to exchange experiences in one specific sector or specific topic; b) assistance to countries on how to integrate tackling air pollution in CCAs; c) exchange on cost effective or efficient innovative solutions for air quality monitoring, advocacy, awareness-raising and engagement of youth in addressing air pollution; d) paper on the links between air pollution and transport, or between air pollution and waste management, ; innovative financing solutions to address air pollution, or a white paper on air



pollution and links to climate and COVID-19; e) possible contribution to governments' and regional agendas; f) strengthening air pollution observations, scientific knowledge of the air quality-climate relationship and developing science-based tools, or tools to reduce health risks, including air quality; g) contribution to the development of messaging and policy briefs on a human rights-based approach in environmental issues including air pollution. The task team will meet soon to brainstorm and to identify actions to take forward.

Sustainable consumption & production

The objective of this task team is to promote and accelerate the uptake of sustainable consumption and production patterns. The proposed activities are: a) a webinar to present guidance, practices and resources for the uptake and implementation of sustainable public procurement at local, national and regional levels (end of 2020); b) training and guidance to strengthen countries' public procurement capacity including tools to apply sustainability criteria, assess and monitor sustainability performance of suppliers and enhance sustainability performance of micro, small & medium enterprises.

Water management

The task team's activities are based on RCs' requests from the past subregional meetings. Two webinars have been organised: a) on 27 May a webinar on the 2020 United Nations World Water Development Report "*Water and Climate Change*" for RCs and UNCTs of Europe and Central Asia organized by UNESCO and UNECE, in coordination with UNDCO, and with the participation of IBC members, RCs and UNCTs from the region (presenting the results of the WWDR report, notably its regional perspective for Europe and Central Asia, and initiating a discussion with RCs and members of UNCTs that are planning, implementing and monitoring water and climate activities); b) on 7 July 2020 a webinar on transboundary cooperation based on water management in the Drin and Drina river basins was organized by UNECE and UNESCO with contributions from UNDP and WMO in collaboration with active participation by the two RCs from Albania and Serbia (for which the target audience was RCOs, UN Country Teams in programme countries in Europe and Central Asia and IBC members). The task team proposed three further webinars as future activities in 2020-early 2021 on: a) water and COVID-19 or water and health; b) on SDG 6 (and/or the WWDR 2021); and c) subregional transboundary water management. The task team will meet in September 2020 to discuss future actions.

UNDP referred to a critical situation in Tajikistan, notably on the supply of electricity due to a significant drop in water levels in hydropower reservoirs caused by this year's drought. This



will have an impact to electricity supply not only in Tajikistan but beyond i.e. to Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. UNDP proposed that the task team on water management could consider this issue as one of the possible areas of work.

Food security & land management

The task team proposed: a) for the end of the year a regional webinar on *Adapting to changing context: climate change and food security nexus during COVID-19* (end of October 2020 tbc); and b) a stock take on ongoing and planned research work, evidence-building activities related to climate change and environmental pollution and food security nexus. The task team will meet in September to discuss the activities and coordinate with the task team on sustainable consumption and production.

Sustainable infrastructure

The task team aims to follow up and promote a related UNEA resolution with global good practice guidance. There is a need in countries and in the region for practical guidance to promote good and concrete practices. There is a need also for investigating the role of environment in tools for infrastructure such as the capacity assessment tool. The task team will discuss potential webinars.

UNFCCC suggested to consider involving the Rio Conventions Secretariats.

Environment & youth

The task team will work with the IBC on Youth and the task team on air pollution. It will look at youth engagement and mobilization, impacts of environment on youth and which are the networks, advocacy elements and the key products to offer. The task team will meet in September to come up with concrete actions for late 2020 - early 2021.

UNEP suggested *GEO-6 for youth* <https://www.unenvironment.org/global-environment-outlook/geo-6-youth>, could be a valuable contribution and is currently being prepared.

Environment & gender

The task team leads were not present and will report at the next meeting.

Migration, environment & climate change



There is little awareness on these issues in the region. The key task of the team is to raise awareness among UNCTs and RCs. The plan of the team is to organize a regional webinar on the human mobility work programme under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, notably the work of the Task Force on Displacement (early 2021), with experts, from within and outside of the region. To produce an information sheet on the European Green Deal and migration (last quarter of 2020) and key common messages for the RCs (early 2021).

Final conclusions by Ana Luiza Massot Thompson-Flores, Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe:

- The IBC co-leads asked all task teams to provide a single slide with the summary of the discussed activities of each task team.
- The fourth IBC meeting is foreseen within the next two months (date tbc)

Annex 1: Meeting agenda

Annex 2: IBC task teams presentation updated

Annex 3: IBC task teams matrix updated

Annex 4: IBC member list updated

Annex 5 : IBC work plan 2020-2021