

**Online Session of the First Global Meeting of National Focal Points
Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental law
(Montevideo Programme V or Programme)**

Online Session, 2-4 June 2021¹

Co-Chairs' Summary

Item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 3:02 p.m. Nairobi time (UTC +3) on 2 June 2021. Mr. Arnold Kreilhuber, Acting Director of the Law Division of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), welcomed participants and then invited Ms. Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of UNEP, to provide opening remarks.
2. Ms. Andersen underscored the significance of Montevideo Programme V as a flagship programme for UNEP and encouraged Member States to engage with the Programme to strengthen environmental rule of law across the globe. Furthermore, Ms. Andersen, inter alia, welcomed collaboration and engagement with partners including UN agencies, secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector in delivering the Programme. The Executive Director concluded by highlighting that the online session is a significant step to start substantive activities under the Programme, which will contribute to achieving a sustainable and just future for all.

Item 2: Organizational matters

3. Mr. Timothy R. Epp of the United States of America and Mr. Marcelo Cousillas of Uruguay were elected as Co-Chairs of the meeting. Ms. Kunzang of the Kingdom of Bhutan was elected as rapporteur. In their opening statements, the Co-Chairs noted, inter alia, that the online session of the first global meeting of national focal points is an opportunity for national focal points to provide guidance on what should be the initial priorities for implementation of the Programme, to designate a steering committee for implementation, and to adopt the modalities of work for the steering committee.
4. Following the election of officers, the agenda for the meeting (UNEP/ENV.LAW/MTV5/GNFP.1/1) was adopted. The organization of work was also adopted, with two additional suggestions from the Co-Chairs: organization of informal consultations for regional groups to discuss nominees for the steering committee for implementation, and an invitation to national focal points to submit textual comments on the draft modalities of work for the steering committee for implementation by the end of 3 June, in advance of consideration of the document on Friday 4 June.

Item 3: National focal points

5. The secretariat introduced a report on the status of designation of national points (UNEP/ENV.LAW/MTV5/GNFP.1/3) highlighting that Member States had designated a total of 136 national focal points as of 2 June 2021. The secretariat also stated that an up-to-date list of all national focal points is maintained on the UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform, which

¹ The first global meeting will be held in two parts. The first part was held online from 2 to 4 June 2021, while the second will be held in person at a location and date to be determined.

is available at www.leap.unep.org. The secretariat also invited national focal points to communicate by e-mail any errors or omissions in the list of focal points.

Item 4: Status of implementation, activities, and funding

6. The secretariat introduced a report titled ‘Status of Implementation, Activities and Funding’ (UNEP/ENV.LAW/MTV5/GNFP.1/2), prepared pursuant to paragraph 6(a)(x) of Montevideo Programme V. In the report, the secretariat highlighted a series of preparatory activities undertaken to ensure effective implementation following the first global meeting. Amongst others, this included the development of the UNEP Law and Enforcement Assistance Platform (www.leap.unep.org), which was launched by the secretariat. Several delegations welcomed the launch of the platform.
7. The secretariat reported that there was no dedicated funding currently available to implement Montevideo Programme V. It noted that in accordance with the Programme adopted by Member States, it would, if necessary, consider the establishment of a trust fund to provide for dedicated funding for the Programme.

Item 5: Priority areas for implementation

8. The Co-Chair recalled that Montevideo Programme V tasks national focal points to identify priority areas for the implementation of the Programme. He noted that for the online session, national focal points have been asked to identify a limited number of focused and feasible priority areas for implementation – underscoring that this could be one or two areas -- to enable substantive activities under the Programme to start. The Co-Chair reminded participants that the in-person session in 2022 will provide room for more robust discussions and negotiations concerning the priorities for the Programme.
9. The secretariat presented eight proposed areas for implementation, and one initial priority area for implementation, being legal responses to address the air pollution crisis, which was identified through a survey the Secretariat conducted prior to the session. Some delegations suggested additional initial priorities, including public participation, access to information and access to justice; climate change; biodiversity; and strengthening education and training on environmental law. Delegations also stressed that transboundary issues should be specifically considered, including within the context of air pollution. There was broad consensus amongst delegations that air pollution should be the initial priority area for implementation for the programme. Accordingly, the meeting adopted Annex I of document number UNEP/Env.Law/MTV5/GNFP.1/4.
10. Several delegations underscored additional priorities that should be included or further articulated into the broader set of proposed priorities for implementation. Suggestions included environmental finance, trade in used goods, sustainable agriculture, water and marine pollution, and illegal trade in wildlife and chemicals and waste. One delegation suggested reducing the number of priority areas to become more focused on achieving results. The Co-Chairs stated that all interventions would be reflected in the meeting report and that priority areas would be further discussed in detail at the 2022 in-person session of the first global meeting.

Item 6: Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

11. The Co-Chair noted that partnerships are central to Montevideo Programme V, and following a presentation by the secretariat, many delegations underscored the critical importance of partnerships and stakeholder engagement for the success of the Programme. One delegation suggested the secretariat, in collaboration with the steering committee for implementation, should develop a working document to clearly outline the Programme's strategy on building partnerships and stakeholder engagement, and several delegations supported this proposal.
12. Several delegations provided suggestions on areas of focus and important considerations regarding partnerships and stakeholder engagement. These included: ensuring linkages and coherence amongst global, regional, national and sub-national levels; engaging the security sector; ensuring coherence with other environmental law focused entities and programmes; supporting or establishing networks to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of environmental law; engaging with regional and sub-regional entities; engaging judiciaries and developing a judicial portal; engaging law students and academics; showcasing research; engaging media; facilitating nexus dialogues amongst stakeholders; and linking up countries to donors and funding opportunities under other programmes and initiatives. Some delegations noted that governments should play a key role in determining partnerships at national and local level. One delegate stressed that when engaging children and youth, engagement must be meaningful and rights-based, and that children and youth should be engaged throughout the whole policy process as an equal partner and stakeholder at all levels. The delegate also noted the importance of meeting young people where they are and the need to build their capacity and empower them as implementers of environmental governance and policies.
13. The Co-Chair advised that partnerships and stakeholder engagement will be considered in greater detail during the resumed in-person session.

Item 6: Steering committee for implementation

14. The Co-Chair recalled paragraph 6(c) of Montevideo Programme V that states that the national focal points will, at their global meetings, designate a steering committee for implementation, composed of two to three representatives nominated from each United Nations region, ensuring gender balance to the extent possible.
15. National focal points designated the following representatives to serve on the first steering committee for implementation:
 - a. African States: Mr. Gontran Some, Burkina Faso; Ms. Sarah Naigaga, Uganda; Ms. Karen Banda, Zambia
 - b. Asia-Pacific States: Md. Ashfaquul Islam Babool, Bangladesh; Ms. Kunzang, Bhutan; Mr. Monyneath Vann, Cambodia
 - c. Eastern European States: Ms. Azra Rogović-Grubić, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms. Tanja Pucelj-Vidović, Slovenia
 - d. Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Mariano Castro Sánchez-Moreo, Peru; Ms. Kate Wilson, Saint Lucia; Mr. Marcelo J. Cousillas, Uruguay
 - e. Western European and other States: Ms. Charlotta von Troil, Finland; Mr. Vincent Bohnenblust, Switzerland; Mr. Timothy R. Epp, USA

16. Delegations congratulated the newly designated steering committee members, and then considered the draft modalities of work for the steering committee for implementation (UNEP/ENV.LAW/MTV5/GNFP.1/5). The Co-Chair presented a revised draft prepared by the Co-Chairs, reflecting key proposed amendments received from delegations on or before 3 June 2021. Some delegations suggested that meetings and reports of the steering committee for implementation should be conducted in all UN languages. The secretariat clarified that all meeting reports would be translated into all UN languages when presented to global meetings of national focal points. The secretariat further clarified that interpretation services would be provided for meetings of the steering committee for implementation, subject to resources. One delegation stressed the need for members of the steering committee for implementation to consult with member States in their regions prior to any meeting of the steering committee for implementation. The meeting adopted the modalities of work for the steering committee for implementation as amended, and on the understanding that notwithstanding paragraph 4 of the document, the steering committee members shall begin their term of office at the closure of the online session of the first global meeting of national focal points and continue until the closure of the second global meeting of national focal points.

Item 8: Other matters

17. No other matters were raised by the meeting.

Item 9: Adoption of the outcomes of the meeting

18. The Co-Chair invited the secretariat to present the Co-Chair's summary of the meeting and noted the rapporteur will finalize and circulate the full report of the online session after the meeting with the help of the secretariat.

Item 10: Closure of the meeting

19. Closing remarks were given by the Co-Chairs and the secretariat. Many delegations expressed strong support for the Montevideo Programme V and thanked the Co-Chairs' and the secretariat for its role in supporting a successful meeting. The online session of the meeting was closed at 5:05 p.m. Nairobi time (UTC +3) on 4 June 2021.