



UN ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

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FIRST DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY FOR AFRICAN DIPLOMATS



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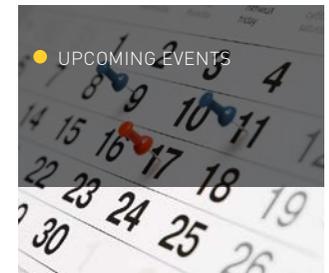
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FIRST DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY FOR AFRICAN DIPLOMATS



Over forty members of the Nairobi-based Africa Diplomatic Corps including Ambassadors and Senior Officials participated in a three-day dialogue on Environmental Diplomacy. The dialogue was organized by the UN Environment, Africa Office and took place from 18 to 20 September at the UN Environment Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

diplomacy, negotiation skills and to provide them with deep understanding of emerging environmental issues,” said Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director and Regional Representative of the UN Environment, Africa Office.

Access to the right information, better organization and effective communication are crucial for negotiators to achieve concrete results in multilateral negotiations such the UN Environment Assembly.

The dialogue was the first of its kind to be organized in order to equip African diplomats with environmental information and skills to better engage in regional and global environmental negotiations with a focus on the upcoming UN Environment Assembly.

“This dialogue is important to strengthen the capacity of the African diplomats in environmental

“It is a capacity building exercise which we very much appreciate. The issue of pollution was at the heart of this dialogue as Africa has a lot of challenges in that area. We need technical capacity to understand issues and the UN Environment Secretariat is helping us in that regard,” said H.E. Kelebert Nkomani, Dean of the Africa Diplomatic Corps and High Commissioner of Zimbabwe. “This dialogue can be extended to other diplomatic stations. I am thinking of Addis Ababa, Geneva and New York because our colleagues in these stations are all involved in negotiations,” he added.

Asked about the preparedness of the Africa Group for the upcoming UN Environment Assembly, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, H.E John Moreti, High Commissioner of Botswana, said “the capacity of the [African] negotiators, the mix between Ambassadors and technical experts, the very timely intervention by the UN Environment, Africa Office with the assistance extended to the Africa group, have convinced me that we are ready for UNEA.”

“With the amount of information that was shared with the group focusing on pollution, I am absolutely convinced that the group is well equipped.” Ambassador Moreti added.





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and open format, the dialogue on environmental diplomacy has been recommended for replication to benefit African diplomats that interact with the African Union in Addis Ababa and those that engage with the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The Dialogue on Environmental Diplomacy for Addis Ababa based Africa Diplomatic Corps subsequently took place on 1 November 2017.

Through this dialogue a strong link will be developed between the African diplomats in the two capitals on one hand, and members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment programme in Nairobi on the other hand. It has the potential to enhance a common understanding of the sustainable development issues that are facing the African region and to arm the Africa group of diplomats with the necessary scientific data and information to make a strong case for consideration of important environmental issues faced by the continent in international negotiations.

The dialogue provided an opportunity to outline the different approaches to multilateral environmental diplomacy and how these work through various institutions and forums as well as how they feed into the Environment Assembly. It also highlighted the common area around different environment-related treaties and how they can be articulated to influence processes in preparation, and in the conduct of negotiations.

The multilateral environmental system has significantly evolved during the last few decades, and a number of its components have become increasingly interconnected in complex ways. Conducted in an interactive

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WORKING VISIT OF THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGER, H.E. MR. ALMOUSTAPHA GARBA

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Niger, H.E. Mr. Almostapha Garba led a delegation to UN Environment in October 2017. The objective of the visit was to strengthen cooperation with UN Environment in its support to Niger's efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as its National Environment and Sustainable Development Policy.

The mission of H.E. Mr. Almostapha Garba to Nairobi took place in the backdrop of national reforms undertaken by the Niger authorities with the view to reconcile short-term imperatives with medium and longer terms ones. This is in order to optimize sustainable management of natural resources and ensure inclusive, equitable, balanced and sustainable economic and social development.

Discussions covered five priority areas including: 1) Climate change adaptation; 2) Niger's transition to Green economy; 3) Environmental monitoring and governance; 4) Conflicts and disasters; and 5) Biodiversity management.

The visit provided an opportunity to discuss the status of the Country Cooperation Framework between UN Environment and Niger which is currently under development. Its objective is to enhance coherence of UN Environment interventions and support to Niger. It is expected that the cooperation agreement would be signed during UNEA-3 in December 2017.



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CONNECTING KENYA COUNTY FIRST LADIES TO BEAT POLLUTION AND PAVE THE WAY TOWARDS A POLLUTION FREE PLANET

The UN Environment and the County First Ladies of Kenya joined efforts to fight pollution and contribute in paving the way towards a pollution free planet. A round table was organized on 30 October 2017 at UN Environment to discuss the issue of pollution.

“The challenge of environmental pollution affects every person and institution in the society. To address it requires a collective action and the involvement of a variety of stakeholders,” said Prof. Judi Wakhungu, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya.

Current research has revealed correlations between exposure to pollution and human diseases including cancer, reproductive dysfunction, as well as immunologic and neurologic impairments. “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”, a report published by UN Environment, stresses these correlations and places focus on the impact of pollution on human health and the ecosystems.

“The Counties must be part of the agenda and decision making process in the fight against pollution as they are ready to work with UN Environment

and support the implementation of the UNEA-3 outcomes,” said Mrs. Nazi Kivutha, Vice-Chair of the County First Ladies Association.

In Africa, women suffer most of the negative effects of pollution. The intensive use of charcoal, firewood and kerosene as the main sources of energy in Africa (especially for cooking), is significantly contributing to pollution. Ninety per cent of the Africa’s population is exposed to indoor air pollution due to the use of biomass sources of energy for cooking, lighting and heating.

“African women and children are dying every year from indoor pollution and sometimes women have no other choice but to work on lands that are polluted by chemicals and dumping of waste,” added Juliette Biao, Director and Regional Representative, UN Environment, Africa Office.

This year, the United Nations Environment Assembly will gather in Nairobi, Kenya from 4-6 December under the overarching theme of pollution– a major driver of climate change and species extinction, and the biggest human killer as outlined in the comprehensive UN Environment report on pollution released in September 2017.



The outcome of the County First Ladies round table feeds into Kenya’s effort to combat pollution. It also supports Kenya’s strategy to mobilize citizens and policy-makers at all levels to accelerate the implementation of the ban on plastic bags.

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CHAMPIONING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT AGAINST LEAD POISONING

This year's International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW) took place 22-28 October 2017. Championed by the Lead Paint Alliance, a global partnership of governments and other stakeholders convened by UN Environment and WHO, the purpose of this annual event is to raise awareness and promote actions to address the human health effects of lead exposure, especially in children.

Globally, approximately 600,000 children develop intellectual disabilities because of exposure to lead every year. Africa's annual economic burden of childhood lead exposure stands at \$134.7 billion.

Several African countries have been found to experience ongoing lead exposure from multiple sources in their homes, schools and workplaces. Recent studies indicate the availability of paint, in some instances with extremely high lead concentrations in a range of African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, and Ghana. The links between lead in paint and adverse health effects among exposed children and adults are well established. In addition, the detrimental health, social and educational effects of lead exposure exert an enormous economic cost on African economies.

"Heavy metals such as Lead, contribute to unintentional poisonings at home and in the workplace. Unintentional poisonings is estimated to cause 193 000 deaths annually with the major part being from preventable chemical exposure such as that from Lead in paints," said Abdouraman Bary, Chemicals Waste and Air Quality Regional Sub-Programme Coordinator for Africa.

"Despite the fact that most African countries do not apply legislative controls on lead, cooperation efforts are being made in setting limits for the use of lead in paints with a view to phasing it out by 2020 throughout the continent", he added. An East African standard on lead in paint applicable to five East African Community (EAC) countries is currently being developed. The Board of the Kenya Bureau of Standards has already approved the 90 ppm total lead limit standard. Ethiopia and Tanzania, countries in the greater Eastern Africa region are also currently working to finalize regulations to restrict the use of lead in paint.

In 2014, Resolution 1/5 of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) at its first session recognized the significant risks to human health and the environment arising from releases of lead and cadmium into the



environment. During its second session, the Assembly called upon UN Environment to cooperate with Governments, with the private sector, and with other non-governmental organizations to advance the work on lead and cadmium.

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MAURITANIA APPROVES ITS NEW NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At a meeting of the Council of Ministers held in September and chaired by the President of the Republic, Mauritania adopted the National Strategy for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NSESD) 2017-2030 and its five-year action plan 2017-2021.

According to M. Amedi Camara, the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, " This strategy takes into account the country's current environmental trends and challenges and it is aligned with the new political orientation at national and international level, notably the new Mauritania's Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity 2016-2030 (SCAPP), Sustainable Development Goals and the international conventions ratified by our country".

The National Strategy for the Environment and Sustainable Development has four strategic areas: (1) Integrated environmental governance; (2) Integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and terrestrial biodiversity; (3) Sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment, and (4) Strengthening prevention and management of pollution and anthropogenic threats. The National Strategy recommends an integrated approach that involves key actors including key sectors (Economy, Finance, Agriculture, etc), the Legislature, Civil Society Organization and development partners in order to reverse the current degradation of the environment and natural resources and achieve sustainable development.

The Poverty and Environment Initiative in Mauritania and the German development agency, GIZ supported the Government of Mauritania to develop its National Strategy. The Poverty and Environment Initiative in Mauritania provided technical support in the development of the strategy including holding three sub-national conferences



that saw the contribution of local stakeholders to the strategy. The Initiative also developed tools, policy briefs, and reviewed the public expenditures for climate change, Medium-term Expenditure Framework all which informed the new strategy.



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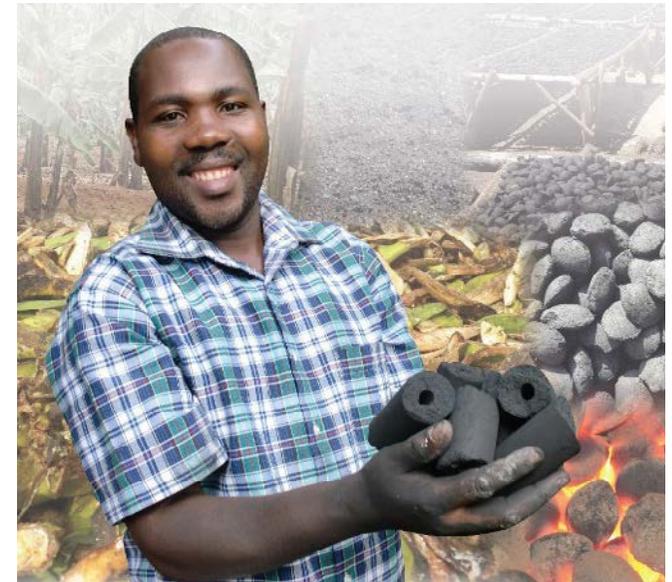
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ENHANCING BIOENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

UN Environment has partnered with the Government of Germany to support decision makers in Ethiopia and Kenya to develop effective, integrated policies for sustainable bioenergy use. The project titled "Building Capacity for Enhancing Bioenergy Sustainability through the Use of Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) Indicators" is funded by the International Climate Initiative of Germany's Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

The project provides technical assistance to experts responsible for bioenergy policy and environment ministries in Ethiopia and Kenya to gather data, apply the GBEP indicators and interpret the results. GBEP indicators measure the sustainability of bioenergy under various environmental, social and economic themes to inform decision-making and facilitate the sustainable development of bioenergy. The process will therefore help each country to assess the sustainability of its bioenergy sector. Capacity building activities and information exchange between partner-countries are also key activities.

High levels of biomass use persist in many countries. Over 80% of sub-Saharan Africa's population relies on biomass for its cooking and heating needs; much of it is harvested and used unsustainably. Biomass use in Ethiopia and Kenya currently stands at 91% and 68% respectively.

The unsustainable use of bioenergy has direct impacts on biodiversity, water and soil quality. Sound planning that balances the different policy objectives and bioenergy conditions and needs are required to enable bioenergy contribute to low carbon development and the building of a green economy.



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RESOURCE EFFICIENCY



SUSTAINING UGANDA'S RESOURCES THROUGH PROMOTING GREEN BUSINESS PRODUCTION

Switch Africa Green held a National Networking Forum from 14 to 15 September 2017 in Kampala, Uganda under the theme of "Sustaining Uganda's Resources". The key objective of the forum was to foster open information and knowledge sharing among stakeholders on the transition towards and inclusive green economy. The forum brought together over 150 participants including government officials, civil society, members of Parliament, development partners, academia, researchers, cultural institutions, private sector among others.

"An Inclusive green growth economy with a brilliant private sector is a very good opportunity to develop a long-lasting economy while safe guarding environment," said Pavlos Evangelidis, Head of Inclusive Green Economy, European Union delegation to Uganda.

The Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) that benefitted from the Switch Africa Green project and adopted Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices such as the Skyfat Tannery Co. reported that after the SCP interventions, it invested 628,000 USD to improve solid waste management through the concept of industrial symbiosis. This resulted into annual savings of 1,080,800 USD. The investment has created green jobs for 250 youth (100 male and 150 female) directly involved in adding value to solid waste, additionally preventing over 21,600 tons of solid waste annually that would end in poorly managed dumping sites. Other impacts were improvements in air quality as the society around the disposal sites previously complained of air pollution.



Before



After

Through interventions of the Switch Africa Green project, SME's such as Skyfat Tannery have pledged to create more synergies with other leather processing companies country-wide and be a collecting center of splits and off cuts that are currently ending up in dumping sites.

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EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN ECONOMY TRANSITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA



UN Environment and the Government of South Africa convened a panel discussion to explore opportunities for small, micro and medium enterprise development and deliberate the green economy and climate change adaptation landscape in South Africa. Over 40 policy makers, practitioners and entrepreneurs participated in this event.

The Government of South African has shown commitment to address climate change adaptation and mitigation through a transition towards an inclusive, environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economy. The transition to a greener economy is embedded in national policy which is driving the greening of economic sectors to support the creation of green and decent jobs, more energy and material efficient production processes, significantly less waste, pollution and Greenhouse Gas emissions. Green economy initiatives are increasingly contributing to job creation, skills development and overall sustainable development.

Agriculture, energy and transport are the most active sectors, with initiatives in solar and bio-energy, non-motorized transport, spatial planning and organic farming. Agriculture has the largest number of direct job-creating opportunities. However, land tenure system is still a key challenge for commercial farming in the Eastern Cape. Practical solutions and appropriate business models developed within a particular context are required to address the current challenges. Entrepreneurs in the rural areas still have limited access to funding opportunities.

Discussions also focused on the importance of industrialization, built environment, mobility, and energy and small scale urban agriculture as key factors in the transition to a low carbon economy. The importance of technological innovation and skilled workforce as enabling environment towards green economy transition was also discussed.



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United Nations Environment
Assembly
Nairobi, Kenya

23-25
JAN
2018

Bamako Convention, COP-2
Bamako, Mali



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NOF Block 2, Level 1, South-Wing
P.O. Box 30552, 00100
Nairobi, KENYA
Email: communication.roa@unep.org

www.unep.org/africa