



putting the environment at the heart of people's lives



Foreword by

António Guterres

United Nations Secretary-General



In 2018, the world received a stark wake-up call when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C. The Panel's research told us that time is running out to minimize extreme weather events, species loss, water scarcity and many other climate impacts that endanger lives, economies and livelihoods.

UN Environment's Emissions Gap research tells us we need to increase our ambition five-fold to meet the 1.5°C target. This may seem unrealistic. But, as this Annual Report shows, the solutions to climate change and other pressing environmental issues are available. We just need to push harder.

2019 presents many opportunities to increase ambition. We have my climate summit in September. We have continued work on making the Paris Agreement fit for purpose. We have the entry into force of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which can avert 0.4°C of warming by reducing the use of greenhouse gases in the cooling industry. We also have the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2019.

A key focus of the Assembly is resource efficiency. Doing more with less can positively affect not only climate change but the depletion of natural resources and the pollution of air, water and land—all issues of grave concern that UN Environment pushed hard on in 2018. I urge Member States to use the Assembly to make new commitments and use the organization's expertise to reshape their economies.

UN Environment has been, and will continue to be, a crucial actor in supporting nations to deliver on their environmental commitments. In 2019, I fully expect the organization to continue this transformative work and help steer the world towards a more sustainable track.

A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to be "António Guterres". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a blue background.

Foreword by

Joyce Msuya

Acting Executive Director,
UN Environment Programme



Over the last year, UN Environment supported Member States as they stepped up their efforts to build a better, cleaner and more equitable world. While it was a challenging year, we saw hope in growing action and global commitment to new ways of doing business that tackle the environmental challenges we face. Our role in highlighting best practices, advocating action and bringing together governments, civil society and businesses once again proved critical.

World Environment Day 2018 inspired action on plastic pollution, reaching hundreds of millions of people in over 190 countries. In pledging to phase out single-use plastics by 2022, India has set the bar high for the rest of the world. Commitments from 57 nations covering over 60 per cent of the world's coastlines made our Clean Seas campaign the largest global compact for combatting marine litter.

We also partnered with the World Health Organization to host the first global meeting on air pollution, which kills millions of people each year, and continued to support national strategies and policies on cleaner transport. For example, we supported the development of national strategies for electric mobility in several countries in Latin America—a key step in reducing air pollution and mitigating climate change.

Our work on financing for sustainable development also broke new ground. The world's leading chief executive officers gathered in Paris to draft principles for responsible banking under the leadership of the Finance Initiative. Forty-five banks and financial institutions have endorsed the principles. We also saw the first-ever Tropical Landscapes Bond—launched in collaboration with BNP Paribas, the World Agroforestry Centre and partners. This US\$95 million bond will restore 80,000 hectares in Indonesia.

South-South cooperation is equally important. We brought together organizations and countries to save the Cuvette Central Peatlands in the Congo Basin, which stores the carbon equivalent of three years of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Brazzaville Declaration—signed by the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Indonesia—keeps this carbon in the ground.

As you will read in this report, we are catalysing change in many other areas: from supporting efforts to make the cooling industry more climate-friendly, to reducing and better managing waste in the hotel industry in Jordan, to helping nations such as Saint Lucia report and track their environmental commitments.

In 2019, we will build on our successes, focusing on promoting the circular economy, mobilizing science and data, promoting greener cities and backing renewable energy. The UN Environment Assembly in March is a tremendous opportunity to boost innovation that can help us change the choices we make and how we consume and produce. I am confident that many new solutions will emerge from this vital meeting. Finally, we are fully engaged in UN reform efforts and will work more closely with other UN agencies to contribute to UN-wide results.

2019 is a year in which the world must take decisive action. It is also clear that the environmental challenges we face cannot be addressed by any one entity or institution alone. UN Environment is once again counting on its staff, funding partners, and other stakeholders to help us make the difference, as you have done in the past. Thank you for your past and future hard work. Together, we can deliver on our mandate for people and planet.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Msuya', with a stylized flourish at the end.

“Doing more with less can positively affect not only climate change, but depletion of natural resources, and the pollution of air, water and land—other issues of grave concern that UN Environment pushed hard on in 2018.”

Selected 2018 highlights

Beating plastic pollution

Reducing plastic pollution of the oceans is a priority issue for UN Environment. In 2018, we helped nations and individuals make huge commitments to giving up single-use plastics.

- World Environment Day 2018 targeted plastic pollution, with global host India leading the way by pledging to give up single-use plastics by 2022. The world's biggest day for global environmental action reached hundreds of millions of people in more than 190 countries and 60 languages. It engaged 6.5 million people online, including 90 celebrities from all parts of the world, and inspired thousands of events across the globe, from beach clean-ups to zero-waste marathons.
- Many others countries, blocs and businesses made commitments, such as Nigeria and Honduras. The European Union proposed a ban on 10 single-use plastic items representing 70 per cent of all marine litter by 2025. Businesses like Ikea and Foodpanda pledged to act.
- Commitments from 57 nations, covering over 60 per cent of the world's coastlines, made our Clean Seas campaign the largest global compact for combatting marine litter.

Financing sustainable development

Our work on financing for sustainable development broke new ground in 2018:

- Forty-five banks and financial institutions endorsed the principles for responsible banking, drafted under the leadership of the Finance Initiative.
- We launched the first Tropical Landscapes Bond, worth US\$95 million, in collaboration with BNP Paribas, the World Agroforestry Centre and partners. The bond will restore 80,000 hectares of tropical forests in Indonesia.

Global policy action on plastic waste As of July 2018:



127 countries had adopted legislation to regulate plastic bags.



27 countries had enacted legislation banning specific products, materials or production levels.



27 countries have instituted taxes on the production of plastic bags.



30 countries charged consumers fees for plastic bags.



63 countries had mandates for producer responsibility on single-use plastics, including deposit-refunds, product take-back and recycling targets.



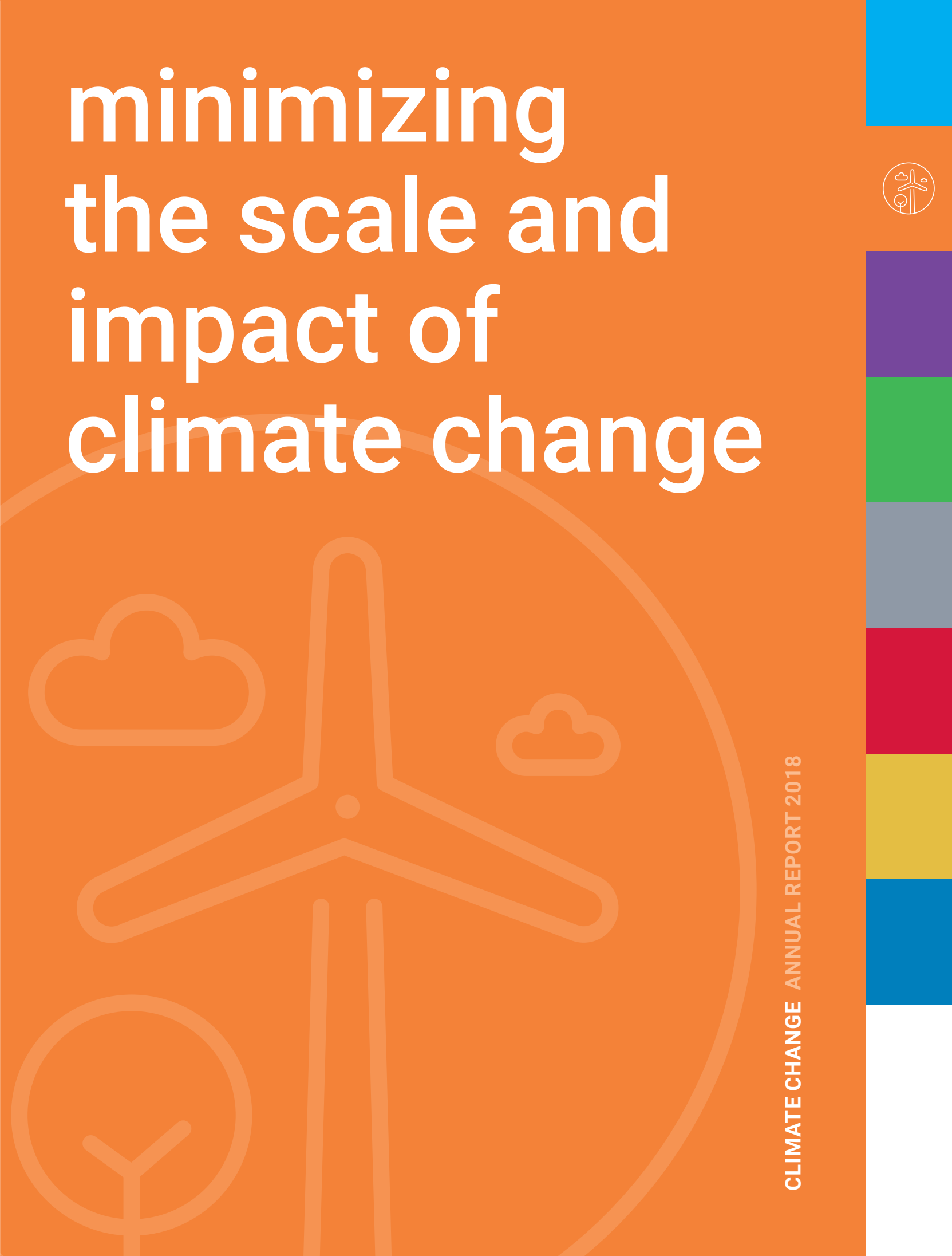
8 countries had established bans of microbeads through national laws or regulations.

- The Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System completed its four-year mandate with a report showing that green bond issuance grew from US\$11 billion in 2013 to US\$155 billion in 2017, while policy measures to advance sustainable finance doubled over four years to 300.
- Almost two dozen financial centres, from Casablanca to London to Shanghai, joined the UN Environment-hosted Financial Centres for Sustainability Network to help align investments with sustainable development and climate action.

minimizing the scale and impact of climate change



CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT 2018



UN Environment fights to cut cooling and heating emissions

Cooling and heating are—for those lucky enough to have them—a lifesaver, keeping children healthy, vaccines stable, food fresh, energy supplies stable, economies productive and environments clean.

In our work on climate change we focus on:

- **Climate resilience**, where we support countries to use ecosystem-based and other approaches to adapt to climate change.
- **Low-emission growth**, where we support countries to increase energy efficiency, access clean energy finance, and reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants by moving to renewable energy.
- **REDD+**, where we enable countries to capitalize on investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation with adequate social and environmental safeguards.

But there is a cruel irony at play. Cooling and heating systems consume over 50 per cent of building energy and run largely on fossil fuels—at a level of 84 per cent in the European Union for example. Consequently, they are pushing our planet's temperature up to dangerous levels.

We can expect more greenhouse gas emissions from the sector as the planet warms and middle classes expand in developing economies. We need this growth to provide equitable access to the 1.1 billion people who face imminent threats from a lack of cooling.

With energy consumption in the refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump sectors expected to surge 33 times by 2100, we need to build up renewable energy and energy efficiency to avoid runaway climate change. This is possible, as the work of UN Environment's District Energy in Cities Initiative is showing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, India and the 14 other countries where it works.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina's second-largest city, Banja Luka, district energy—a network of underground pipes that carry hot or cold water to multiple buildings—keeps around 20,000 residents warm when winter bites hard. But the 35-year-old system has relied on fuel oil to power its creaky and inefficient boilers. The Initiative teamed up with the city, the UN Environment-hosted Climate Technology Centre and Network and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to change this.

Through the partnership, the city attracted US\$22 million in investment—a US\$9.5 million loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the rest from the private sector—for a district heating network that runs on renewable energy. The 49 megawatt system, which uses locally sourced biomass, came online in March 2018. This increased the share of renewables by 75 per cent, reducing CO₂ emissions by 91 per cent and saving up to US\$1 million annually in reduced fuel costs. It also improved air quality by cutting sulphur dioxide emissions by 94 per cent.

"The intervention of the District Energy in Cities Initiative and partners enabled us to overcome long-standing barriers to modernizing our district heating system and attract the international investment and expertise needed," said Igor Radojičić, Mayor of Banja Luka.



With this success under its belt, the Initiative is expanding its work. One of the biggest impacts from this expansion could come in India, where, according to the country's draft National Cooling Action Plan, space cooling demand will rise 11 times by 2037. District cooling—already used in cities from Amman to Stockholm—is on the table as a viable option to meet this demand.

Based on feasibility studies, two projects identified in the pilot city Thane are being taken to market for a combined investment of US\$50 million. Once built, these projects could save 30,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, phase out harmful refrigerants and give customers cost savings of over 10 per cent each year.

“District energy will dramatically cut energy costs for our businesses and public buildings, increase urban resilience and deliver significant environmental benefits,” said Sanjeev Jaiswal, Municipal Commissioner, City of Thane. “We hope to pioneer the technology’s development for the benefit of all cities in India.”

UN Environment is also backing another process to make the cooling industry more climate-friendly: the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. This legally binding

expansion to the treaty that protects our ozone layer can avoid up to 0.4°C of global warming this century by reducing the use of powerful climate-warming refrigerants known as hydrofluorocarbons by 80 per cent.

It could avoid even more warming by improving the energy efficiency of new equipment that will need to be designed. This is built into the Amendment, which had 65 ratifications by the end of 2018. UN Environment is supporting countries to adopt energy efficiency standards during the transition.

Increased district cooling use is central to the Amendment. The Kigali Cooling Efficiency Programme, a group of philanthropists supporting the Amendment by helping low- and middle-income countries with the transition, is the most recent donor to support the Initiative, backing it to accelerate investment in district cooling in Egypt.

Ultimately, cooling and heating present huge opportunities to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. With pledges under the Paris Agreement only taking the world one third of the way towards the cuts needed to limit climate change to 2°C, we have to seize them.

Mumbai, India's largest city, is one of many growing metropolises in Asia that need to limit emissions in order to protect the health of its residents.

“District energy will dramatically cut energy costs for our businesses and public buildings, increase urban resilience and deliver significant environmental benefits.”

Sanjeev Jaiswal

Municipal Commissioner
City of Thane



For a full summary of results and success indicators from 2018, read the **Programme Performance Report**.

unenvironment.org/annualreport

Photo: UN Environment

minimizing environmental threats



DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Building resilience and peace in resource-scarce Darfur

Four years ago, Aziza Mohammed Abdallah Mukhtar was scraping a living growing tobacco in the community of Zamzam in Sudan's arid North Darfur State.

Like many Darfuris, Aziza, 52, has lived for decades in a fragile environment, characterized by growing climatic variability and periods of shortage. Her crops took seven months to mature under normal conditions, stretching the widowed mother of five's resilience to breaking point.

Now, thanks to a project that spreads seasonal water to increase agricultural productivity and reduce soil erosion, Aziza has yielded thriving crops such as watermelon, sorghum, tomato, okra and sesame.

"This project has enabled me to finance my children's education," she says. Three of her children are now studying at universities in Khartoum.

UN Environment has been implementing the European Union-funded Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project since 2014, partnering with local organization Practical Action, the Government of Sudan and communities such as Aziza's.

Before the US\$7.7 million project, Aziza's land—close to the state capital of El Fasher—did not receive water from the wadi (a channel that fills up in the rainy season). The seven-metre-high water spreading embankment built under the project, which extends 1.2 kilometres along the Zamzam administrative area, has helped her and other locals to diversify agricultural output.

Two other embankments, three water channels and two water reservoirs have been constructed or rehabilitated. This has enabled nearly 1,600 households from 34 village councils to triple production of sorghum and millet, and grow vegetables and cash crops well into the dry season.

The benefits are not restricted to increasing resilience to droughts. With resources like water and land increasingly scarce, grievances also often arise between competing communities in Darfur. These lead to local conflicts, and played a major role in the war that broke out in 2003.

In our work on disasters and conflicts we focus on:

- **Risk reduction**, where we improve the capacity of countries to use environmental management to prevent and reduce the risks of natural hazards, industrial disasters and conflict.
- **Response and recovery**, where we support countries in the aftermath of a disaster or conflict to identify and address environmental risks that could have serious social and economic impacts.

The project has helped reduce tensions, especially between pastoralists and crop farmers. Community councils from many villages meet to evaluate the best way of using the water, while committees ensure technical and political engagement at state level.

The second phase, launched in November 2018, aims to expand integrated water resource management to communities upstream and downstream of the Wadi El Ku catchment. It will directly benefit 80,000 households within the area.

"Less water availability impacts on health and food security. It triggers displacement of people and political instability," says Jean-Michel Dumond, the European Union's Ambassador to Sudan. "Our hope is that the same model could be reproduced in other regions. This will help local populations to better manage their natural resources in partnership towards a peaceful and profitable future."

In East Darfur State, meanwhile, another UN Environment and European Union project, implemented by the UN Office for Project Services, is starting to make a similar difference to communities struggling to manage their resources.

“When I was growing up, there were less than 50 households here,” says Abdulrahman Ismail, a cleric who lives in East Darfur’s Bakhiet village. “Now, it has risen to more than 5,000. Trees have been decimated due to cooking energy demands.”

These environmental changes are just as common in other parts of the semi-arid state, which covers an area slightly larger than Greece and is home to about 1.5 million residents.

The East Darfur Natural Resources Management Project supports six communities by increasing their ability to implement natural resource management policy reform. In May 2018, nearly three years since the project’s launch, the East Darfur State Legislature passed the 2018 Council Act for Coordination and Management of Natural Resource Policies for East Darfur State.

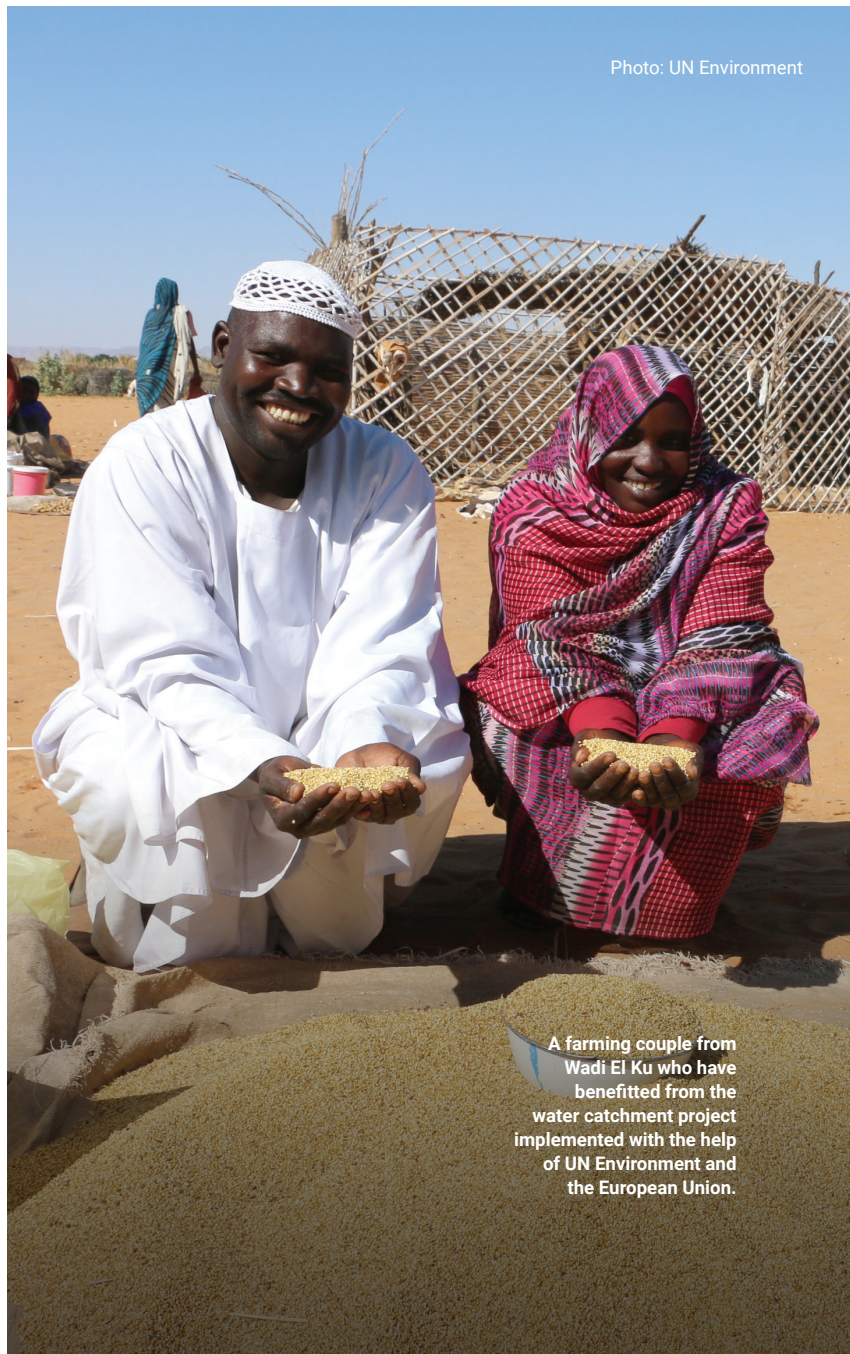
The legislation is the first of its kind in Sudan and provides a framework for the joint management of resources by the state government and local communities. Through a separate piece of legislation passed in September, East Darfur is also working to promote the joint management of water yards, dams and other water sources within its territory.

As climate change bites harder and populations continue to grow—in Darfur and many other regions across Africa—efforts that help

communities share their resources will be crucial in preventing conflicts and minimizing the impacts of dry spells.

UN Environment has provided environmental support to Sudan since the 1990s. Its work spans natural resource management, livelihoods, climate change adaptation, environmental governance, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and strengthening women’s roles in local peacebuilding processes.

Photo: UN Environment



A farming couple from Wadi El Ku who have benefitted from the water catchment project implemented with the help of UN Environment and the European Union.

“Less water availability impacts on health and food security. It triggers displacement of people and political instability.”

Jean-Michel Dumond

European Union’s Ambassador to Sudan



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Photo: Jalan Sahba

supporting human well- being through healthy ecosystems



ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Vow to protect massive African peatland a huge win for planet

As a biodiversity treasure trove and an opportunity for climate action, peatlands need our urgent protection and restoration—which makes a 2018 commitment to protect a massive peatland in Central Africa a huge win for the planet, and the people and animals living there.

People have lived in the Congo Basin for more than 50,000 years. Today, 75 million people from over 150 distinct ethnic groups depend on the health of the forest that covers much of the Congo Basin peatland complex.

Known as the Cuvette Centrale, this complex is the size of the United Kingdom and straddles the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. It is rich in biodiversity and—according to 2017 estimates—contains around 30 gigatonnes of carbon, equivalent to 15 years of emissions from the United States.

Brought together by UN Environment and other Global Peatlands Initiative partners, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Indonesia signed the Brazzaville Declaration in March 2018 to protect this complex. The Global Peatlands Initiative, led by UN Environment, helps peatland countries save or restore these vital wetlands, which cover about 3 per cent of global land area.

“For biodiversity, for climate and for people, we need healthy peatlands,” said Dianna Kopansky, Global Peatlands Initiative Coordinator, UN Environment. “Cuvette Centrale is home to 14 globally threatened species including bonobos, gorillas and chimpanzees. This peatland is a global treasure that deserves global attention and efforts for now and for our future.”

Although relatively undisturbed due to its remote location, Cuvette Centrale is at risk from oil, gas and forestry concessions, as well as infrastructure development. If the area is used for agricultural purposes such as palm oil, the ecosystem could be drained and degraded, and the entire hydrology of the Basin disturbed.

The first step to avoid such outcomes, according to Republic of the Congo’s Minister

of Tourism and Environment, Arlette Soudan-Nonault, is to improve understanding of how this vital ecosystem works.

“As an example for the implementation of the Brazzaville Declaration, the Government of the Republic of the Congo has decided to set up a high-level scientific committee to enable the country to improve its understanding of this biodiversity-rich ecosystem,” she said.

The Brazzaville Declaration shows that neither the international community nor the governments involved want to see the pattern of peatland drainage or destruction that

In our work on ecosystem management we focus on:

- **Creating an enabling environment**, where we assist countries in incorporating the value and the long-term functioning of ecosystems in planning and accounting frameworks.
- **Productivity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems**, where we help countries to use an ecosystem approach to manage terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- **Productivity of marine ecosystems**, where we help countries to use an ecosystem approach in marine ecosystem management.



Photo: Wildlife Conservation Society

The Congo Peatlands, or Cuvette Centrale, is a major carbon sink.

The Brazzaville Declaration shows that neither the international community nor the governments involved want to see the pattern of peatland drainage or destruction that happened in Indonesia repeated.

happened in Indonesia repeated. But issues remain. For example, while logging on swamplands is prohibited in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Rainforest Foundation UK says that “Congoese legislation does not precisely define what constitutes a swamp”.

Many of the forestry concessions given out in Cuvette Centrale have expired. Greenpeace campaigners are calling for these concessions to be “shut down and returned to the state”. This is a key step in protection of the peatlands, and one local residents hope will preserve their way of life.

“We hope our government will support us in our role as guardians of this ancient forest and provide us with the needed support to safeguard peatlands for our children and for the world,” said Valentin Egobo, a member of the Lokolama community, which lives on the edge of the peatlands in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Indonesia’s role is to share its hard-won lessons on peatlands management. Indonesia has over 15 million hectares of tropical peatlands and experienced large-scale peatland fires in 2015. The nation is now rewetting over two million hectares of dried-

out peatland, while scaling up information sharing globally. Laws are in place to make sure regulations—including a nationwide ban prohibiting new peatland drainage—are enforced.

The chances of survival for all peatlands were further boosted in October, when countries and Global Peatlands Initiative partners came together for a South-South exchange that culminated in the International Tropical Peatland Center, which will strengthen international collaboration. During the visit, Indonesia and the Republic of the Congo signed the first-ever agreement on the protection and management of peatlands between an African and an Asian country.

UN Environment Acting Executive Director Joyce Msuya called the joint effort on Cuvette Centrale, “South-South cooperation at its best”.

“We will need such excellence to continue if we are to conserve peatland biodiversity and keep huge amounts of carbon in the ground,” she said.



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Photo: Lobostudio/Unsplash

strengthening governance in an interconnected world



ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Helping enforcement catch up with environmental laws

When Pakistani customs officers last year seized massive amounts of R-22 refrigerant—a powerful ozone-depleting substance and greenhouse gas—it showed how strong enforcement of environmental laws can make a real difference to protecting the planet.

In our work on environmental governance we focus on:

- **Coherence and synergies**, where we help the UN system and multilateral environmental agreements to work together more coherently.
- **Stronger laws and institutions**, where we support national efforts to develop and enforce laws, and strengthen institutional arrangements for achieving environmental objectives in tandem with social and economic goals.
- **Mainstreaming of environment into development planning and decision-making**, where we assist countries to integrate environmental sustainability into development planning.

Countries are phasing out hydrochlorofluorocarbons like R-22 under the Montreal Protocol, the treaty that protects the ozone layer. According to the latest Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion, stratospheric ozone has been recovering at a rate of 1 to 3 per cent per decade since 2000, thanks to actions taken under the Montreal Protocol.

R-22's destructive impacts on the ozone layer are compounded by its huge global warming potential—over 1,800 times that of carbon dioxide. The greenhouse gas emissions from this shipment would have been equivalent to burning over 132,000,000 kilograms of coal.

Even so, demand for controlled substances is still high in some places where alternatives are expensive or don't work as well at extremely high temperatures. The illegal trade in ozone depleting substances is worth almost US\$70 million per year, according to the latest estimates.

Such successes show that enforcement of environmental laws is possible, even if it is not yet the norm. UN Environment's first-ever

In the largest seizure of its kind for Pakistan, customs authorities confiscated 18,000 kilograms of the refrigerant at Karachi Port in October 2018. The bust came when a customs officer, Rahmatullah Vistro, received a tip about the smuggling plans.

Vistro is one of many customs officers around the world who have received UN Environment training to identify ozone-depleting substances smuggled by methods such as misdeclaration and mislabelling—as was the case with this shipment.

“I just dream about how to achieve a big goal like this, to hit the top of the syndicate.”

Klairong Poonpoon

Director in the Wildlife Conservation Bureau of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation.

global assessment of environmental rule of law, the result of exhaustive research throughout 2018, found weak enforcement to be a global trend that is exacerbating environmental threats, despite a 38-fold increase in environmental laws since 1972.

“This report solves the mystery of why problems such as pollution, declining biodiversity and climate change persist despite the proliferation of environmental laws in recent decades,” says David Boyd, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. “Unless the environmental rule of law is strengthened, even seemingly rigorous rules are destined to fail and the fundamental human right to a healthy environment will go unfulfilled.”

Strong institutions can enforce environmental laws and ensure more effective management of natural resources. UN Environment works with countries to strengthen enforcement and compliance by promoting a rights-based approach to environmental management and by strengthening capacities to enforce legislation and combat violations.

“We have the machinery in the form of laws, regulations and agencies to govern our environment sustainably,” says Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director of UN Environment. “Political will is now critical to making sure our laws work for the planet.”

UN Environment works to build public support for the fight against environmental crime, thus encouraging governments and authorities to

crack down through the laws already in place. For example, the Wild for Life campaign has mobilized millions of people in the fight against wildlife trafficking since its launch in May 2016. In 2018, the campaign’s advocacy helped bring greater protection for the snow leopard when the Government of Mongolia revoked mining licenses in Tost Nature Reserve.

UN Environment and partners also encourage further action through recognizing and awarding those who enforce laws.

For example, when a Thai court in 2018 sentenced wildlife kingpin Boonchai Bach, a 41-year-old Thai-Vietnamese national, to two years in prison for smuggling 11 kilograms of rhino horn, worth US\$700,000, it was a major coup worthy of recognition. The team that delivered the evidence—the Thai Customs, the Royal Thai Police, and the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation—received one of the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards 2018 for their work.

“I just dream about how to achieve a big goal like this, to hit the top of the syndicate,” says Klairong Poonpoon, a director in the Wildlife Conservation Bureau of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. “We wanted to do something that can have an impact on the region.”



Training from UN Environment is helping law enforcement around the world stop environmental crime, such as the trafficking of banned substances and wildlife products.



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Photo: Perry Grone/Unsplash

ensuring sound management of chemicals & waste



CHEMICALS AND WASTE ANNUAL REPORT 2018



— 25 steps to end millions of deaths from “the new tobacco”

Air pollution isn't a new problem. We've been worried about smog for centuries, from the infamous “pea souper” smogs of 19th century London to the hazes that regularly engulf cities from Beijing to Delhi in the present day. What is new, however, is the awareness of exactly how bad it is for our health.


According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution-related diseases claim seven million lives each year. But bad air doesn't just kill. In 2018, studies linked air pollution to everything from millions of cases of diabetes to lower intelligence levels. Little wonder that World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus calls air pollution “the new tobacco”.

But with this bad news comes a determination to act. 2018 saw the first-ever Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, organized by the World Health Organization in collaboration with UN Environment and others, where participants pledged to reduce air pollution deaths by two thirds by 2030. At this meeting, UN Environment, the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership and the Climate and

In our work on chemicals and waste we focus on:

- **Creating an enabling environment**, where we support countries to have the policies and institutional capacity to manage chemicals and waste soundly.
- **Chemicals**, where we help countries and other stakeholders implement sound chemicals management and related multilateral environmental agreements.
- **Waste**, where we help countries and other stakeholders implement sound waste management and related multilateral environmental agreements.

Photo: Reuters



Commuters crossing a street in Mexico City, which is one of many urban areas in Latin America working to improve air quality.

Clean Air Coalition launched 25 solutions for Asia-Pacific to make this goal a reality.

Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-based Solutions lays out 25 policy and technological measures, covering everything from industry to energy to agriculture. Together, these measures could save millions of lives and let one billion more people breathe clean air by 2030. And work is already under way in a region where four billion people—92 per cent of the population—are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution.

Take electric mobility, one of the 25 measures. Philippines and Sri Lanka, supported by UN Environment, have begun to tax electric and hybrid vehicles lower than conventional vehicles. The impact has been clear. The number of electric and hybrid cars in Sri Lanka's active fleet grew 10 times between 2013 to mid-2018, with 150,000 such vehicles now on the streets. This growth saw the percentage of cleaner vehicles in the active fleet rise from 4 per cent in 2013 to 23 per cent by mid-2018. In the capital Colombo, where past research showed heavy traffic accounts for over 50 per cent of air pollution, this can make a real difference to human health.

"We acknowledge the importance of promoting cleaner and more efficient fuels and vehicles, and we welcome the support of UN Environment," said Sugath Yalagama, Director-General, Sustainable Development Council, Government of Sri Lanka. "Due to the more comprehensive vehicle excise tax, we now have more hybrid and electric vehicles on the road."

This is just one example. Implementing all 25 measures fully would lead to a 56 per cent lower fine particulate matter exposure across Asia-Pacific in 2030 compared to 2015.

But air pollution is a global problem. For example, replacing the current fleet of buses and taxis in 22 Latin American cities could save 36,500 lives by 2030. This is why UN Environment, through its MOVE platform and with the support of Euroclima+, is assisting Argentina, Colombia and Panama with national electric mobility strategies, and is helping Chile and Costa Rica to expand the use of electric buses.

Replacing the current fleet of buses and taxis in 22 Latin American cities could save 36,500 lives by 2030.

"Latin America has the greenest electricity matrix in the world, the fastest growing emissions of the transport sector and the highest use per capita of public transport globally," says Gustavo Mañez, UN Environment Climate Change Coordinator in Latin America and the Caribbean. "The region is uniquely positioned to take advantage of electric mobility."

Much more is happening across the globe. Breathe Life, a campaign by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the World Health Organization and UN Environment, is running initiatives that cover 52 cities, regions and countries, and reach over 153 million citizens. For example, campaign partners energized the public through a sporting challenge that saw 55,000 people pledge to commute by bicycle or on foot. There are now more than a million electric cars in Europe. The rise of renewable energy will help, with investment in new renewable sources outstripping fossil fuel investments each year.

All of this work is having an impact. The World Health Organization in 2018 found that more than 57 per cent of cities in the Americas and more than 61 per cent of cities in Europe had seen a fall in particulate matter pollution between 2010 and 2016. We have a long way to go, but with all of the new science showing solutions, UN Environment and partners are pushing harder than ever to end the threat of this invisible killer.



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Photo: UN Environment

accelerating the transition to sustainable societies

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY ANNUAL REPORT 2018



— Turning waste into an asset in Aqaba, Jordan

Jordan is facing increasing waste problems, with municipal solid waste rising from 2.6 million tonnes in 2014 to almost 3 million tonnes in 2017.

The nation is not alone in what remains a global problem. Despite recycling rates of over 50 per cent in countries such as Germany and South Korea, across the planet we throw out one third of the food we produce to rot alongside plastics, paper and metal that could be reused or recycled. All of this waste not only leads to depletion of the planet’s dwindling resources, but drives climate change, as landfills emit climate-warming methane.

In Jordan however, the seaside city of Aqaba is beginning to apply circular approaches through a reduction in waste, and conversion of unavoidable waste into an asset through job creation—building the business case for resource-efficient approaches and providing livelihoods to vulnerable communities.

The city, popular for its clear waters and coral reefs, discards 150 tonnes of solid waste per day, including that of restaurants and hotels. Supported by the European Union and UN Environment through the EU SWITCH Med Programme, the Association for Energy, Water and Environment in Jordan worked with 15 hotels and 17 restaurants to carry out a waste audit and find ways to reduce their impact.

High-end hotels such as the InterContinental Aqaba Resort, Movenpick Aqaba, Double Tree by Hilton and Kempinski Aqaba all got involved in the project.

“As a hotel, we benefited immensely from the project in that we understood how much waste we produce and what percentage is organic and solid,” says Adbulla Radaideh, Chief Engineer of the Intercontinental Aqaba resort. “We now have goals to minimize our production of waste.”

The project trained staff in waste management practices and prepared plans for participating businesses to cut waste to landfill by 25 per cent. The savings come from simple measures, such as revised menus and better food management, including ensuring short-dated products are used first and providing smaller buffet plates to avoid food waste, as well as recycling metals and plastics.

In our work on resource efficiency we focus on:

- **An enabling policy environment**, where we help countries make the transition to inclusive green economies and to adopt sustainable consumption and production action plans.
- **Sustainability in businesses**, where we work with governments, businesses and other stakeholders to make global supply chains more sustainable.
- **Sustainable lifestyles and consumption**, where we empower countries, businesses, civil society and individuals to live and consume responsibly and sustainably.

— The women are now renting premises to manufacture their products and sell them, including at a bazaar organized in a major hotel in the Jordanian capital, Amman.



Now, the city is considering incentives to get more businesses involved. Currently, hotels pay a fixed tax for waste collection based on their built area. The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority is set to reduce collection fees for hotels that better manage their waste.

“We have the possibility of applying a model of sustainable development in Aqaba that would ultimately serve everybody, be it the government or local community,” says Hotaf Yassein, Head of Green Economy Division of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. “The hotels can benefit from the incentive and waste can be used as a fertilizer. It’s a win-win situation.”

The project is also providing livelihoods, with a special focus on women’s empowerment, by training the local community in upcycling (the process of transforming waste into more valuable commodities). Women from Aqaba and the surrounding area learned how to produce crafts from waste, such as candleholders from defective tins. This increases incomes and further reduces waste to landfill.

One of these women is Latifa Abdullah Mahameed. Latifa, 45, lost both her mother and brother in 2018 and needed to find a way to support her and her divorced sister. She now works on upcycling paper and fabric, and is passionate about learning new skills.

“We were able to have a meaningful job that enables us to contribute to saving the environment,” says Latifa.

The women are now renting premises to manufacture their products and sell them, including at a bazaar organized in a major hotel in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

These may all be small beginnings, but the successes of the pilot project are set to go national through sharing lessons and institutionalizing good practices. The project developed a national solid waste management training programme, and the national government is on board.

“This will be an environment, economic and social project that will provide many jobs and, God willing, have positive effects on the ground,” says Ahmad Al Qatarneh, Secretary-General, Ministry of the Environment.

Aqaba, Jordan, where tourism is an important part of the local economy, is implementing upcycling programmes to ensure a growing number of visitors don’t harm the environment.



For a full summary of results and success indicators from 2018, read the **Programme Performance Report**.

unenvironment.org/annualreport

Photo: NREL/VisualHunt

promoting evidence- based decision- making

ENVIRONMENT UNDER REVIEW ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Paradise found: Saint Lucia preserving beauty through data and policy action

If ever an island justified the label “paradise” that tourist brochures liberally apply to destinations, it is Saint Lucia.

Shaped like a teardrop, this tiny Caribbean nation has everything. Crescent moon beaches of white sand. Jagged volcanic mountains jutting up from the azure waters. Eclectic biodiversity that manifests in a riot of colour, no more so than in the Saint Lucia Amazon, a spectacular parrot found only on the island.

Unfortunately, as is the case in so many places, human activity is endangering this beauty and the benefits it brings to humanity. The threats are many, including extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change, forest habitat loss from land-use change and over-exploitation of marine resources.

We can deal with these challenges, as the return of the Saint Lucia Amazon, or *Amazona versicolor*, shows. In the 1970s, only around 100 of these birds remained. Thanks to a conservation programme, the species is now on an upward trend. While still classed as “vulnerable” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List, the last census of the bird, carried out between 2007 and 2009, found a stable and viable population of 2,258 individuals.

The Government of Saint Lucia, with the support of UN Environment, is determined to repeat this success for all the island’s natural resources while ensuring a better future for its estimated 180,000 residents.

The nation is signed up to global treaties, including the three Rio Conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, under which the Paris Agreement falls.

In order to meet its obligations—and to design and implement meaningful interventions—the government needs to have a clear picture of where it stands in terms of data and required policies.

“While we pursue on-the-ground initiatives that guarantee our survival, it is equally important to pursue the soft initiatives that will allow us to make sound decisions on the strategic interventions needed,” said Annette Rattigan-Leo, Saint Lucia’s Chief Sustainable Development and Environment Officer.

In August 2018, the island took a big step forward. Working with UN Environment on a Global Environment Facility-funded project, the Saint Lucian government launched its first national environmental information system. Information on the three big treaties is available to ministries, the private sector, academia, multilateral environmental treaty focal points and the public. For each convention, indicators

In our work to keep the environment under review we focus on:

- **Assessments**, where we support global, regional and national policymaking using environmental information accessible on open platforms.
- **Early warning**, where we provide planning authorities with information on emerging environmental issues of global importance.
- **Information management**, where we strengthen the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge.

related to broader policy goals and objectives are being integrated to support reporting and translate data into useful and actionable information.

“This is certainly an encouraging endeavour, as it will allow Saint Lucia to work closely with UN Environment,” said Gale Rigobert, Minister for Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development. “We acknowledge the crucial role environmental information continues to play in helping us meet our national and multilateral environmental agreement obligations.”

As part of the project, 17 major environmental data providers signed an agreement to cooperate on the development and use of the system, ensuring that the bigger picture will be as complete as possible. Meanwhile, the project developed a set of core sustainable development and environmental indicators for the Rio conventions, which all derive directly from the 1992 Earth Summit. According to Teshia Jn Baptiste, who managed the project, the system and associated common data storage facility have “significantly improved collaboration among the public and private sectors”.


Those who work on the ground are hopeful that the new system will help Saint Lucia meet its commitments and so improve the health of its ecosystems.

“If we reach our targets, the livelihoods of fishermen and others depending on marine resources will be protected in the face of climate change impacts,” said Allena Joseph, Fisheries Biologist in Saint Lucia’s Department of Fisheries. “We can do this through better-informed decisions in areas relating to biodiversity conservation and resilience building.”

The government has previously called for an end to illegal logging, which has led to habitat loss and landslides. Karl Augustine, a research officer in the Forestry Department, believes that the new system will help claw back some of the damage.

“We see a positive impact on human and wildlife cohabitation and a transition to forest in areas historically affected by land degradation,” he said.

For species such as the *Amazona versicolor* and the people of Saint Lucia, this can only be good news.



The Caribbean island of Saint Lucia brought the *Amazona versicolor* parrot back from the brink of extinction and is now aiming to protect the rest of its biodiversity.

“This is certainly an encouraging endeavour, as it will allow Saint Lucia to work closely with UN Environment.”

Gale Rigobert

Minister for Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development

Photo: UN Environment



For a full summary of results and success indicators from 2018, read the **Programme Performance Report**.

unenvironment.org/annualreport

Photo: Samuel Zeller/Unsplash

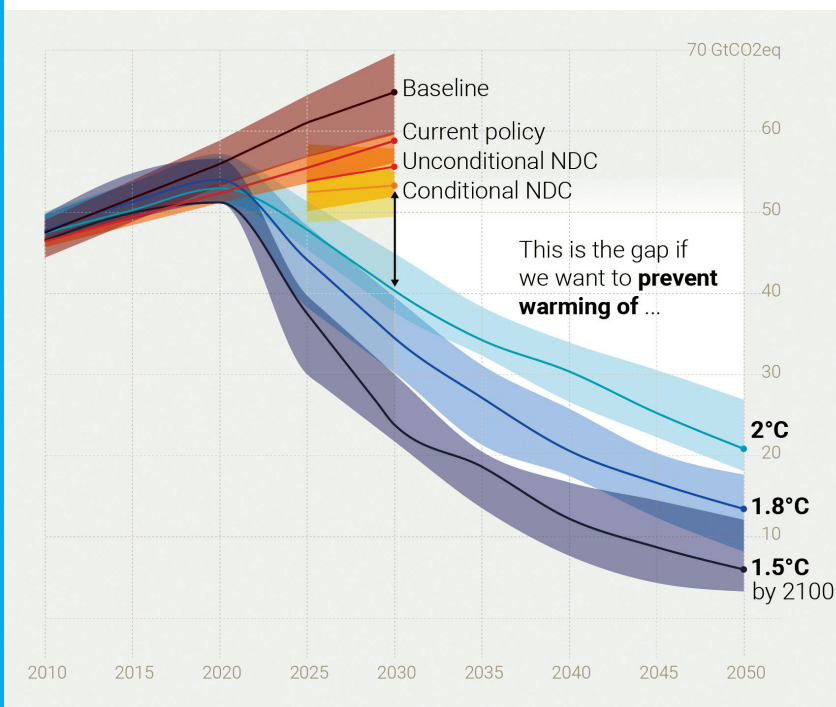
enabling, inspiring and celebrating environmental action



Science

Providing knowledge to policymakers

UN Environment and the scientific bodies it hosts provide cutting-edge science that helps policymakers take decisions that protect the environment for the benefit of all.



Emissions Gap Report 2018

The Emissions Gap Report is an annual scan of the difference between international commitments and the ambition needed to meet the Paris Agreement goals. The 2018 edition, released before the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, found that nations must triple their efforts if we are to keep global warming below 2°C. Global emissions reached a new high of 53.5 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2017. Only 57 countries are on track to peak emissions by 2030. But momentum from the private sector, innovation and green financing can bridge the gap.

Adaptation Gap Report 2018

While minimizing climate change is crucial, the world also has to prepare for some unavoidable impacts. The fourth UN Environment Adaptation

Gap Report revealed a big gap between preparedness and the measures needed to protect communities from increasing climate risks. There is, however, growth in national laws and policies that address adaptation: at least 162 countries explicitly address adaptation at a national level, through 110 laws and 330 policies.

Inclusive Wealth Report 2018

The Inclusive Wealth Report is led by UN Environment to evaluate the sustainability of nations' economies and the well-being of their citizens. A country's inclusive wealth is the social value of all its assets, including natural resources, human capital and production. The 2018 report shows that 44 out of 140 countries reviewed have suffered a decline in inclusive wealth per capita since 1992, despite gross domestic product growth. However, growth in inclusive wealth per capita in 81 countries puts them on a sustainable path.

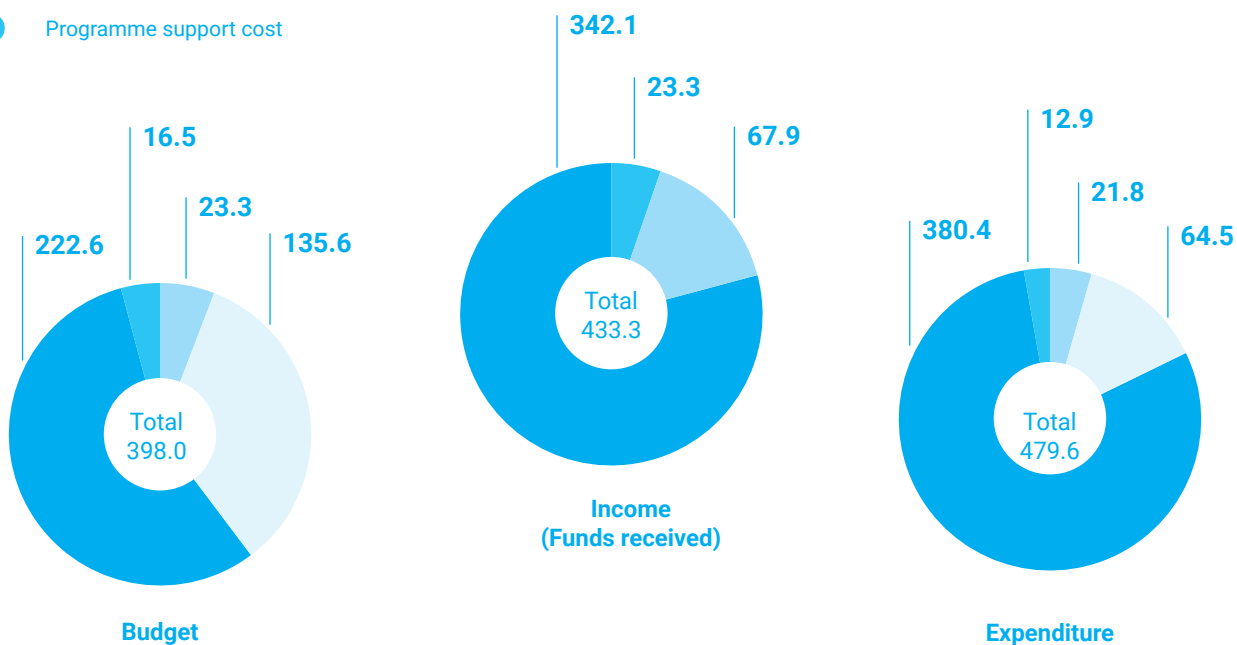
International Resource Panel

The UN Environment-hosted International Resource Panel launched two major pieces of research. "Re-defining Value – The Manufacturing Revolution" finds that if products were remanufactured, refurbished, repaired and reused, the amount of new material needed could be significantly reduced. Such value-retention processes could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in some sectors by 79 to 99 per cent.

"The Weight of Cities: Resource Requirements of Future Urbanization" calls for policymakers to treat resource efficiency with the same importance as climate policy to create cities that are low-carbon and resource-efficient. The annual amount of natural resources used by urban areas could grow from 40 billion tonnes in 2010 to 90 billion tonnes by 2050 if changes are not made to how cities are built and designed.

Budget performance

- UN regular budget
- Environment Fund
- Trust and earmarked funds
- Programme support cost



Top 15 contributors to earmarked funds

Funding partners	US\$
1 Global Environment Facility	126.7
2 UN system organisations	48.4
3 Private sector	26.6
4 Green Climate Fund	26.4
5 European Commission	21.4
6 Denmark	16.7
7 Norway	15.4
8 Sweden	10.0
9 Japan	9.8
10 Germany	8.2
11 France	6.6
12 Luxembourg	3.4
13 Finance Initiative	3.0
14 Italy	2.8
15 Switzerland	2.5

*in US\$ millions

Top 15 contributors to the Environment Fund

Member States	US\$
1 Netherlands	9.1
2 Germany	8.9
3 France	7.6
4 United States of America	6.1
5 Sweden	5.1
6 Belgium	4.6
7 United Kingdom	4.3
8 Switzerland	3.8
9 Norway	3.0
10 Canada	2.4
11 Japan	2.4
12 Finland	1.7
13 China	1.5
14 Russian Federation	0.9
15 Ireland	0.6

*in US\$ millions

UN Environment leadership team



Joyce Msuya
Acting Executive Director
and UN Assistant
Secretary-General



Satya Tripathi
Director, New York
Office and UN Assistant
Secretary-General



Sami Dimassi
Director, West Asia Office



Susan Gardner
Director, Ecosystems
Division



Leo Heileman
Director, Latin America
and the Caribbean Office



Barbara Hendrie
Director, North America
Office



**Juliette Biao
Koudenoukpo**
Director, Africa Office



Jorge Laguna-Celis
Director, Governance
Affairs Office



Sonja Leighton-Kone
Director, Corporate
Services Division



Gary Lewis
Director, Programme
and Policy Division



Jian Liu
Director, Science Division
and Chief Scientist



Sylvie Motard
Acting Director, Europe
Office



Elizabeth Mrema
Director, Law Division



Ligia Noronha
Director, Economy Division



Naysán Sahba
Director, Communication
Division



Dechen Tsering
Director, Asia and
the Pacific Office

Erik Solheim and Ibrahim Thiaw served as Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director respectively until their departures in 2018.

world environment day



BEATPLASTICPOLLUTION

Photo: Sudarsan Pattnaik

worldenvironmentday.global

World Environment Day

www.worldenvironmentday.global

India helped to make World Environment Day 2018—under the theme of Beat Plastic Pollution—one the biggest and most impactful in the annual event's 45-year history. Aside from the pledge by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban all single-use plastics in the nation by 2022, India delivered a buoyant countrywide World Environment Day that inspired the planet.



- Major corporations such as Infosys and Procter & Gamble pledged to make their Indian operations free of single-use plastics.
- Tamil Nadu State banned non-biodegradable plastics, including single-use plastics, starting January 2019.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India promised to reduce its environmental impact by greening operations and engaging cricketers and fans.
- Clean-ups took place across the country on 48 beaches and riverbanks. Over 6,000 people gathered at Versova Beach in Mumbai to join UN Environment Champion of the Earth Afroz Shah in the 136th week of his beach clean-up, collecting over 90,000 kilograms of plastic.
- Zero-waste marathons were carried out in six cities, with the participation of over 15,000 students in the capital alone.
- 24,000 eco clubs across India were engaged in painting and drawing competitions. The Centre for Environment Education designed an educational toolkit in 11 languages and organized 115 events across 24 states, reaching over 38,000 school children and teachers.

On the day itself, World Environment Day was the #1 global topic on Twitter, trending in English, Spanish and Turkish. It also trended in Chinese on Weibo, and became a main topic on the social media accounts of major news outlets such as CNN, Al Jazeera and the BBC.

champions of the earth



Photo: UN Environment

Champions of the Earth

Honouring outstanding environmental leadership

UN Environment recognized six of the world's most outstanding environmental change-makers with a Champions of the Earth Award—the United Nations' highest environmental honour—on the sidelines of the seventy-third session of the UN General Assembly in September. Weibo, China's microblogging and social media giant, supports the awards.

Lifetime achievement

Joan Carling received an award for 20 years of work as one of the world's most prominent defenders of environmental and indigenous rights. Her tireless fight has made her a champion to peoples and communities across the globe.

Science and innovation

Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods received recognition for developing popular, plant-based substitutes for beef and for educating consumers about environmentally conscious alternatives.

Policy leadership

Emmanuel Macron, President of France, and Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, were recognized for championing the

International Solar Alliance and promoting new environmental cooperation, including Macron's work on the Global Pact for the Environment and Modi's pledge to eliminate single-use plastics in India by 2022.

Inspiration and action

Zhejiang's Green Rural Revival Programme scooped an award for transforming a once heavily polluted area of rivers and streams in East China. This eco-restoration programme shows the transformative power of economic and environmental development together.

Entrepreneurial vision

Cochin International Airport (India) was awarded for leadership in sustainable energy. As the world's first fully solar-powered airport, Cochin is showing that global movement doesn't have to harm the environment.

Young Champions

The second edition of the Young Champions of the Earth saw seven trailblazers between the ages of 18 and 30 receive US\$15,000 in seed funding, training and mentoring for their ambitious ideas to restore and protect the environment. The award is backed by Covestro, a leading manufacturer of polymer materials.

The winners were:

Shady Rabab, for addressing poverty and waste management in Egypt by making musical instruments from trash and training young people in a band.

Hugh Weldon, for a smartphone app that calculates ecological footprint based on shopping receipts.

Heba Al-Farra, for support to female professionals working in energy and environment across the Middle East and North Africa.

Arpit Dhupar, for a groundbreaking technique that filters 90 per cent of particulate matter from diesel generators and turns it into ink.

Miao Wang, for her Better Blue initiative, which empowers divers to conserve and protect the ocean.

Miranda Wang, for her technology to turn plastic pollution into new resources for a sustainable economy.

Gator Halpern, who launched a network of coral farms to restore endangered reefs.



global conventions

hosted by UN Environment

Global conventions

hosted by UN Environment



Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

- The Kigali Amendment, which can avoid 0.4°C of global warming by reducing the use of certain greenhouse gases in the cooling industry, entered into force on 1 January 2019. On this day, the Amendment had 65 ratifications, achieved in only two years since its signature.
- A report from the Scientific Assessment Panel of the Montreal Protocol, released at the 30th Meeting of the Parties in November 2018, showed that Northern Hemisphere midlatitude ozone is scheduled to recover to 1980 values in the 2030s, the Southern Hemisphere around mid-century and the Antarctic ozone hole in the 2060s.
- At the same meeting, parties to the Montreal Protocol agreed to track and eradicate new and illegal sources of chlorofluorocarbons to preserve the healing of the ozone layer.



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

- Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks listed eight shark species in December 2018 for better protection globally.

- More than 30 African countries hosting populations of African wild dog, cheetah, leopard and lion established in November 2018 a joint African Carnivore Initiative—a collaboration between the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement agreed in December 2018 on targeted action for threatened waterbirds, including a new Plan of Action for Africa, while the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment are assisting nations to better prosecute the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds.



Convention on Biological Diversity

- The UN Biodiversity Conference was held in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2018 under the theme “Investing in biodiversity for people and planet”. The Conference adopted 69 decisions and launched a process to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- The International Day for Biological Diversity marked the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on 22 May 2018.
- The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress entered into force in March 2018. This addition to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by providing international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress relating to living modified organisms.



Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

- The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, led by the Secretariat of the Convention, supported Operation Thunderstorm. The operation involved police, customs, border, wildlife, forestry and environment agencies from 92 countries and territories, and resulted in 1,974 seizures and the identification of over 1,400 suspects.
- Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants, the largest programme of the Convention for capacity building and monitoring, analysed poaching trends of elephants across their range in Africa and showed that overall elephant poaching in Africa declined for the seventh year in a row. It also—for the first time—presented trends in the illegal killing of Asian elephants.
- The Secretariat of the Convention gathered representatives from 24 countries from across Africa, Asia, Europe and North America to develop and implement national ivory action plans, which strengthen controls of the trade in ivory and help combat the illegal trade in ivory in range, transit and consumer countries.



Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

- Basel Convention: the Open-Ended Working Group proposed possible avenues of actions for tackling marine plastic waste.
- Rotterdam Convention: three more hazardous chemicals were made subject to the prior informed consent procedure. Fifty chemicals are now on the list, with seven more under consideration.
- Stockholm Convention: two more toxic chemicals were added to the list of persistent organic pollutants for elimination, and three more persistent organic pollutants were reviewed.



Minamata Convention on Mercury

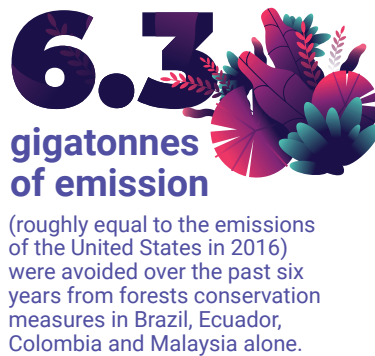
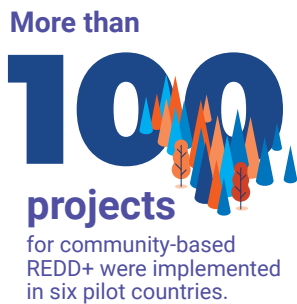
- The Minamata Convention on Mercury stepped into its implementation phase, with 101 parties at the end of 2018, and the bulk of the technical guidance needed for implementation adopted.
- The Specific International Programme, part of the Convention's financial mechanism, is now fully operational with five approved projects.

The UN-REDD Programme celebrates 10 years

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (the UN-REDD Programme) was the first joint UN global initiative on climate change. By backing an approach that combines conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests, the UN-REDD Programme has assisted countries in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing carbon stocks (REDD+).



that submitted benchmark forest emission levels to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change received support from the programme.



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