

ADVANCE QUARTERLY REPORT

to the 147th Meeting of the

**COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES**

01 July – 15 September 2019

FOREWORD

Inger Andersen, UN Environment Programme

As this Report outlines, the period from July to mid-September has been a busy but fulfilling quarter where we have made important progress on several milestones and contributed substantively to important deliberations such as the High-Level Political Forum in New York, the 18th Conference of the Parties (COPs) to the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Geneva and the 14th United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP in India.

At the High-Level Political Forum, a sense of urgency prevailed across the board. As the climate crisis looms large, the Forum laid bare that we are not making sufficient progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNEP contributed to a number of important deliberations on an inclusive green economy, Forum on Small States, and the high-level panel of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on transforming the SDGs. I see a clear role for us to ramp up the science and partnerships required to help discard the idea that our economies can continue to be at such odds from the environment and support economic actors in making the transition to a zero-carbon future.

We made remarkable progress at the CITES COP, a critical convention regulating trade in 36,000 species. The largest ever agenda points to the importance Member States afford to this Convention, and even as some Parties may not be satisfied with how this Convention supports their specific positions, the wildlife crisis is too big and too interconnected for nations to tackle alone.

However, while environmental multilateral agreements are critical to protecting people and planet, but we cannot ensure a life for dignity for all if we cannot guarantee a healthy environment. I was privileged to sign an agreement with Michele Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen our cooperation on environmental and human rights.

During this quarter, we also significantly stepped up momentum on nature-based solutions as we move within striking distance of the UN Climate Action Summit. Investing in nature's infrastructure means investing in people, livelihoods and resilience and this was evident in our contributions to the Abu Dhabi preparatory summit and across other initiatives. This message was also highlighted at the UNCCD COP 14 in India where 9,000 participants gathered, to discuss how land degradation neutrality is a powerful tool for climate action.

These are just some of the highlights that you will find more information on in this quarterly snapshot of our progress. I hope you find it useful. We look forward to your collective feedback on strengthening our programme of work further to deliver effectively and efficiently on our mandate.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this report: This quarterly report focuses on the implementation of the Programme of Work for the current Biennium (2018-2019). It also shares progress made in implementing the decisions of the Environment Assembly.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) held in New York on 9–18 July, under the theme ‘Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’, reviewed six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. Forty-seven countries presented their voluntary national reviews (VNRs). The President of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) addressed the HLPF and presented the messages of the fourth UNEA.
- Ms. Inger Andersen participated in the HLPF and met representatives of Member States, partners and major groups and stakeholders.
- UNEP continues to undertake global, regional, national and thematic assessments on the state of the environment, which it then communicates to various target groups. These assessments include the International Resource Panel’s ‘Land Restoration for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals’ report launched during this quarter.
- On the United Nations development system (UNDS) reform, UNEP remained actively engaged in important work, such as the development of the new set of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidelines and the Cooperation Framework companion pieces that will provide guidance to United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs). UNEP has reviewed its approach on how to engage with UNCTs. This is informed by feedback from the dialogue held with the Resident Coordinators from Africa in September. To pilot our engagement approach, we will proactively engage in those countries entering their Common Country Assessments and/or developing their Cooperation Frameworks in 2020.
- UNEP was the lead agency supporting the Nature Based Solutions track for the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit. UNEP also engaged in other tracks, including mitigation; energy transition; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; and climate finance and carbon pricing, as well as the youth and public mobilization track. The first Meeting of the Bureau of the fifth session of the UNEA (UNEA-5) agreed to a road map outlining the path forward through a wide consultation process to define the next assembly’s theme by consensus by December 2019. Three possible themes are under discussion: (i) Investing in nature-based solutions; (ii) Blue Planet: Transformative actions to protect the planet and enhance well-being; and (iii) Addressing the water–energy–food nexus for sustainability.
- The Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) provided opportunities for the Executive Director and

UNEP at large to highlight key messages on the need to take synergistic measures that are good and meaningful for people and the planet.

- UNEP’s engagement in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework provides an opportunity to further mainstream national capital accounting as a decision-making tool. It was therefore a special pleasure to welcome the CBD’s Open Ended Working Group on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to Nairobi for its first meeting.
- The fifth Montevideo Programme (Montevideo V) on environmental law promotes gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of women and girls, and covers the poverty–environment nexus.
- UNEP is exploring options for better delivery models in conflict, post-conflict and crisis contexts that will inform the development of its next Medium-Term Strategy.
- As at 30 September 2019, UNEP and its multilateral environmental agreements secretariats comprised 1,230 staff members: 744 professional personnel and 486 general service personnel.
- Efforts to deepen staff engagement are underway, including through the monthly letters sent by the Executive Director to all staff.
- On the implementation of the management reforms, UNEP continues to pursue the five lines of defence previously presented to Member States. Actions taken over the last quarter include increased compliance with travel rules resulting in reduced travel, establishment of a corporate academy and preparations for the first Fund Management Officers/Administrative Officers Academy in Nairobi (4–8 November), strengthening risk management capacities.
- During the reporting period, eight project evaluations were completed. At present, 47 project evaluations, as well as that of the Environment Under Review subprogramme are under way.

SECTION 1: SIGNIFICANT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

GLOBAL

REPOSITIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

UNEP continues to support the reforms of the United Nations development system (UNDS) and actively engages in United Nations system-wide processes to operationalize and implement the reform. UNEP has, as requested by UNEA resolution 4/1, undertaken an assessment of internal policies, guidelines and regulations that need to be adjusted in order to implement the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the provisions in General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279. Some of the actions UNEP has undertaken include:

- Active engagement in developing the new set of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidelines,¹ which provide an operational framework for the roll out of UNDS reforms. UNEP has also engaged in the preparation of six Cooperation Framework companion pieces that will provide guidance to United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) on how to design and develop the frameworks to better support Member States as they implement the SDGs and their national priorities.
- UNEP has reviewed the approach on how to engage with UNCTs. This was informed by the feedback from the recent dialogue with the Resident Coordinators in Africa (see page 10). UNEP will proactively engage with UNCTs completing their Common Country Assessments (CCAs) or developing their Cooperation Frameworks in 2020 to pilot the organization's engagement approach.
- UNEP is strengthening staff capacities on Cooperation Frameworks and SDG processes, including through the participation of two staff members in a training of trainers workshop on Cooperation Framework guidance, organized by the United Nations Development Coordination Office. Once trained, these staff members could be deployed as resource persons and lead facilitators at the request of UNCTs for in-country Cooperation Framework design support. Likewise, they will play a key role in strengthening UNEP staff capacities and awareness on Cooperation Framework processes.

Meanwhile, the development segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) undertook the following operational activities:²

¹ <https://undg.org/document/united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework/>.

² <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/2019-operational-activities-development-segment>.

- Adopted resolution 2019/15 on ‘Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system’ on 8 July 2019.³
- Welcomed the Secretary-General’s ongoing efforts to reposition the UNDS,⁴ and acknowledged the progress achieved in advancing all reform mandates of General Assembly resolutions 71/243⁵ and 72/279.⁶
- Took note of the Secretary-General’s report on implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243⁷ and the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office.⁸

FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 72/277

- The General Assembly adopted resolution 73/333⁹ on 30 August 2019, entitled ‘Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277’.
- Resolution 73/333 endorsed the recommendations, which included forwarding the working group’s recommendations to UNEA for its consideration, and preparing, at its fifth session, a political declaration for a United Nations high-level meeting, subject to voluntary funding, in the context of the commemoration of UNEP’s creation at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,¹⁰ with a view to strengthening the implementation of international environmental law and governance in line with paragraph 88¹¹ of ‘The Future We Want’.¹²

TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY AND THE FIRST UNEA-5 BUREAU MEETING

The UNEP Executive Director participated in the Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity and the first UNEA-5 Bureau Meeting in Norway on 2–4 July.

³ <https://undocs.org/e/res/2019/15>.

⁴ <https://reform.un.org/content/development-reform>.

⁵ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/243>.

⁶ <https://undocs.org/a/res/72/279>.

⁷ <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/SGR2019-%20Advance%20Unedited%20Version%20-%202018%20April.pdf>.

⁸ <https://undg.org/document/report-of-the-chair-of-the-united-nations-sustainable-development-group-on-the-development-coordination-office/>.

⁹ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/333>.

¹⁰ Held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972.

¹¹ <https://www.unenvironment.org/sw/node/24780>.

¹² Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf>.

- The Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity brought together more than 500 scientists and experts. In her keynote, the Executive Director stressed the importance of learning from the past and improving the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The remarks highlighted eight messages on how to approach this challenge over the next year to help ensure a future for nature and the benefits it brings to people everywhere.¹³
- The Executive Director also attended a very productive first Meeting of the Bureau of the fifth session of the UNEA (UNEA-5), where Members of the Bureau reaffirmed their strong personal commitments to an ambitious fifth Assembly in 2021. Importantly, the meeting agreed to set in motion a wide consultation process to define the theme for the next Assembly. The President was mandated to share a ‘thought starter’, which outlined three possible thematic areas: (i) Investing in nature-based solutions; (ii) Blue Planet: Transformative actions to protect the planet and enhance well-being; and (iii) Addressing the water–energy–food nexus for sustainability. The consultation will lead up to a decision by consensus in December 2019. The Bureau also agreed to a road map outlining key meetings and milestones on the way to UNEA-5.¹⁴

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

- The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)¹⁵ held in New York on 9–18 July 2019, under the theme ‘Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’ reviewed six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. In total, 47 countries presented their voluntary national reviews (VNRs).¹⁶
- In his opening remarks at the HLPF, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres outlined the ‘Inclusion Imperative’ to kick-start a ‘decade of delivery and action for people and planet’.¹⁷
- The President of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) addressed the HLPF and presented the messages of the fourth UNEA.¹⁸
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) actively participated in the proceedings and contributed to the interactive dialogues to promote the full integration of the environmental dimension in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹³ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/speech/speech-trondheim-biodiversity-conference>.

¹⁴ More information, including the Chair’s summary of the meeting and all background material is available at <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/unea-bureau-meetings/meeting-bureau-fifth-session-un-environment-assembly>.

¹⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>.

¹⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.

¹⁷ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-07-16/secretary-generals-remarks-opening-of-high-level-political-forum-ministerial-segment-delivered>.

¹⁸ <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/communications-president-3>.

- UNEP’s Executive Director held meetings with Member States, partners, major groups and stakeholders. At a meeting with the Forum of Small States (FOSS), she outlined the role of UNEP in amplifying messages on climate change, such as decarbonizing economies, protecting ecosystems or addressing pollution.
- During a side-event, organized by UNEP with partners on 16 July, entitled ‘Fast, Fair, and Green: Join the global partnership for an inclusive green economic transformation’,¹⁹ the Green Growth Knowledge Platform²⁰ launched two new platforms: the new Green Industry Platform²¹ and the Green Finance Platform.²² The high-level panel featured UNEP Executive Director, International Labour Organization (ILO) Executive Director Guy Rider and UNEA President Ola Elvestuen. The event marked the launch of the Five Principles of Green Economy.²³

CLIMATE CHANGE

Green Climate Fund

The first Green Climate Fund (GCF) Global Programming Conference was held in August in Songdo, Republic of Korea. The Deputy Executive Director attended the meeting and emphasized the importance of expanding partnerships and commitments with the GCF, government officials and other partners. Given the relevant theme of ‘Urgency for Transformative Action: the 1.5 Degree Celsius Imperative’, there was a strong emphasis on raising the level of ambition with climate action. Representatives from 135 developing countries, including 50 Ministers, participated in the conference and discussed how better direct climate finance flows to match the ambitions, needs and coalescing paths of practical climate action across the planet. The conference allowed the GCF to better understand how developing countries are incorporating mitigation and adaptation action into their national priorities.

Climate Action Summit preparations

UNEP actively engaged in the preparations for the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit which it facilitated through six out of nine tracks. UNEP served as the lead agency for the **nature-based solutions track**,²⁴ catalysing partners to put forward commitments to fully employ nature in addressing climate change at the Summit. During the reporting period, UNEP facilitated negotiations between China and New Zealand, and the coalition members on the NBS Manifesto.

¹⁹ <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/event/hlpf-side-event-fast-fair-and-green>.

²⁰ <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/news/press-release-two-new-platforms-offer-latest-knowledge-green-finance-and-green-business>.

²¹ <https://www.greenindustryplatform.org/>.

²² <https://greenfinanceplatform.org>.

²³ <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/5%20principles%20of%20GE%20One%20Pager.pdf>.

²⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>.

The Manifesto²⁵ was launched on 30 August 2019. A number of countries, non-state actors, and private sector companies submitted support letters to the Manifesto.

UNEP also contributed to preparations towards the summit under five other tracks:

- **Increasing ambition and enhancing NDCs:** UNEP supported the deliberations for increased ambition by preparing a 10-year summary of the Emissions Gap Reports, a Climate Action Plan for the UN Secretariat and the Greening the Blue report outlining UN progress on meeting our climate goals, planned to be launched alongside the Summit.
- **Energy transition:** UNEP supported the development of three coalitions/alliances aimed at launching ambitious emission reduction commitments at the summit, namely the Global Methane Alliance (methane emissions reduction), the Cool Coalition (cooling sector emissions reductions), and a Global Coalition on energy efficiency (countries, businesses and institutions). The Climate and Clean Air Coalition High-Level Assembly, planned to be held alongside the Summit, intends to put forward a 2030 Vision Statement on limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius and drastically reducing air pollution.
- **Resilience and adaptation:** The Global Commission on Adaptation launched its flagship report on adaptation on 10 September and was working towards the launch of its Year of Action at the summit.
- **Climate Finance & Carbon Pricing:** UNEP has been facilitating the development of the UN Net-zero Asset Owners Alliance and the Principles for Responsible Banking, intended to be launched at the summit and involving portfolios of trillions of dollars.
- **Mobilization:** UNEP has worked with the gaming industry for the past six months on their future carbon neutrality and on including climate change in their gaming platforms. To lay the ground towards the launch of the Playing for the Planet Alliance, UNEP secured the support of 10 CEOs representing companies with the ability to reach about 850 million players worldwide.

A preparatory meeting of the Summit was held in Abu Dhabi from 30 June to 1 July focusing on accelerating action and amplifying climate ambition. Leaders from governments and the private sector were invited to present plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The Executive Director led discussions on how nature can be a core part of the global strategy to tackle climate change.

BIODIVERSITY AND LAND USE

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

UNEP hosted the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group in Nairobi, Kenya, on 27-30 August. It enabled further discussion of the elements paper and resulted in the schedule of consultations with stakeholders in the run-up to China 2020. UNEP also made two technical

²⁵<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29705/190825NBSManifesto.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

submissions. This, together with its communications activities enhanced UNEP's visibility in biodiversity governance and synergies actions with MEAs and improved our engagement with the MEA secretariats.

Endangered Species

The Executive Director opened the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP18) to the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in August. In a sign of the growing emphasis on the responsible management of nature, species and biodiversity, the 2019 CITES COP had the largest agenda ever. In her speech, Ms. Andersen emphasized the core mandate of the CITES agreement and urged Parties to work better together by 'staying at the table within the CITES process'.²⁶ UNEP organized a side event on cooperation among MEAs post-2020

Land use and desertification

The fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in New Delhi, India, on 8–10 September. The UNCCD COP14 was a success in terms of its substance, visibility and political engagement. COP14 provided a solid narrative feeding into the upcoming Climate Action Summit and set the pace for other upcoming Rio Conventions' COPs. The Executive Director led the UNEP delegation. UNEP managed to position key issues related to the interlinkages of land degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss. UNEP also contributed to COP14's narrative by convening and contributing to discussions on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as sand and dust storms.

AFRICA

UNEP-United Nations Resident Coordinators Dialogue: on 2–3 September, UNEP organized a dialogue with Resident Coordinators from more than 30 African countries and Regional Representatives of other United Nations entities in Africa on United Nations country support for integrated environmental sustainability and climate action in the continent. The dialogue aimed at sharing, highlighting and discussing key environmental and climate challenges, opportunities and available solutions for Africa. The dialogue also provided an opportunity for UNEP, Resident Coordinators and other United Nations entities to examine how to cooperate jointly, effectively and efficiently to strengthen the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Discussions also covered key areas in which UNEP will contribute its expertise and services to the UNDS, and possible modalities for UNEP's to support the Resident Coordinators in response to country and regional objectives and needs.

²⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/speech/drivers-species-loss-are-multilateral-nature>.



UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen, engaging with Resident Coordinators and other participants during the UNEP-United Nations Resident Coordinators Dialogue on United Nations country support for Africa. September 2019, Nairobi, Kenya.

The dialogue provided a platform to discuss and develop joint actions on regional and country-level cooperation and to strengthen the implementation of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and Africa’s Agenda 2063 considering the UNDS reforms. With a view to accelerating environmental sustainability and climate actions at both the country and regional levels, the dialogue identified the following priority areas of cooperation between UNEP and Resident Coordinators in Africa:

- provision of data, information and knowledge resources, as well as tools and methodologies; and,
- advocacy for the environment and the creation of partnerships and platforms to support delivery at the country level (in addition to the need to continuously engage with the UNDS on the common areas of interest).



A group photo featuring the United Nations Resident Coordinators with UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen, UNEP Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Juliette Biao (right of the Executive Director) and United Nations Development Coordination Office Regional Director, Mr. Munyaradzi Chenje (left of the Executive Director). 2 September 2019, Nairobi, Kenya, at the UNEP-United Nations Resident Coordinators Dialogue.

Kigali Global Dialogue: The dialogue was held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July. The Deputy Executive Director spoke on climate change and sustainability, technological transformation, public health and human capital and situated gender quality at the core of these changes. The visit served to strengthen UNEP’s support with the Government of Rwanda on delivering an action-oriented Africa Green Growth event, provide expertise and advice on alternatives to single-use plastics and circular economy strategies.

African Leadership Forum: The forum was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August. The dialogue on transformative change was further reinforced at the forum, with the theme focused on natural resource management for socioeconomic transformation in Africa. The Deputy Executive Director’s participation at the forum sought to further strengthen cooperation with the Governments of Tanzania and other participating countries, as well as think tanks, on sustainable development.

Migration, Land Degradation and Sustainable Development Dialogue: A high-level policy dialogue on migration, land degradation and sustainable development in the G5-Sahel countries²⁷ was held in Burkina Faso on 25–27 July 2019. The dialogue was attended by G5-Sahel Ministers of the Environment and representatives of the African Union Commission,²⁸ various United Nations entities and other partners. G5-Sahel countries committed to align their national environmental policies and investment plans with the international, continental and regional initiatives relating to land degradation and migration; to raise awareness about the competitiveness of the related ecosystems, based on integrated promotion of landscape resilience, natural resource management, and their respective economic opportunities; and to promote the creation of green jobs for vulnerable groups through land restoration in order to combat the root causes of migration

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

UNDS reform: UNEP piloted a UNCT focal point system in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure that all regional subprogramme and development coordinators represent UNEP in at least one UNCT with backstopping support provided by the Regional Development Coordinator and a Junior Professional Officer.

Pollution control:

²⁷ <https://www.g5sahel.org/>.

²⁸ <https://au.int/en/commission>.

- In July, Nepal announced a National Environment Policy 2019 outlining the implementation of environment-related laws to control pollution, manage waste and promote greenery.²⁹
- Singapore’s Zero Waste Masterplan, released on 30 August, outlined plans to adopt a circular economy approach for waste as well as resource management practices to decrease the amount of waste in landfills.³⁰
- In July, India announced its 2019 budget, which includes tax benefits for investment in solar-powered infrastructure and tax breaks for individuals on the purchase of electric cars.³¹
- Thailand’s new Cabinet was announced in July and the new Minister of Natural Resources and Environment is H.E. Mr. Varawut Silpa-archa.³²

Biodiversity - Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment: The meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Senior Officials on the Environment was held in Bangkok on 8–9 July, and discussed mainstreaming biodiversity, the new ASEAN Heritage Parks nominations, protected area management, preparations for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity and ASEAN’s inputs to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution: The twenty-first meeting of the Steering Committee was held in Darussalam, Brunei, on 6 August. Participating countries pledged to remain vigilant and to monitor and intensify their haze prevention efforts to minimize any possible occurrence of transboundary smoke haze during periods of drier weather.

Twenty-ninth Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment (SPREP) Meeting of Officials: Representatives from Pacific Island nations met in Apia, Samoa, on 3–6 September to discuss the theme ‘Resilient Blue Pacific’. UNEP’s engagement in the Pacific was highlighted through support provided from the regional and subregional offices. The Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC),³³ which officially opened during this forum, is a partnership between the Governments of Japan and Samoa and SPREP.³⁴ It facilitates capacity-building and knowledge-sharing and provides support and training to address climate change.

²⁹ http://mofe.gov.np/downloadfile/National%20Environment%20Policy_1563366482.pdf and <https://www.nepal24hours.com/nepal-government-endorsed-national-environment-policy/>.

³⁰ <https://www.gov.sg/news/content/today-online---singapore-aims-to-cut-daily-waste-sent-to-landfill>.

³¹ <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budgetspeech.php>.

³² <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/1710151/new-cabinet-ministers-appointed>.

³³ <https://www.sprep.org/pacific-climate-change-centre>.

³⁴ <https://www.sprep.org>.



The Green Energy & Waste Recycling Forum was held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on 3–5 July 2019.

Kubuqi International Desert Forum: The seventh high-level Kubuqi International Desert Forum was held in Ordos, China, on 26–28 July, under the theme ‘Greening the Belt and Road, the Building of Ecological Civilization’. The forum focused on cooperation to prevent desertification in countries along Belt and Road routes, climate change, innovation and development of green finance, biodiversity protection and desertification control, and how to achieves the SDGs.

Tenth High-level Officials Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment: The meeting was held in Manila, the Philippines, on 26–28 September. Planning for continued integration of the environment, health and SDGs gained further momentum as senior officials from environment and health ministries and authorities of over 30 countries and territories gathered to review progress of the Regional Forum Implementation Plan (2017–2019), responding to the Manila Declaration, and to plan for the fifth Ministerial Forum in 2021.

North and Central Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: The forum and a workshop on ‘Leaving No One Behind: Inequality and Social Protection in North and Central Asia’, were held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, on 20–22 August. These aimed to foster a shared understanding among Member States and other stakeholders in North and Central Asia on cross-border challenges and ways forward to accelerate the balanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national and subregional levels. The event was attended by high-level government officials, United Nations Resident Coordinators and Country Team members from North and Central Asian countries, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia. The outcome report from the forum will be submitted to the seventh Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development, which will take place in 2020.

EUROPE

Tenth Anniversary Central Asian Leadership Programme (CALP) on Environment for Sustainable Development: The event was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 16–22 September. It was organized by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in cooperation with international partners supporting CALP, including UNEP. At the 2019 event, CALP brought together a renowned pool of more than 70 partners, speakers, trainers, experts and consultants from various international organizations, expert communities, national and regional partner organizations, companies and the media. 30 young professionals from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (5 from each country) working in state, non-governmental, academic and green business sectors were sensitized about UNEP’s mandate, its global campaigns and activities in Central Asia region as well as informed about global processes and platforms UNEP supports to facilitate cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development.

Green Energy & Waste Recycling Forum: The forum was held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on 3–5 July. This event is unique in Central Asia and is where government decision makers, international organizations and industry professionals in the field of green energy and waste management share their ideas, international experience and the best industrial and consumer waste recycling and utilization technologies. During a session on plastic pollution, UNEP’s national partner, KazWaste Association, presented the outcomes of the Beat Plastic Pollution campaign, along with recommendations from the ‘Single-use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability’ report.³⁵

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Leticia Pact for the Amazon: The pact was signed on 6 September by the Presidents of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as by Suriname and Guyana. The pact provides a framework for cooperation and coordinated actions for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the Amazon biome. Following increased attention and support for Amazon conservation due to the increase in fire incidents in 2019, different countries have offered financial and technical support to contain the fires in the Amazon. UNEP issued a statement on the fires in the Amazon rainforest.³⁶

³⁵ <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/single-use-plastics-roadmap-sustainability>.

³⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/statement/statement-inger-andersen-ongoing-fires-amazon-rainforest>

Coalition for the closure of dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean: The voluntary coalition of governments and relevant organizations for the progressive closure of dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean was launched in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 10–11 September. This coalition, already joined by 10 governments in the region and several international and regional organizations, was established by a decision of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and will contribute to the UNEA Implementation Plan ‘Towards a Pollution-free Planet’.

NORTH AMERICA

Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative joins the Clean Seas campaign: UNEP collaborated with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI) – the first river system in the world to join the Clean Seas campaign - to put into action their commitment to reduce plastic waste in the Mississippi River Valley by 20 per cent by 2020. A co-convened plastics reduction session was held on 18 September as part of the MRCTI’s Annual Meeting. This session brought together mayors, state legislators and private sector representatives to discuss practical ways to achieve the plastic reduction goal. Following this meeting, a forward action plan is to be developed in the coming months and mayors and state legislators have already begun discussing how to take action in the short term.

WEST ASIA

Arab States United Nations Regional Directors Meeting: The meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 25 July. Regional Directors addressed regional issues and defined a way forward on how to optimize and operationalize their respective roles in light of the United Nations reform. An action plan for the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between UNEP and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was signed on 26 July. Both parties agreed to jointly implement new regional initiatives in support of the UNDS reforms.

Regional workshop on assessing the environmental impacts of conflict in West Asia: The regional workshop was held in Amman, Jordan, on 22–25 July. For the first time, UNEP brought together government representatives of the four conflict-affected countries in the region (Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen), as well as Jordan (as host and recipient of a large Syrian refugee population). Participants exchanged views and shared experiences about the environmental impacts of conflicts. The workshop identified preliminary capacity needs and workplans for conducting the assessments in Syria and Yemen were developed.

Phasing out of plastic products in Bahrain: As of July, the Government of Bahrain has started phasing out the use of plastic products. The first phase is focused on single-use plastic bags and on banning the import of non-biodegradable plastic bags. Later phases will involve a permanent ban on the use of plastic bags at certain malls and supermarkets. The Government has also initiated a national clean-up campaign supported by UNEP.

Arab League: The Technical Committee for the Arab strategy on health and environment, which is supported by UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO), conducted consultations in July where participants agreed on a set of recommendations to operationalize the strategy and to hold a second joint health and environment ministerial meeting in 2020.

SECTION 2: PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE

During the reporting period, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continued to deliver on the following seven subprogrammes:

1. Climate change
2. Resilience to disasters and conflicts
3. Healthy and productive ecosystems
4. Environmental governance
5. Chemicals, waste and air quality
6. Resource efficiency
7. Environment under review

Key programmatic activity highlights in relation to the Expected Accomplishments of the approved **Programme of Work 2018–2019** are presented below, with key opportunities, challenges and risks highlighted. Interwoven into the elements of the Programme of Work are developments related to:

- **Environment Assembly resolutions** and how they are being implemented
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** linkages to the subprogrammes

1. CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Countries increasingly make the transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change.”

Expected Accomplishment – 1a

“Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystems-based adaptation.”³⁷

Global Commission on Adaptation:

- During the Commission’s third meeting in **Bangladesh**, more than 100 local stakeholders shared adaptation solutions and feedback with the Commission.
- On 10 September, the Commission launched its synthesis report³⁸ on global climate adaptation needs, which calls on governments and businesses to take urgent action to **innovate and advance climate adaptation solutions** considering its new research findings.

Climate finance: UNEP supported **Eco Bank Ghana** to become accredited as a Direct Access Entity by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), by enhancing its institutional capacity and development of institutional standards such as international fiduciary standards.³⁹

National Adaptation Planning:

- **Eswatini, Mauritania and Zimbabwe** launched National Action Planning (NAP) Readiness activities.
- **Nepal**, with UNEP support, brought together more than 200 provincial and 80 national stakeholders in July/August and successfully initiated a bottom-up adaptation planning process and validation of needs under the GCF National Adaptation Plan project.
- **Dominican Republic** launched the project *Developing Capacities to Advance the National Adaptation Plan* in July.⁴⁰ The project aims to strengthen the country’s planning framework to address medium and long-term adaptation needs due to its high vulnerability to extreme weather events. The project is supported by UNEP, with a \$3 million contribution from the GCF.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA): The **Gambia** GCF EbA project has provided technical support and capacity building on green economy master planning and the development of

³⁷ Linked to UNEP resolution UNEP/EA.2/Res.6 and SDGs 13.1, 13.2, 13.3.2, 13.a and 13.b.

³⁸ See https://cdn.gca.org/assets/2019-09/GlobalCommission_Report_FINAL.pdf.

³⁹ Press release available at: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/news/green-climate-fund-board-approves-usd-267-million-for-climate-action-agrees-decision-making-procedures>.

⁴⁰ See <http://web.unep.org/ganadapt/press-release/dominican-republic-develops-national-adaptation-plan>.

certification systems by natural resource-based businesses, on market analysis and development planning, and on business development.

Expected Accomplishment – 1b

“Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies.”⁴¹

Cooling: G7 countries pledged to take immediate steps to improve energy efficiency in the cooling sector while phasing down hydrofluorocarbons during the forty-fifth G7 Summit held in Biarritz, France (24–26 August). The Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) launched the Efficient Cooling Initiative and countries launched the Biarritz Pledge for Fast Action on Efficient Cooling.⁴²

Jobs and clean energy: UNEP, in partnership with Power for All, launched the #PoweringJobs campaign⁴³ in July, to raise awareness about job creation opportunities that accompany growth in clean energy markets, particularly within the solar photovoltaic market.

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC): In July, UNEP supported **Senegal** to strengthen its political framework to boost its NDC implementation, resulting in an integrated municipal solid waste management strategy.

Climate emissions and air pollution: The CCAC introduced⁴⁴ Argentinian farming methods to reduce air pollution and climate emissions and conserve soil fertility compared to traditional open burning. A pilot was carried out in **Peru** and the **Indian Himalayas** to compare two plots, one managed using the Argentinian methods and the other using traditional methods involving open burning. The alternative Argentinian farming methods plot produced double the yield and decreased costs by approximately one-third, demonstrating economically viable alternatives to burning.

Gender and renewable energy: In September, UNEP organized in Bangkok, **Thailand**, the first ever Round-table Discussion⁴⁵ on the link between **gender and renewable energy** across pillars

⁴¹ UNEP/EA.3/Res.8 (SDGs 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.2.17.3.1, 7.a.1, 7.b.1, 9.4.1, 12.c.1, 13.3.2, 13.a, 13.b, 17.17.1).

⁴² See <https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/06/306cf93611abfad315fbc8ebce8e86dc27282363.pdf>.

⁴³ See <https://unepdtu.org/unlocking-the-full-potential-of-africas-green-energy/>.

⁴⁴ See <https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/news/pioneer-argentinian-farming-method-reduces-air-pollution-and-climate-emissions>.

⁴⁵ See

https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/1982707/1_AEBF19/EmPower%20at%20ASEAN%20Energy%20Business%20Forum_%205%20Sept.pdf?utm_campaign=AEBF19_Confprom&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=76333738&hsenc=p2ANqtz--N45Lmjv0fcnpaCDEhE5uNn91Ea4UwvypTSaXRaMwLGgQF2xK77S_SZ0xMsOefXcfHRzJEJwhpLvBXcDkTQa814Ei7Wg&hsmi=76333738.

of policy, finance, capacity and technology. The discussion⁴⁶ gathered key recommendations on **gender-inclusive climate solutions** to inform the United Nations Climate Action Summit. It presented a unique exhibit that uses augmented reality to raise awareness of ways to empower women in the face of climate change.

Climate campaign: In September, UNEP launched a new campaign in North America to magnify the #ActNow campaign, which is the United Nations’ global call to individual action on climate change. The campaign is a critical part of the United Nations’ coordinated effort to raise awareness, ambition and action for climate change in the lead-up to the United Nations Climate Action Summit and beyond.

Expected Accomplishment – 1c

“Countries increasingly adopt and implement forest-friendly policies and measures that deliver quantifiable emissions reductions as well as social and environmental benefits.”⁴⁷

Peatlands: The Global Peatlands Initiative, UNEP and key peatland scientists created a video⁴⁸ capturing how vital peatlands are to fast-track climate action as a nature-based “super solution”.

REDD+:

- **The REDD+ Environmental Excellency Standard (TREES):** TREES was launched for public comment by the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions initiative. The development of safeguards elements for the TREES initiative was supported by the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD).
- **Côte d’Ivoire** published its first safeguards summary in July.⁴⁹
- **Myanmar** held a national workshop in June to refine the country’s proposed national safeguards information system design, involving multiple stakeholders. The first draft of Myanmar’s Safeguards Summary of Information was also prepared and reviewed by a multi-stakeholder drafting group.
- In **Indonesia**, the UN-REDD Programme held a dialogue in August on the national action plan for a sustainable palm oil industry, facilitated by the Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture.
- The **Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Climate Week** took place in August in Salvador, Brazil. The UN-REDD LAC regional team participated in the dialogue on NDCs in Latin America, where discussions focused on how to help countries strengthen their NDCs,

⁴⁶See https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/f0e05f_1db87e607a5a445f96a0eafa0f7c4450.pdf.

⁴⁷ UNEP/EA.2/Res.6 and SDGs 12.c.1, 13.3.2, 13.a, 13.b, 15.1.1, 15.2.1, 15.3.1, 15.6.1 and 17.17.1.

⁴⁸ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCVYPkHT1U8>.

⁴⁹ See <https://redd.unfccc.int/submissions.html?country=civ>.

considering the possibilities of greater coverage, ambition and taking advantage of the lessons learned in the progress made to date. UN-REDD also led a session on the progress and challenges of REDD+ payments in the thematic block of nature-based solutions.

- **Chile**⁵⁰ and **Paraguay**⁵¹ put initial versions of their REDD+ safeguards information systems online and **Paraguay** published its first safeguards summary of information. These new advances have made both countries eligible to receive results-based payments for REDD+.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.encrv.cl/sis>.

⁵¹ See <http://dncc.mades.gov.py/sistema-de-informacion-de-salvuardas>.

2. RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Countries increasingly prevent and reduce the environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts, while building resilience to future crises.”⁵²

Expected Accomplishment – 2a

“Countries and international partners integrate environmental measures for risk reduction in key policies and frameworks.”

Ecosystem-based approaches for disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR):

- UNEP is scaling up Eco-DRR at country, regional and global levels, with support from the European Union and the Government of Norway.
- In Thrissur, **India**, a technical workshop was held in August with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration to explore possibilities for Eco-DRR to enhance community resilience. The objective is to create a model for larger-scale Eco-DRR implementation.
- In **Colombia**, in August, UNEP and the Javeriana University trained government, academic and civil society representatives on Eco-DRR. UNEP also convened a symposium with experts from Latin America and Colombia to encourage more research and training in the region, and trained instructors at 25 universities and other institutions from Latin America.
- In August, an environmental and hazardous materials expert was deployed to **Mauritius** by the UNEP-OCHA⁵³ Joint Environment Unit (JEU) with support of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. The mission, in support of the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), came at the request of the Government of Mauritius to assess national capacities for disaster risk reduction.

Eco-DRR and infrastructure: UNEP has started working with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to promote national reporting on ecosystems and investments in “green” and “blue” infrastructure for risk reduction in the Sendai Monitor, which tracks implementation of the Sendai Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. UNEP and UNDRR will develop technical guidance for Member States to report on progress on green/blue infrastructure.

Natural resources and climate resilience: UNEP is also working with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations entities to

⁵² The programme is relevant to the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as external shocks such as natural disasters, industrial accidents and especially armed conflict have proven to be extremely powerful ‘brakes’ on development. However, UNEP specifically aims to deliver on SDGs 1, 11, 13 and 16.

⁵³ OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

develop the analysis and an action plan for the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa on natural resources and climate resilience.

Expected Accomplishment – 2b

“Emergency response and post-crisis recovery plans integrate environmental considerations to increase the sustainability of recovery.”

The UNEP-OCHA JEU supported the United Nations Disaster and Coordination (UNDAC) team response to Hurricane Dorian in **the Bahamas** in September. The JEU is providing direct support to the Ministry of Environment on impact assessment and recovery efforts. Hazardous materials have been mapped and some smaller leaks identified, with advice also provided on how to oversee the recovery from an oil spill at a storage facility. Disaster waste management is a key priority, with UNEP supporting the development of a strategy and action plan for the **Caribbean region**.

In July, JEU supported the OSCE-led⁵⁴ training for the Environmental Focal Points of the Special Monitoring Mechanism for **Ukraine**. This support focused on the assessing and sharing of environmental information in crisis contexts.

Environmental risks in humanitarian action: The Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+),⁵⁵ an innovative mobile application that helps humanitarian actors rapidly assess environmental risks, was piloted in August in the Bidibidi refugee camp in **Uganda** by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the JEU and UNEP’s MapX team. NRC is planning a rollout of the tool across the Eastern Africa region. The Government of **Uganda** has requested that the tool be incorporated into environmental mainstreaming guidance for in-country humanitarian actors. The latest version of the NEAT+ tool not only identifies environmental risks but also proposes mitigation measures. The tool will next be tested by NRC in **Myanmar** and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) **globally**.

Expected Accomplishment – 2c

“Crisis-affected countries adopt key environmental and natural resource governance policies and sustainable practices as a contribution to recovery and development.”

Ecosystems restoration: UNEP has been supporting the establishment of the Haitian Biodiversity Fund (HBF) in **Haiti**. The Fund, designed to catalyse the financing of ecosystems

⁵⁴ OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

⁵⁵ See <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/digital-tracking-environmental-risks-offers-insights-humanitarian-actors>.

restoration and environmental recovery, was legally established in May, and in July the first General Assembly and Board were appointed. The French Development Agency, German Development Bank and the World Bank have pledged support amounting to \$13 million, \$10 million and \$3 million, respectively.

Post-conflict recovery:

- As part of ongoing support to the Government of **Iraq** in addressing the pollution caused in the conflict against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), UNEP has organized a practical field-based training on the clean-up of oil-contaminated sites in Kirkuk. This technical assistance is being carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and is hosted by the state-owned North Oil Company. The training, funded by the Government of Norway Oil for Development (OfD) programme, is part of a package of technical assistance designed to support Iraq’s post-conflict recovery.
- UNEP has continued supporting **Afghanistan** with the development of its first National Environment Policy, notably within a policy and contextual analysis and review. This support on environmental governance and policy is being provided following a request from Afghanistan’s National Environment Protection Agency. UNDP is also supporting this work.

Post-conflict natural resource management: In **Somalia**, the Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range, supported by UNEP, held a stakeholder meeting in August to validate the National Charcoal Policy. The policy addresses illegal charcoal exports and the means to conserve remaining forests. The Ministry will soon present the policy to the parliament of Somalia. UNEP has also presented to the Director General of Environment of Somalia a final draft of a State of Environment and Gaps Analysis report for Somalia.



Some of the female participants during a stakeholders’ engagement meeting on Somalia’s National Charcoal Policy, August 2019. The participation of women in policy formulation is key to inclusive policy development in Somalia.

3. HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE ECOSYSTEMS

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are increasingly managed through an integrated approach that enables them to maintain and restore biodiversity, ecosystems’ long-term functioning and supply of ecosystem goods and services.”

Expected Accomplishment – 3a

“The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels.”

Great apes: During the Conference of Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented the status report on great apes and their habitat⁵⁶ whose recommendations were fed into an amendment of the resolution on great apes. The report recommends the CITES Parties to, *inter alia*, increase law enforcement efforts by ensuring that existing laws are effectively applied and appropriate judicial processes are adhered to, such as through training of customs agents to profile suspect shipments and identify animal species to combat cross-border illegal trade.

Ocean governance: In September, a regional ocean governance workshop for the **Western Indian Ocean** (WIO) region was held in the Seychelles. The workshop focused on the governance needs and structure of a regional ocean governance strategy and ensured alignment with national and regional priorities, the SDGs, the ocean dimension of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Decade for Ocean Science.

Coral reefs: In August, in Mahé, Seychelles, UNEP and the International Coral Reef Initiative trained 30 Marine Protected Area Professionals from **Kenya, the Seychelles and Tanzania** on ecological monitoring of coral reefs, sea grass, mangroves and beach habitats in marine protected areas.

Transboundary landscape management: In August, government representatives of **Bhutan, India and Nepal** held a dialogue on “exploring options for transboundary cooperation towards resilience building in the eastern Himalayas”. This resulted in a shared understanding of the need to strengthen transboundary cooperation in eastern Himalayas landscape management, with

⁵⁶ See

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331210139_IUCN_GRASP_Report_to_the_CITES_Standing_Committee_on_the_Status_of_Great_Apes.

specific priority issues and activities identified by the participants for future efforts and being incorporated in the joint proposal for a project among the three countries.

Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP): In August, the seventeenth Focal Points meeting of NOWPAP’s Data and Information Networking Regional Activity Center was held in Dalian, **China**. The meeting discussed the 2020–2021 workplan, focusing on red list species and marine environmental data-collection.

Expected Accomplishment – 3b

“Policymakers in the public and private sectors test the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making.”

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB):

- The **Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (TEEBAgriFood)**⁵⁷ framework has been adopted and endorsed by inter-institutional and high-level steering committees in **China** and **Indonesia**.
- In **Indonesia**, the work will focus on agroforestry. Twenty-eight national stakeholders explored policy opportunities for improving biodiversity and human livelihood outcomes in the Indonesian agriculture and food sector, ultimately agreeing to focus on the promotion of alternatives to the expansion of monoculture.
- In **Mexico** and **Thailand**, where the framework was already endorsed, the policy aspect for the agricultural sector that the framework will analyse has been further refined.
- In **China**, in August, TEEB launched agriculture and food workshops where over 30 national stakeholders convened to explore possible policy opportunities for improving biodiversity outcomes in the Chinese agriculture and food sector and payments for ecosystems services for grassland restoration.

Natural capital accounting:

- The development of ecosystem accounts to monitor ecosystem health and productivity is under way in **Mexico** and **South Africa**, further to the discussions of the inter-institutional Working Group on Natural Capital Accounting.⁵⁸
- At the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework National Dialogue in **Uganda** in August, the role of natural capital accounting was highlighted by TEEB as a tool for mainstreaming and making the values of nature visible in decision-making.

⁵⁷ See <http://teebweb.org/agrifood/home/evaluation-framework/>

⁵⁸ UNEA-2 resolution on Sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication. See http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11188/K1607246_UNEPEA2_RES13E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

- A replicable model for deforestation-free and climate-resilient agricultural production is now available to governments further to the Zero Budget Natural Farming project in Andhra Pradesh, **India**, supported by UNEP through the Sustainable India Finance Facility (SIFF).

Poverty-Environment Initiative: The publication *Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Lessons on Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development from the Poverty-Environment Initiative 2005–2018*⁵⁹, published in July, brings together 10 lessons learned and good practices from the initiative’s country-level experience in mainstreaming poverty-environment objectives into national, sectoral and subnational development planning, implementation and monitoring systems.

⁵⁹ See <https://povertyenvironmentactionhome.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/lessons-learned-version-3.pdf>.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development.”⁶⁰

Expected Accomplishment – 4a

“The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Environmental and social standards: The United Nations Environment Management Group has adopted in July a common approach⁶¹ to environmental and social standards for programmes, to ensure that the United Nations’ social and environmental standards are based on international conventions and that they avoid multiple interpretations of what this means in the context of programming.

Environment and human rights: UNEP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights signed an agreement in August to enhance collaboration on human rights and the environment. The collaboration aims at bringing environmental protection closer to the people by assisting state and non-state actors to promote, protect and respect environmental and human rights.

Environmental Management Systems: Since August, United Nations entities worldwide now have access to a new digital tool⁶² to design and implement their Environmental Management Systems. The online data management tool,⁶³ developed by Greening the Blue, enables United Nations entities to turn their engagement on environmental sustainability into action.

Expected Accomplishment – 4b

“Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.”

⁶⁰ Highlights support implementation of UNEA resolutions 2/2, 2/5, 2/17, 2/19, and 2/21.

⁶¹ See https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/FINAL_Model_Approach_ES-Standards.pdf

⁶² See <https://emstoolkit.org>, created by the Greening the Blue team.

⁶³ See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Llj5_sZdHM.

The *Legal Readiness for Climate Finance: Private Sector Opportunities* report⁶⁴ was launched in July.

Legal aspects of mitigating impacts of plastics and waste:⁶⁵

- UNEP co-organized a **regional** workshop in Malaysia on strengthening institutional capacities, that identified the absence of legal provisions to cover certain issues relating to the illegal trade in plastic waste, such as the repatriation of waste.
- UNEP and the World Resource Institute developed a **legislative guidance tool on single-use plastics**.⁶⁶
- A training workshop was held in Latin America to discuss the **preparation of a customs curriculum in the region**.
- UNEP and Operation Green Earth partnered to raise awareness on **illegal trade in waste**, under the overall coordination of the World Customs Organization.



Faith for Earth: The Faith for Earth initiative continued to collaborate with faith-based organizations on environmental issues at events, such as with the Vatican.⁶⁷ For example, the Second International Conference on Laudato Si, held in, Nairobi in July, brought together 300 faith and young leaders representing more than 50 countries and different religions, where discussions on ‘care for our common home’ were prominent. Another example is the fourth annual Water and Faith event at the 2019 World Water Week, which discussed mobilizing local faith actors on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to achieve SDG6 on water.^{68,69}

⁶⁴ The report sets out characteristics of the legal and regulatory dimensions of climate finance and is available at http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28219/2019law_clim_fin-rprt.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁶⁵ These are responses to United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions 4/6 on Marine plastic litter and micro-plastics, and 4/9 on Addressing single-use plastic products pollution.

⁶⁶ UNEP is also developing an interactive online single-use plastic legislative toolkit consisting of a database of single-use plastics legislation across the world. The toolkit will also allow countries to assess the effectiveness of their single-use plastics legislation and will further provide case studies on how countries have initiated and developed regulatory frameworks on single-use plastics.

⁶⁷ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/vatican-and-un-environment-bring-faith-organizations-together-care-our>

⁶⁸ <https://www.worldwaterweek.org/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.worldwaterweek.org/event/8691-water-and-faith-mobilizing-local-faith-actors-to-achieve-sdg6>



15 –16 July 2019, Nairobi, Kenya. Second International Conference on Laudato Si. Photo credit: UNEP/Iyad Abumoghli

5. CHEMICALS, WASTE AND AIR QUALITY

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Sound management of chemicals and waste and improved air quality contribute to a healthier environment and better health for all.”

Expected Accomplishment – 5a

“Policies and legal, institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for sound chemicals management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).”

Beyond 2020 process: The UK hosted a technical expert workshop in Cambridge (3–5 September) on potential indicators and supporting data to measure the draft targets for the Beyond 2020 process on the sound management of chemicals and waste. The main findings of this workshop will be presented at a technical briefing at the third meeting of the intersessional process in Bangkok (30 September).

Lead in paint:

- **Bangladesh** was the seventy-third country to adopt a technical standard of 90 parts per million total lead in paint. Globally, 34 per cent of countries have adopted lead paint laws. Seven new partners have been accepted to the Lead Paint Alliance and a draft set of paint reformulation guidelines are being piloted in selected small- and medium-sized paint enterprises.
- Four **regional** workshops were held to assist countries in adopting lead paint laws.^{70, 71} Country representatives and experts from Africa met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in August, to review a regional project proposal on waste lead-acid batteries management.

Ozone-depleting substances and Kigali Amendment:

- The **Viet Nam** Government approved its ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol in September.⁷²

⁷⁰ Europe: Almaty, Kazakhstan, 26–27 March; Africa: Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, 29–30 May; Latin America and the Caribbean: Panama City, Panama, 12–13 June; Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok, Thailand, 21–22 August.

⁷¹ Pursuant to UNEA 3/9 Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries.

⁷² The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer aims to reduce the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, which are potent greenhouse gases, and thus avoid global warming of up to 0.4°C this century.

- UNEP conducted a mission to Damascus, **Syria**, in July, to launch the implementation of the Kigali Enabling Activities project and initiate the preparation of the Hydrofluorocarbons Phase Out Management Plan (HPMP) Stage II.
- UNEP signed an agreement with the **Jordan Building Council** under the Ministry of Housing to assist in updating the Arab Unified Building Insulation Code.
- UNEP signed an agreement with **Oman** to support national efforts to implement the Kigali Enabling Activities.

Pollution and health: International experts and experts from the Ministry of Environment and Health, Government of India, met to finalize the draft report on *Pollution and Human Capital for India*.

Chemicals inventory: A comprehensive training was delivered to 60 **Iraqi** experts on inventory development for mercury and Persistent Organic Pollutants, as well as on the globally harmonized system for chemicals.

Expected Accomplishment – 5b

“Policies and legal and institutional and fiscal strategies and mechanisms for waste prevention and sound management developed or implemented in countries within the framework of relevant multilateral environmental agreements.”

E-waste: The United Nations University and UNEP produced a foresight paper on e-waste – *Future E-waste Scenarios*⁷³ – that looks at six aspects of e-waste (technology, impacts, management, policies, businesses and users) and how they are affecting the e-waste stream. The paper outlines three potential future scenarios of e-waste.

Marine litter and plastics:

- A National Marine Litter Data-Collection Training Workshop was held for 32 participants from government institutions, civil society nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and universities. Baseline data will serve to inform both the National Source Inventory for Marine Litter in Kenya and a National Action Plan on Marine Litter for Kenya.⁷⁴
- On 2 August, the city of **Kitakyushu**,⁷⁵ Japan, and UNEP confirmed their intention to partner to tackle plastic pollution in **Southeast Asia**. Kitakyushu plans to use its Asian Center for Low

⁷³ http://www.step-initiative.org/files/_documents/publications/FUTURE%20E-WASTE%20SCENARIOS_UNU_190829_low_screen.pdf

⁷⁴ <https://environmentlive.unep.org/egm/kenyamarinelitter>

⁷⁵ Kitakyushu is a city with one of the greatest environmental comeback stories of the twentieth century: it was transformed from industrial wasteland to the first ‘Eco Town’ in Japan. Hundreds of species of marine life now live in Dokai Bay in Kitakyushu, which was once nicknamed the ‘Sea of Death’. Since 2010, Kitakyushu has implemented more than 192 projects in waste

Carbon Society to support local governments in Thailand and Cambodia in implementing effective waste management plans.

- To support the implementation of the revised Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter,⁷⁶ COBSEA and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter organized a training of trainers on the *Guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of plastic litter and microplastics in the ocean* (9–13 September).

Waste management: In June, **Bhutan** launched its National Waste Management Strategy, developed jointly with UNEP’s International Environmental Technology Centre. The strategy includes short- and long-term targets, financing mechanisms, and gender aspects in waste management pursuant to resolution 4/7.⁷⁷

Expected Accomplishment – 5c

“National emissions sources identified, policies, legal, regulatory, fiscal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms for the reduction of air pollution developed, institutional capacity built for improved air quality, and air quality assessments done by countries with UNEP support.”

Sand and dust storms: In September, the Secretary-General released his report on *Sand and Dust Storms*. A technical meeting on Sand and Dust Storms was held at the UNCCD COP14 in India, with participants from different UN System entities. It agreed on the Terms of Reference of the United Nations Coalition on Sand and Dust Storms which UNEP and UNCCD launched the following day.

Air pollution, health and economy:⁷⁸

- **Ghana, Ethiopia and Rwanda** have started to explore the impact of air pollution on their human capital and wealth. A scoping study for **China** aims to better understand the impact of air pollution on human capital and the economy.
- In **Thailand**, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on 15 August between UNEP and government agencies responsible for environment and health in order to strengthen cooperation on environmental and health issues under the United Nations

management, water supply, waste treatment and air pollution control in 78 cities across 16 countries. The new collaboration will expand the support to areas such as plastic waste management.

⁷⁶ The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) is a regional intergovernmental policy forum and the sole decision-making body for the East Asian Seas Action Plan, supporting participating countries (Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Viet Nam) in the development and protection of the marine environment and coastal areas of East Asian Seas. A revision of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was adopted at the twenty-fourth Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA in Bali, Indonesia, on 19–20 June 2019.

⁷⁷ Resolution 4/7, section 2(c): Assist Member States in the use of best available techniques and best environmental practices in solid waste management.

⁷⁸ Further to the implementation plan of UNEA 4/21: Towards a pollution-free planet.

Development Account (UNDA)-funded project “Air Quality Assessments for Health and Environment Policies in Africa and Asia Pacific”.

- TransJakarta Bus Rapid Transit System is rolling out a trial programme of electric buses on certain routes in **Jakarta**, Indonesia. UNEP has worked closely with the Governor’s office and TransJakarta to support this transition, providing technical advice on electric bus specifications and integration into public transit systems. UNEP is also supporting efforts to implement Euro 4 emissions and fuel quality standards and a pollution tax for vehicles, which could help significantly reduce air pollutants.

Acid deposition: The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) and its partners organized the Awareness Forum on Prevention of Air Pollution in Asia Pacific in Bangkok (25–27 June). More than 130 participants from 16 countries participated in this event, which included a site visit to the Automotive Emission Laboratory of the Pollution Control Department and to the monitoring station of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

6. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Countries transition to sustainable development through multiple pathways, including inclusive green economy and trade, and the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns, increasingly decoupling economic growth from unsustainable resource use and environmental impacts while improving human well-being.”

Expected Accomplishment – 6a

“Science-based approaches that support the transition to sustainable development through multiple pathways, including inclusive green economy and sustainable trade, and the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns at all levels.”

International Resource Panel (IRP): The *Land Restoration for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*⁷⁹ report was launched at the UNCCD COP14. It provides strategies to maximize the benefits of land restoration and rehabilitation for life on land, with positive spin-offs across all 17 SDGs.



Launch of the IRP *Land Restoration for Achieving the SDGs* report, New Delhi, India, 5 September 2019

SWITCH-Asia II:

- Under the SWITCH-Asia II regional policy advocacy component, UNEP is working with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) to support **India** on monitoring and reporting for SDG 12. This will contribute to the national reporting process, which feeds into the international voluntary reporting process (VNR).

⁷⁹ <https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/land-restoration-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>

- UNEP is supporting **China** to improve its knowledge on sustainable consumption and production through a review of existing policies and activities, in collaboration with the China Environmental United Certification Centre.
- The SWITCH-Asia II launch event in Central Asia⁸⁰ was co-organized in July by the SWITCH-Asia Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Facility, the European Commission and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Central Asian countries will benefit from two components under the programme: the SCP Facility that promotes information sharing and cooperation, and the grant scheme to finance pilot projects, with the aim of providing more evidence and rationale for an enhanced policy dialogue with national governments and regional/subregional organizations.

Green economy:

- The first green economy workshop in **Oman** was held (20–21 Aug).
- The *Inclusive green economy: Policies and Practice*⁸¹ was launched in June. It was published by UNEP, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment and Tongji University.

Expected Accomplishment – 6b

“Public, private and financial sectors increasingly adopt and implement sustainable management frameworks and practices.”

Sustainable tourism: UNEP has been supporting the **Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Mauritius and Saint Lucia** to develop sustainable tourism policies⁸² for low-carbon and resource-efficient tourism. After two years of research and data collection in tourism value chains in these countries, key environmental hotspots have been identified and translated into national road maps that set clear targets for the tourism sector that are aligned to SDG targets.

Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE): In July, **Burkina Faso** adopted the National Strategy on Green Economy,⁸³ marking a major milestone in the country’s inclusive green economy transition. The strategy promotes the creation, development and consolidation of a critical mass of competitive, sustainable, value-adding industries and decent-job providers, primarily in the transformation of local raw materials.

⁸⁰ <https://www.switch-asia.eu/news/switch-asia-launch-event-in-central-asia-paves-the-way-for-boosting-innovation-and-mainstreaming-sus/>

⁸¹ <https://greeneconomytextbook.org>

⁸² <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/resources>

⁸³ <https://www.un-page.org/burkina-faso-adopts-national-strategy-green-economy>

Expected Accomplishment – 6c

“Public and private sectors increasingly aware of and support the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns.”

Sustainable lifestyles: UNEP hosted, on 12 September, the launch event in Paris, France, of the Anatomy of Action,⁸⁴ a social media tool kit developed with the UnSchool of Disruptive Design.⁸⁵ A contribution to the One Planet Network's Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme,⁸⁶ it provides evidence-based messages and means for people to live more sustainably every day in the areas of Food, Stuff, Move, Money and Fun.

Consumer information: UNEP released 18 cases studies⁸⁷ showing how the *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information* were applied. A training of trainers toolkit and an online self-assessment tool are available to support implementation of the guidelines within companies and countries. In addition, a webinar on the use of the guidelines was jointly delivered with the Secretariat for Consumer Protection of **Paraguay** in September.

Food loss and waste: UNEP, in collaboration with the FAO, the Alliance to End Hunger and the Congressional Food Recovery Caucus jointly convened a briefing⁸⁸ on 12 September, in Washington D.C., USA, for congressional staff and other stakeholders on the topic of reducing the environmental and social costs of food loss and waste in North America and around the world.



UNEP North America Director Barbara Hendrie addresses the congressional briefing on Reducing Food Loss and Waste, 12 September, Washington D.C., USA.

⁸⁴ <https://www.anatomyofaction.org>

⁸⁵ <https://www.unschools.co>

⁸⁶ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-lifestyles-and-education>

⁸⁷ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/consumer-information-scp/product-sustainability-information-hub>

⁸⁸ <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reducing-the-environmental-and-social-costs-of-food-loss-and-waste-tickets-69443418133>

7. ENVIRONMENT UNDER REVIEW

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development.”

Expected Accomplishment – 7a

“Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action.”

Corporate sustainability reporting: Corporate sustainability reporting stimulates private sector actions towards creating a more sustainable planet. SDG indicator 12.6.1 encourages companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. In September, UNEP finalized a methodology for monitoring corporate reporting under SDG indicator 12.6.1. This methodology was agreed upon by the Inter-agency and Expert Groups on SDG Indicators.

Global Environment Outlook 6: Communication and outreach around the GEO-6 is ongoing. Its summary for policymakers is available in German, Japanese, Italian and Czech, in addition to the six United Nations languages. Several outreach products to disseminate GEO-6 key messages to specific target audiences are under development, including: GEO-6 for Youth, for Cities, for Business and for the Scientific/Academic community.

Ocean assessments:

- UNEP continues to engage with partners on ocean assessment activities, including the Regular Process (World Ocean Assessment), which has received nominations to add to the Group of Experts for its second phase.
- A GEO-6 webinar on the chapters on state and policy of oceans was held, presenting the key findings of the two chapters together with an overview of UNEP’s ocean activities.
- The steering committee on the Future of the Global Environment Outlook was set up. It includes 36 Member States and the European Union. Two online meetings (24 Jul; 12 Sep 2019) were held in preparation of the forthcoming inception meeting in Prague, Czech Republic (31 Oct–1 Nov 2019).

Emissions Gap Report (EGR) 2019: The launch of the full 2019 EGR report is planned for the end of November 2019. In August, at the second steering committee of the 2019 EGR, its

chapters were reviewed and the products to be launched on 23 September at the Climate Action Summit were agreed and reviewed:

- A 10-year synthesis of EGR lessons learned
- A two-page EGR Summary for the United Nations Climate Science Synthesis Report (with WMO and IPCC)
- A pre-launch chapter on the role of G20 countries in mitigating emissions.

World Water Quality Alliance: UNEP convened the second Global Meeting of the World Water Quality Alliance, hosted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission in Ispra, Italy, on 6–18 September. A declaration is forthcoming. Recognizing the multiple dimensions of the global water quality challenge and as a direct response to UNEA resolution 3/10, the alliance brings together over 50 water experts from the United Nations agencies, scientific research institutions, universities, space agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, of which some 10 voluntarily support the UNEP World Water Quality assessment and six will launch and engage in the first global task group on ground water. The innovative dimension of the alliance is reflected in its multifaceted and synergistic approach to water quality – which not only delivers an integrated and forward-looking assessment – but is involving science, technology, ecosystems- and community-based approaches, as well as strong engagement of and knowledge from the private sector to trigger transformation at scale. The Alliance with UNEP coordinating has since its emergence in November 2018 generated about \$5 million in cash, in-kind and as pro bono support.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements and SDGs: To improve collaborative environmental reporting on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the SDGs at the national and regional levels,⁸⁹ the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Pacific regional cross-cutting capacity development (Inform) project⁹⁰ held a regional meeting for 14 Pacific Island countries.⁹¹ Its midterm review process was launched and a national validation workshop was held on the Papua New Guinea 2019 State of Environment Report.⁹²

⁸⁹ Further to the UNEA-4 Ministerial Declaration (Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production) and the 2025 Global Environmental Data Strategy: <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/unea-4-commits-to-global-environmental-data-strategy-reducing-single-use-plastics/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.sprep.org/inform>

⁹¹ <https://www.sprep.org/news/inform-project-meeting-reviews-impacts-on-improved-environmental-reporting>

⁹² <https://www.sprep.org/news/papua-new-guinea-stakeholders-meet-to-validate-state-of-environment-report>



Meeting of the Pacific regional UNEP-GEF Inform project, 19 August, Apia, Samoa

Data sharing: The Asia-Pacific Regional Environmental Data Knowledge-Sharing, Capacity Strengthening and Strategic Pathways workshop was held in Bangkok (22–25 July). Under a UNEP/European Commission project, more than 30 governmental officials and national experts from **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal and Thailand** met to strengthen national capacity for sharing and reporting environmentally relevant and reliable data and information in order to achieve the SDGs and support science-based decision-making.

SECTION 3: RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

This section of the report focuses on human resources and management issues, provides an update on audits and evaluation work, and highlights lessons for future work. Financial information is not available at the time the advanced version of the report is shared with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and will be shared subsequently.

3.1 HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW

General overview

As at 30 September, UNEP staff totalled 1,230, comprising 744 professional personnel and 486 general service personnel, of which 748 were female and 482 were male.

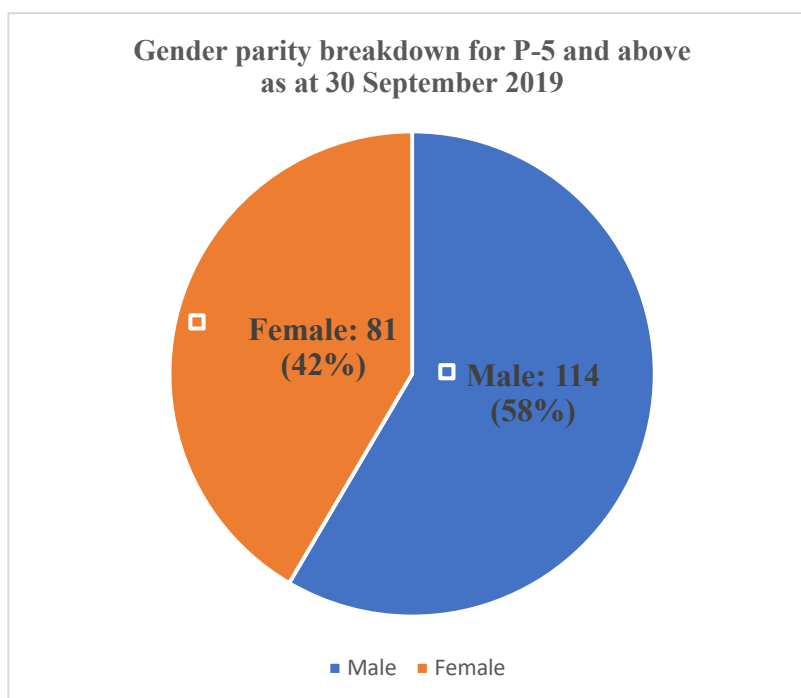
Total staff at grade P-5 and above as at 30 September 2019

Level	USG	ASG	D-2	D-1	P-5
No. of Staff	1	3	9	52	130

Note: USG = Under-Secretary-General; ASG = Assistant Secretary-General; D = Director; P = Professional.

Gender parity status

UNEP met or exceeded four of nine required gender parity targets for 2019 as at 31 August. UNEP will continue its efforts to ensure that it is within the range of parity as defined by the United Nations Secretariat, i.e., 47–53 per cent women.

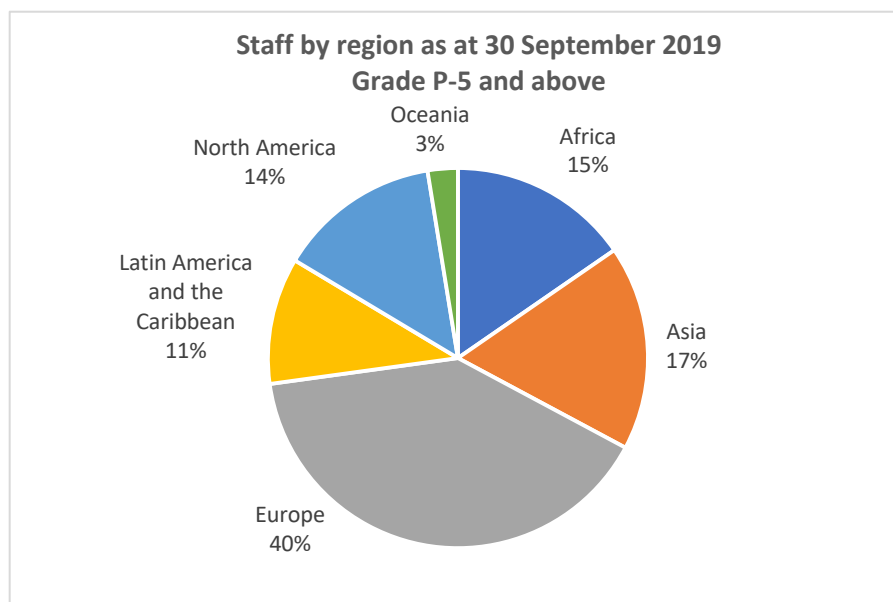


UNEP overall gender status

Level	Women	Men	Total staff	% women	2019 targets ⁹³
USG ⁹⁴	1	0	1	100	12%
ASG	2	1	3	66	12%
D-2	6	3	9	66	55%
D-1	20	34	54	37	39%
P-5	57	77	134	42	50%
P-4	101	118	219	46	50%
P-3	130	79	209	62	50%
P-2	68	40	108	63	53%
P-1	1	0	1	100	88%

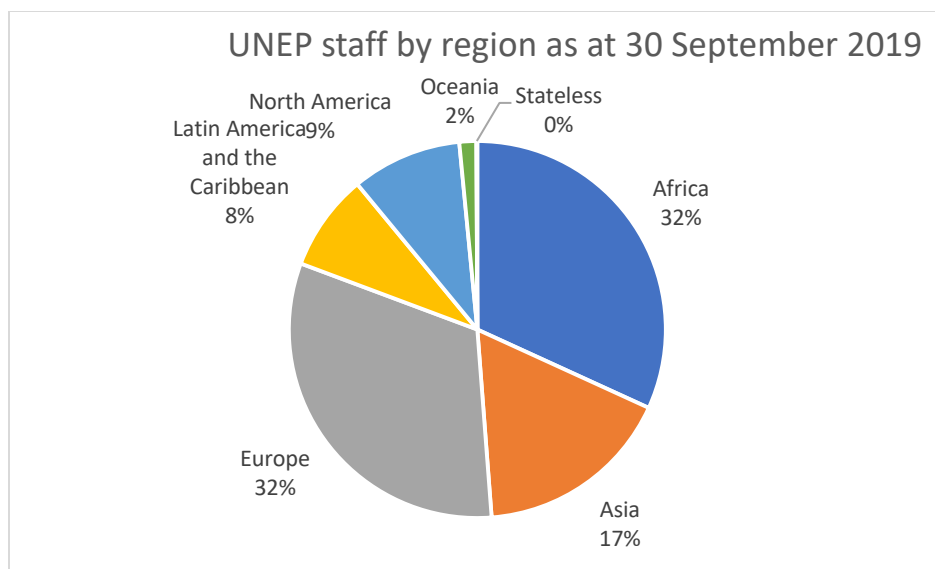
Geographic distribution of staff

UNEP continues to monitor and commit to the objective of achieving a geographically diverse workforce. The following graphs depict the geographical representation of UNEP staff and those at grade P-5 and above.



⁹³ The UN System-wide strategy on Gender Parity was launched in September 2017 and its implementation started in 2018. The UN Office for Human Resources Management in New York developed and shared an explanatory note on calculation methodology. Each UN entity, including UNEP, was provided with its baseline and annual targets for the period 2018-2028. Reporting on the implementation of the Strategy is undertaken biannually through the Senior Management Group and the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

⁹⁴ Under-Secretary-General is considered a one-person position, so it is not possible to reach parity. However, the United Nations Secretary-General's office monitors data on senior staff selections.



As regards staff at grade P-5 and above, Europe has the largest number at UNEP, with 78 staff in senior positions, representing 40 per cent. Asia and Africa have the second and third largest numbers at grade P-5 and above, with 34 and 30 staff in senior positions (17 and 15 per cent), respectively, while Oceania has the lowest number, with five senior staff members (3 per cent). In total, North America has 27 staff members (9 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 21 (8 per cent) staff members.

3.2 AUDITS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

Implementation of the recommendations of audits already completed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and development of audit assignments planned for 2019 are ongoing.

A. Ongoing OIOS audits

1. UNEP Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
2. Management of partnerships at UNEP
3. Recruitment process at UNEP

B. Implementation of recommendations of completed OIOS audits

1. UNEP Afghanistan Project Office⁹⁵
2. Official travel at UNEP⁹⁶

⁹⁵ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1558649143_1_2019_032_pd.pdf

⁹⁶ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1542402847_1_2018_109_pd.pdf

3. Contract management at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat (UNON Lead)⁹⁷
4. UNEP's Asia and the Pacific Office⁹⁸
5. UNEP's Abidjan Convention Secretariat⁹⁹
6. Environmental Governance subprogramme¹⁰⁰
7. Disasters and Conflicts subprogramme¹⁰¹
8. Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme¹⁰²
9. Caribbean Environment Programme¹⁰³

C. Planned audits to commence in 2019 as per the OIOS workplan

1. Grants management at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat
2. Management of data classification and data privacy at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat

United Nations Board of Auditors

Implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors interim audit of UNEP has begun.¹⁰⁴

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT REFORMS

UNEP is implementing the back-to-basics foundational concept to strengthen and establish control and oversight mechanisms that support the achievement of excellence in processes and operations. Reform initiatives are focused around the following five key lines of defence and updates for the reporting period are:

1. Re-establishing management tone at the top
 - Critical travel audit recommendation of establishing tone at the top closed by OIOS.
 - Increased compliance with travel rules resulting in reduced travel.
2. Re-sensitizing and training staff on their role as gatekeepers and custodians of policies
 - Preparations were initiated for the first Fund Management Officers/Administrative Officers Academy to be held in Nairobi on 4–8 November 2019.

⁹⁷ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1550592434_1_2019_004_pd.pdf

⁹⁸ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1518812780_1_2018_006_pd.pdf

⁹⁹ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1522185956_1_2018_017_pd.pdf

¹⁰⁰ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1467999488_1_2016_074_pd.pdf

¹⁰¹ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1494949567_1_2016_036_pd.pdf

¹⁰² https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1478550697_1_2016_130_pd.pdf

¹⁰³ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/oios_migration/resources/1440704051_1_2015_083_pd.pdf

¹⁰⁴ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/5/Add.7>

3. Benchmarking best practices internally and across United Nations organizations and the public sector
 - Drafted terms of reference for the consultancy review to establish benchmarks on policies and strategies to be finalized by October 2019.
 - Guidelines on Flexible Working Arrangements issued in August 2019.
 - Junior Professional Officer in risk management selected and expected to join in early October 2019.
4. Partnering with auditors, OIOS and an evaluation office to benefit from an external view
 - Assessments of project management systems and practices have been started, with a focus on quality assurance, risk management and lessons learned.
5. Focus on communication of results, improving programme management and reporting, and strengthening transparency
 - Monthly updates from the Executive Director to all staff.
 - Development of new quarterly management reporting formats in progress.

3.4 EVALUATIONS

During the reporting period:

- **eight** project evaluations were completed, bringing the cumulative total of completed evaluations for 2019 to **38**.
- a total of **47** project evaluations were active and are still ongoing.

The evaluation of the **Environment Under Review** subprogramme has progressed and a draft report will be circulated for comments early in the next quarter.

Selected learning points

Terminal Evaluation: Delivering sustainable development and enabling the transition to greener economies through sustainable public procurement project

- Introducing complex approaches and processes such as sustainable public procurement (SPP) in a country with immature SPP models and sparse relevant experience is a big challenge. It is therefore important that countries are selected based on an assessment of the expected achievement of outcomes and the likelihood of sustainability (institutional and financial frameworks with a focus on elements such as vision, policies, strategy, budget, experience, readiness, cooperation culture and competences).

- Eco-labelling is unlikely to be boosted by project support that mainly focuses on public sector-driven demand. It will require a more strategic focus on the business environment and the fundamental drivers of eco-label systems, including business-to-business relations. Future projects should provide more significant support to creating enabling conditions for eco-labelling in countries, including developing both a business case and a policy case (i.e. strengthening the relevance for policy frameworks) for eco-labelling.
- Working with SPP is primarily an organizational and institutional challenge. Focus should be on the institutional aspects of SPP, including how to link it more directly to national strategy and planning processes, and, in turn, national budget allocation frameworks. When an institutional framework is in place, the technical requirements and systems will follow.
- International experience can work as leverage for national efforts. Projects show that successful regional peer countries should be used as models and inspiration in the regional expansion of SPP, given the importance of contextual factors such as language, culture and trade patterns.