

QUARTERLY REPORT (Advance unedited)

to the 148th Meeting of the

**COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES**

October - November 2019

FOREWORD

As this Report outlines, the period from 1 October to 30 November 2019 was a critical and productive time when we made important progress in contributing to the science on the climate emergency; in supporting the multilateral environment agreements that dock at UNEP; and in strengthening partnerships and synergies across the environmental and development spheres.

November was marked by the launch of UNEP's flagship publication, the 2019 Emissions Gap Report which calls on the world to reduce emissions by 7.6% each year until 2030. If we don't, the world will miss the opportunity to limit temperatures to 1.5°C degrees. Ahead of the Climate COP in Madrid under the Chair of Chile, I trust this science will keep the pressure on as we seek a quantum leap in ambition and demonstrate our commitment to overcoming the climate emergency.

The Emissions Gap Report was complimented by the earlier launch of the Production Gap Report, produced by leading research organizations, and supported by UNEP. This report provides a new metric for assessing the current pace of fossil fuel extraction. It also details the steps countries can take to align fossil fuel supply with Paris Agreement goals.

The months of October and November were also dominated by several important Conferences of the Parties to various Multilateral Environment Agreements. At the third conference of parties to the Minamata Convention, I spoke about critical actions to be considered by Parties to the Convention and that central to reducing mercury emissions is to reduce coal emissions. The multiple and synergistic benefits of individual MEAs to climate action is evident.

Rome hosted the 31st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol which highlighted the importance of the Kigali Amendment in climate action and the need for universal ratification. And at the Open-Ended Working Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity on Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs), I made the point that these constituencies have been long deploying exactly the kind of solutions the world needs to consider for a sustainable future.

Building meaningful cooperation between actors in the development and environment challenges is fast becoming our modus operandi. In the past two months we have held useful discussions with the World Bank, UNDP and FAO on a range of areas where joint collaborations can strengthen our impact.

This is but a snapshot of the results reported here. We look forward to your collective feedback on strengthening our programme of work further to deliver effectively and efficiently on our mandate.

Inger Andersen
Executive Director
UN Environment Programme

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. The report covers the period 01 October to 30 November 2019.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Several significant intergovernmental processes at global or regional levels progressed. UNEP and the Environment Management Group continue to actively engage in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process. Discussions on the ‘Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020’ are helping to shape the future chemicals and waste management landscape.
- The world’s greenhouse gas emissions situation remains of deep concern. The *2019 Emissions Gap* report flags once again the lack of sufficient progress globally in reducing emissions for the Paris Agreement to be implemented in a meaningful manner. This contradicts with the ever rapidly decreasing costs of clean energy technologies and the calls from citizens for fast and effective action to deal with the climate crisis.
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements forged ahead to address and support the management of critical environmental challenges. On chemicals and wastes, the Basel, Stockholm, Rotterdam and Minamata Convention or the Montreal Protocol moved ahead with mandated topics, expanding scope of work in some cases such as with new refrigeration gases in the cold sector, dealing with plastic waste or secured funding. On ecosystems and biodiversity, for example the Barcelona Convention moved ahead with a collaboration agreement with the International Maritime Organisation, while the Carpathian Convention contributed to the post-2020 biodiversity framework and the Endangered Species Convention developed its strategic vision.
- Engagement and partnerships remain at the core of UNEP’s business model. UNEP has continue discussing major global environmental challenges with partners, and how data, knowledge and science to policy approaches can effectively inform high level discussions and decision-making. For example, with the current and incoming G20 Presidency, discussions have revolved around marine litter and plastic waste, land degradation and habitat loss, coral reefs and resource efficiency as well as on UNEP as the lead international partner for the global environment forum for the 2020 G20 Summit. The World Bank and UNEP are exploring possible cooperation on development policy lending tools to support countries and their economies as they move towards circularity.
- Environment and security remain an issue to be grappled with. The Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+) tool, developed by UNEP, enables rapid environmental assessments to be carried out by humanitarian actors.

- In October, UNEP launched the consultation process for the new Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact programme supported by the Global Environment Facility. The programme is a partnership between UNEP, World Bank, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund (WWF) for approximately \$57 million and leveraging just under \$400 million in co-financing. UNEP will lead on regional support for learning, capacity building and private sector partnership mobilization.
- Faith for Earth continues its efforts to catalyse change. The October *Faith for Earth Initiative* workshop held in Iceland brought together religious leaders and major groups from Nordic countries, United States, Canada, major groups and stakeholders. After discussing the root causes of climate change and other sustainable development challenges, participants encouraged the creation of a *Faith for Earth Coalition* that would allow faith leaders to set shared and actionable objectives to address climate change and environmental degradation.
- The resource efficiency agenda needs to accelerate drastically. For this to happen, state and non-state actors, including business, industry or citizens must play a more active role in changing the global material use landscape. UNEP continues to support stakeholders build capacity and act on several fronts such as: develop Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) action plans, undertake reporting, transform value chains or lifestyles, or utilise key concepts in fiscal policy or development planning.
- UNEP remains a key player in environment-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) methodology development. The Group on Earth Observations awarded UNEP the *2019 Earth Observations for Sustainable Development and Goals Award for SDG Custodian Agency* for its ‘remarkable efforts to enable the official monitoring and reporting of SDG target 6.6 related to change in the extent of freshwater related ecosystems over time’.
- During the reporting period, six project evaluations were completed. The evaluation of another set of 37 projects and the Environment under Review subprogramme was under way.
- As at 31 August 2019, UNEP and its multilateral environmental agreements secretariats comprised 1236 staff members: 739 professional personnel and 497 general service personnel.

SECTION 1: SIGNIFICANT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

GLOBAL

CLIMATE CHANGE & CLIMATE ACTION

Emissions Gap Report 2019

- UNEP’s annual (2019) Emissions Gap Report¹ says that even if all current unconditional commitments under the Paris Agreement are implemented, temperatures are expected to rise by 3.2° C, bringing even wider-ranging and more destructive climate impacts. Collective ambition must increase more than fivefold over current levels to deliver the cuts needed over the next decade for the 1.5°C goal.
- Crucially, the report says all nations must substantially increase ambition in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as the Paris commitments are known, in 2020 and follow up with policies and strategies to implement them. Solutions are available to make meeting the Paris goals possible, but they are not being deployed fast enough or at a sufficiently large scale. The report is a major contribution to guide the needed additional climate ambition.

Production Gap Report 2019

- The Production Gap Report, produced by leading research organizations and the UN, is the first assessment of the gap between the targets of the Paris Agreement and countries’ planned production of coal, oil and gas. It provides a new metric for assessing the world’s current pace of fossil fuel extraction and details the steps countries can take to align fossil fuel supply with Paris Agreement goals.
- This new report finds that the world is on track to produce far more coal, oil and gas than is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C or 2°C, creating a “production gap” that makes climate goals much harder to reach. It is a report that calls for a sharpened, and long overdue, focus on fossil fuels. It also complements the UNEP Emissions Gap Report.

UN Climate Change Conference COP 25

- The UN Climate Change Conference COP 25 (COP25) will take place from 2 to 13 December 2019 in Madrid, Spain, under the Presidency of the Government of Chile and will be held with logistical support from the Government of Spain.
- Countries will negotiate more ambitious plans to limit global warming to 1.5°C, in line with the Paris Agreement. The conference furthermore serves to build ambition ahead of 2020, the year in which countries have committed to submit new and updated national climate action plans. Crucial climate action work will be taken forward in areas including finance, the transparency of climate

¹ Available at: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

action, forests and agriculture, technology, capacity building, loss and damage, indigenous peoples, cities, oceans and gender.

- The COP25 also presents an opportunity to strengthen coalitions and amplify the commitments made during the Secretary General’s Climate Action Summit. Building on the momentum of the Climate Action Summit, UNEP will convene the Nature Based Solutions (NBS) follow-up process, including launching the ‘NBS Group of Friends’ during COP25, to grow the movement for nature and take forward implementation of the NBS Manifesto’s priorities and associated commitments, to ensure nature's potential can be unlocked and integrated.

POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

- The Executive Director paid a visit to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity in Montreal, where she had the opportunity to meet with the Secretariat staff, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the co-chairs for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. While in Montreal, the Executive Director also engaged with indigenous people and local communities as part of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (WG8J-10).
- UNEP and the UN Environment Management Group (EMG)² continue to engage in the process of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.³
- On the framework’s co-chairs zero-draft, UNEP made a submission which included elements on synergies and the coordinated EMG inputs.⁴
- UNEP and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity organized a workshop from 13 to 14 November in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on “Enhancing cooperation and synergy among biodiversity-related Conventions in Southeast Asia through the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”. Eight ASEAN Member States⁵ participated in the meeting, identified priority areas of actions in promoting synergies and coordination among biodiversity-related Conventions, SDGs and gender mainstreaming, and formulated coordinated inputs towards the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Meanwhile, the General Assembly took the decision to convene a summit on biodiversity and requested the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to appoint two co-facilitators to lead the preparatory process, including the modalities of the Summit. In this regard, the 2nd Committee of the General Assembly adopted a resolution⁶ by consensus on 27 November, which is to be formally

² See <https://unemg.org/about-emg/senior-officials-meeting-som/>. The meeting was attended by 70 representatives from the EMG membership and observing entities and extended the mandates of 8 ongoing EMG processes.

³ The 25th Meeting of the EMG Senior Officials held on 25 September established an interagency consultative process to prepare a UN system-wide contribution to the development and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, that will coordinate inputs from the UN system to the Open-ended Working Group and other meetings with relevance to the framework and prepare an analysis on the role and contributions by the UN system to the framework’s implementation, including an analysis of how these efforts fit within the frames of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁴ This follows the first Open Ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, information on latter available at: <https://www.informea.org/en/event/first-meeting-open-ended-working-group-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework>

⁵ Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

⁶ <https://undocs.org/A/C.2/74/L.66>

adopted by the General Assembly in the coming weeks. The resolution asks the PGA to start preparations for the Summit in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and with the support of UNEP as well as other relevant UN entities.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CHEMICALS AND WASTE

The 3rd meeting of the intersessional process considering the ‘‘Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020’’ took place from 1 to 4 October in Bangkok, Thailand.⁷ These meetings supported discussions on future arrangements for consideration and adoption at the 5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management planned for October 2020.

WORLD BANK ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Executive Director participated in the World Bank annual meetings (14 - 20 October, Washington DC, USA). In her speech *Our Planet Our Future*,⁸ the Executive Director pointed out the three areas that require our full attention: decarbonizing our economies, working with nature and decoupling economic growth. She held a series of meetings with senior World Bank officials to discuss areas in which UNEP could contribute to the Bank’s dialogue with countries on policy lending. There is distinct potential for meaningful cooperation between the World Bank and UNEP, for example through development policy lending tools to support countries and their economies as they strive towards sustainable consumption and production.

MARINE LITTER AND MICROPLASTICS

- At its first meeting on 24 October, the interagency Task Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics⁹ exchanged information about UN and related entities’ work related to marine litter. It also considered the Terms of Reference for the Task Team.
- At its third meeting held from 18 to 22 November in Bangkok, Thailand, the plenary discussions of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics will inform the future work of the expert group in 2020.¹⁰ The meeting was attended by about 185 participating experts nominated from 87 member States, one specialized agency, and about 20 accredited non-governmental organizations.

UNEP SUPPORT TO 2020 G20 PRESIDENCY

- UNEP is collaborating with Saudi Arabia in the context of Saudi Arabia’s 2020 G20 Presidency and the Riyadh G20 Summit. A preparatory meeting was held on 14 November in Manama, Bahrain, between UNEP and a high-level delegation from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture. The meeting discussed Saudi Arabia’s priorities for the environment pillar for the

⁷ <http://www.saicm.org/Beyond2020/IntersessionalProcess/ThirdIntersessionalmeeting/tabid/8024/Default.aspx>

⁸ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/speech/our-planet-our-future>

⁹ Responding to UNEA resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.6, operative paragraph 8,

¹⁰ Outcome outline at : https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/aheg_3_outcome_document.pdf and the Working documents for the meeting at: <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/working-documents>

2020 Summit and opportunities for alignment with UNEP programme of work and agreed to advance concepts and events on marine litter and plastic waste, land degradation and habitat loss, coral reefs and resource efficiency.

- The Saudi Ministry requested UNEP to be the leading international partner for the global environment forum that will be hosted by Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on 12 to 14 September 2020, prior to the G20 Summit in November 2020.

POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT

The UNEP Executive Director attended the 25-year celebration of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+25) on 12 November, in Nairobi, Kenya. She participated in the high-level session on *Closing the Gap: How the Strategic Private Partners Can Fulfill the Promise of ICPD for Women & Girls*. The session focused on the pioneering role of leading private sector partners in accelerating progress towards ending preventable maternal deaths, unmet need for family planning and gender-based violence. In her remarks, the Executive Director pointed out that “Important to addressing the climate crisis is the population challenge. We need to connect the dots. Doing the right thing in one sector, will have a positive impact on another. The agendas of environment, women and girls, and ICPD are connected”.

SAND AND DUST STORMS

After the launch of the Sand and Dust Storm (SDS) coalition¹¹ by the EMG¹² at the desertification conference (UNCCD COP 14), the Coalition met on 14 November in the margins of the 5th Session of Sand and Dust Storm-Warning Advisory System (SDS-WAS) Steering Committee (SC) meeting in Hangzhou, China, to discuss SDS Forecasting and Early Warning.

SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 74TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Second Committee of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted, in November, the resolution on the UNEA report,¹³ which:

- Welcomes the report of UNEA (including its resolutions and decisions) and reiterates the ministerial declaration adopted at UNEA-4;
- Follows-up on some of the UNEA resolutions including by inviting the Statistical Commission, the Commission on science and technology for development and other UN entities to support UNEP in developing a global data strategy by 2025 and inviting Member States and relevant UN bodies to contribute to the delivery of the implementation-plan “Towards a pollution-free planet”;
- Underlines UNEA’s contribution to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), including by encouraging the UNEA President to convey the main messages of UNEA to the HLPF;

¹¹ Work carried out in the context of UNGA resolution 72/225 and UNEA resolution 2/21

¹² See <https://unemg.org/our-work/emerging-issues/sand-and-dust-storms/>

¹³ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/25>

- Expresses concerns about the findings of relevant global environmental assessments, welcomes the sixth Global Environment Outlook and acknowledges the contribution of the International Resource Panel, including through its Global Resource Outlook 2019;
- Takes note with appreciation of the UNEA requests to the UNEP Executive Director to prepare in consultation with Member States the commemoration of the creation of UNEP; and,
- Continues to express concern about the sustainability, predictability and stability of the funding of UNEA.

The Second Committee adopted several other resolutions on sustainable development including on Combating Sand and Dust Storms,¹⁴ Integrated coastal zone management, global climate,¹⁵ eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda,¹⁶ implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹⁷ Natural plant fibres and sustainable development, implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification,¹⁸ sustainable mountains, International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies and implementation of Agenda 21.¹⁹

MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Rotterdam Convention

On 16 September, the amendments adopted by the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (29 April -10 May), to list two new chemicals, namely hexabromocyclododecane (industrial) and phorate (pesticide), in Annex III to the Convention entered into force. Those two chemicals become then subject to the Prior Informed Consent Procedure, through which countries can decide on future imports of these chemicals. COP9 also resulted in the depository communicating the adoption of the new Annex VII setting out procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Rotterdam Convention on 8 November.

Basel Convention

Further to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal held from 29 April to 10 May 2019, the communication by the depository of the adoption of the amendments to the Annexes to the Convention pertaining to plastic waste²⁰ was circulated on 24 September. On 24 March 2020, the amendments will enter into force for all Parties that have not submitted a notification of non-acceptance thereto. The new entries will become effective as of 01 January 2021. The new UN Partnership on

¹⁴ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/263>

¹⁵ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/207>

¹⁶ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/257>

¹⁷ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/207>

¹⁸ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/207>

¹⁹ <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/87>

²⁰ <http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/Communications/tabid/1596/Default.aspx>

Plastic Waste²¹ which aims at promoting action towards reducing and, in the long term, eliminating the discharge of plastic waste into environment was officially launched on 12 November. On 6 September, the depository confirmed that the threshold for entry into force of the Ban Amendment to the Basel Convention was reached and that the Amendment will enter into force on 5 December 2019.

Stockholm Convention

From 1 to 4 October, more than 100 scientific experts, from all over the world, attended the 15th meeting of the POPs Review Committee²² of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The committee recommended the elimination of a new group of hazardous chemicals to help protect human health and the environment from its harmful effects. The committee's recommendation to list the chemicals to the Convention will be considered by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting in May 2021.

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The 31st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol was held in Rome, Italy from 4 to 8 November. Over 700 delegates representing 171 parties to the Montreal Protocol and various stakeholders were present. The meeting adopted 17 decisions including on the unexpected emissions of CFC-11, the terms of reference for the study on 2021-2023 replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, and potential areas of focus for the 2022 quadrennial assessment reports. The “Rome Declaration” on the contribution of the Montreal Protocol to food loss reduction through sustainable cold chain will remain open for endorsement until the 32nd Meeting of the Parties in 2020 in Uzbekistan. It has been endorsed to date by 76 parties.

Barcelona Convention

The UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) focal points met from 10 to 13 September in Athens, Greece. They examined the progress report on activities carried out during the 2018-2019 biennium, the programme of work and budget for 2020-2021, and several draft decisions to be submitted for adoption to the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols to be held from 2 to 5 December in Naples, Italy. On 9 October, in the margins of the 41st Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Convention, the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat signed a Letter of Agreement²³ with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to promote cooperation on issues pertaining to the dumping of wastes.

Carpathian Convention

The 6th meeting of the Working Group on Climate Change, of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, was held on 9 October in Budapest,

²¹ <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwastes/PlasticWastePartnership/tabid/8096/Default.aspx>

²² <http://www.pops.int/Implementation/PublicAwareness/PressReleases/POPRC15expertsrecommeneliminationofPFHxS/tabid/8153/Default.aspx>

²³ <http://web.unep.org/unepmap/unepmap-and-imo-step-cooperation-stem-dumping-ships-mediterranean>

Hungary. The meeting focused on further implementation of the new Article 12*bis* on Climate Change introduced to the Carpathian Convention at its 5th Conference of the Parties held in 2017. On 20 and 21 November, at the Conference on wilderness and old growth forest in Europe held in Bratislava under the patronage of the President of the Slovak Republic, the convention secretariat presented its work focusing on mapping of the virgin forests in the Carpathians in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The secretariat organized, with WWF Romania, from 25 to 28 November in Coltesti, Romania, the 10th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity and workshops on the implementation of transboundary monitoring of large carnivores' populations and transboundary cooperation on illegal killings. These were organized in the framework of the Life Euro Large Carnivores project.²⁴

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

The outcomes of the 18th Conference of the Parties to CITES²⁵ held in August in Geneva, Switzerland, entered into effect on 26 November. This includes the *CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030*,²⁶ which refers to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The CITES Secretariat also announced that the theme of the World Wildlife Day 2020 on 3 March will be *Sustaining all life on earth* – in recognition of the 2020 being a 'biodiversity super year', where several other major events focusing on biodiversity will take place.

Minamata Convention

- The 3rd meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP3) took place from 25 to 29 November in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting began with a call to strengthen implementation for the effectiveness of the Convention.
- Outcomes of the COP3 include decisions adopted on customs codes; cooperation between the secretariats of the Minamata Convention and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions; mercury-added products and processes using mercury or mercury compounds; guidance for completing the national reporting format; capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer; releases; terms of reference for the Implementation and Compliance Committee; guidance on the management of contaminated sites; review of the financial mechanism; waste thresholds; dental amalgam; effectiveness evaluation; Programme of Work and Budget; and the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (SIP) Governing Board.²⁷ The UNEP Executive Director was asked to assess possible options for enhancing the SIP and its operations.

²⁴ <https://www.eurolargecarnivores.eu/en/>

²⁵ These are the new CITES Appendices (at <https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>), resolutions (<https://cites.org/eng/res/index.php>) and decisions (<https://cites.org/eng/dec/index.php>)

²⁶ Further to resolution Conf. 18.3; report available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/document/E-Res-18-03.pdf>

²⁷ <https://enb.iisd.org/mercury/cop3/>

- UNEP presented options on the Executive Director’s operative proposal on a stable framework for the sharing of relevant services between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions at Minamata COP 3.²⁸ The proposal was prepared in consultation with the Executive Secretaries of the Minamata Convention and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm secretariat. In preparing the proposal, areas of potential synergies as well as the efficient delivery of mandates as decided by the conferences of parties was evaluated.

AFRICA

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)

- Under the theme *Taking action for Environment Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa*, the 17th regular session of AMCEN took place from 11 to 15 November in Durban, South Africa. The Deputy Executive Director participated at the conference where Ministers highlighted their support to align AMCEN to global efforts, especially through the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).
- The environment ministers committed to accelerate action on pressing environment and climate challenges, including to unlock inclusive wealth creation that safeguards the socio-economic wellbeing of Africa. This action includes implementation of policies and the relevant regional and global frameworks, that will help the region attain the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Conference focused on themes related to greening Africa’s economy and decisions for action were taken on themes related to environmental sustainability; circular economy; the development of a blue economy; biodiversity; land degradation, desertification, and drought; climate change; plastic pollution; and strengthening informed decision-making.
- In the margins of the meeting, two publications were launched, namely the *Review of wood fuel biomass: Production and Utilization in Africa* and *GEO-6 for Youth Africa*. Both reports reflect UNEP’s commitment to catalyse the development of transformative policies in Africa through evidence-based approaches. The wood fuel biomass study report is a culmination of a joint study by UNEP Africa Office and the African Union Commission. The report explores ways to mitigate negative impacts of wood fuel biomass during the transition to cleaner, renewable energy sources takes place. The youth report resulted from a request put to UNEP by the 16th session of AMCEN in 2017. It builds on the GEO-6 Regional Assessment for Africa and benefited from a collaborative effort of more than 100 youth writers, photographers, artists, and reviewers from 30 African countries.

²⁸ <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Meetings/COP3/tabid/7854/ctl/Download/mid/22186/language/en-US/Default.aspx?id=149&ObjID=74>

UNEP’s increasing role in the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel

- UNEP participated in the 9th meeting of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) on 21 October in Dakar, Senegal. It reviewed ongoing UN initiatives and achievements in the region and considered how the implementation of UNISS could be strengthened to address the growing complexity of the humanitarian and development issues in the Sahel.
- The UNISS Committee requested UNEP to lead the cluster on “Climate Change Resilience”. UNEP already coordinates between the Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and Sahel initiatives in the context of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Africa Network of Women Ministers and Leaders on Environment to Unlock Empowerment Barriers

Held under the auspices of the AMCEN-17, the meeting of the Africa Network of Women Ministers and Leaders on Environment met to discuss and agree on the 2020-2022 action plan to unlock barriers that hinder women from being empowered change agents to promote environmental sustainability and support achievement of Agenda 2030, the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063. They called for stronger synergies across different women networks including the Africa Women Entrepreneurs on Energy Framework, the Network of Africa Women Environmentalists, the Africa Women Innovators on Sustainable Environment and others. While these networks will work at operational level and as think tanks, the Africa Network of Women Ministers and Leaders on Environment will work at policy and strategic level.



Africa Network of Women Ministers and Leaders on Environment meeting, AMCEN-17, 12 November 2019, Durban, South Africa

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sustainable Nitrogen Management

The Deputy Executive Director participated in the launch of the United Nations Global Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen Management on 23 October, in partnership with the government of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka also hosted the intergovernmental process, from 21 to 24 October, that culminated in the adoption of the Colombo Declaration – with an ambitious but critical target to ‘halve nitrogen waste’ by 2030. During a Ministerial/High Level Session on Nitrogen for Life, the Deputy Executive Director highlighted the diverse impacts and challenges associated with nitrogen, the importance of a science-policy interface, as well as policy coordination and collective action given the multi-faceted dimension of the issue.

Air Pollution and Climate Change

The International Forum on Air Pollution and Climate Change (4 - 5 November, Seoul, Republic of Korea) contributed to raising awareness on air pollution in the **Asia and Pacific region** and of the importance of regional and international partnerships to combat it.

12th UNEP and China Annual Consultation

- The Executive Director visited the People’s Republic of China, where she met with government and UN officials as well as partners. The mission aimed at discussing preparations for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming in October 2020 as well as the follow-up to the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit and notably on the Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) workstream which was co-chaired by the People’s Republic of China.
- The consultation, held from 31 October to 01 November in Beijing, China, reviewed cooperation progress, including the 2019 World Environment Day (WED), Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) workstream of Climate Action Summit, preparation for the biodiversity CBD COP 15 in 2020. It also reviewed achievements of China Trust Fund Phase I in building capacity and knowledge across **81 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America** as well as progress of Phase II.
- China highlighted its environmental priorities, reiterated its commitment to SDGs and strong support for multilateralism, and commended UNEP’s leadership in driving the global environmental agenda.

Marine plastic pollution in South East Asia: SEA of Solutions 2019²⁹ (11-14 November, Bangkok, Thailand) is the first annual partnership week to inspire market-based solutions and encourage enabling policies to prevent marine plastic pollution at source, in **South East Asia**. The first of its kind in Asia and the Pacific, it attracted over 500 participants from 45 countries, over 300 entities including 150 private sector companies, civil society representatives, development partners, academia and the media.

²⁹ The week is an initiative of UNEP and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), with support from the Government of Sweden, and was convened by SEA Circular (<https://www.sea-circular.org/>). The focus of the week aligned with the COBSEA Strategic Direction 2018-2022 which highlights land-based sources of pollution as a focus area for the region as well as progressed COBSEA’s Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter adopted in June 2019.

Government representatives included H.E. Helen Ågren, Ambassador for the Ocean, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and H.E. Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Kingdom of Thailand. *The role of packaging regulations and standards in driving the circular economy*³⁰ publication, by UNEP and GA circular, was launched. The Government of Viet Nam formally offered to host the SEA of Solutions 2020.³¹

Acid Deposition

Representatives of 13 participating countries³² attended the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) (12 -13 November, Beijing, China). It reviewed EANET progress in 2019, approved the 2020 work program and budget, as well as provided guidance and consideration on future direction of EANET in tackling acid deposition and air pollution issues in the region.



The Twenty-first Session (IG21) of the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) held on 12-13 November 2019, Beijing, China (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

Regional environmental cooperation

- The 15th meeting of the Governing Council of **South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme** (SACEP) (3-6 November, Dhaka, Bangladesh) recommended the continuation of the on-going activities of SACEP and approved the Work Programme 2020 – 2021. UNEP was invited as a partner to the SACEP Governing Council, building on a long-standing partnership to address priority **environmental challenges** in South Asia.
- At the **35th ASEAN Summit**³³ (2-3 November, Bangkok, Thailand), ASEAN leaders highlighted progress on **environmental protection and cooperation** particularly on climate change, marine

³⁰ <https://www.sea-circular.org/publications/>

³¹ For more information, see <http://sos2019.sea-circular.org/sea-of-solutions-2019-daily-updates/>

³² Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Thailand and Viet Nam

³³ <https://www.asean2019.go.th/en/meeting/35th-asean-summit-and-related-summits/>

pollution and transboundary haze, and reiterated commitment to multilateral environmental agreement targets.

- The **14th East Asia Summit** (4 November, Bangkok) discussed, *inter alia*, specific goals to foster closer collaborative regional capacity for **disaster risk reduction**. This included the effects of climate change, accelerating efforts to reduce marine pollution (particularly through a land-to-sea approach highlighting circular economy principles) and promotion of regional cooperation on environmental management.
- In the context of South-South Cooperation, UNEP has been actively engaging with the Royal Government of **Bhutan** on waste management and on transboundary cooperation towards resilience building in the **Eastern Himalayas**.

EUROPE

EU-UNEP Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Africa

The dialogue took place on 02 October in Brussels, Belgium. Given their relevance for the continent, circular economy, biodiversity and climate change emerged as the UNEP-EU common key areas of focus in Africa for the European Union external action budget for 2021-2027. More UNEP-EU dialogues are foreseen in 2020 to further refine the common areas of interest.

EU Arctic Forum

The EU Arctic Forum held on 3-4 October in Umeå, Sweden enabled a critical dialogue on the global significance of the Arctic. The UNEP Deputy Executive Director participated as a panelist in the session devoted to “Sustainable Arctic”. The Forum focused on international cooperation, the climate-environment-ocean nexus, sustainable investments, and connectivity in the Arctic. The diverse representation at the EU Arctic Forum from governments (including numerous non-Arctic countries), academia, private sector, youth and Indigenous communities reflected the global significance of the Arctic. UNEP also featured an exhibition of its recent report, produced with GRID-Arendal, entitled *Global Linkages – a Graphical Look at the Changing Arctic*, produced as part of the 6th Global Environmental Outlook. The Forum clearly pointed to a need for effective multilateral cooperation to protect the Arctic. UNEP as an observer to the Arctic Council and with its mandate of keeping the environment under review has a clear place in such cooperation.



UNEP Deputy Executive Director at the EU Arctic Summit, session on Sustainable Arctic, 03 November 2019, Umeå, Sweden (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Europe Office)

Regional environmental cooperation

UNEP supported the Republic of Uzbekistan to organize a regional meeting of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on 24 October in Nukus, Uzbekistan. ICSD representatives from Central Asian countries approved the draft *Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia*, which reflects national environmental priorities and synergies at the regional level. This meeting also commemorated the 25th anniversary of the ICSD establishment and transfer the chairmanship from Turkmenistan to the Republic of Uzbekistan.³⁴

UNEP engagement in Kazakhstan and Central Asia

Issues of cooperation to promote environmental policy and SDGs in Kazakhstan were discussed from 29 to 31 October in Nur-Sultan and Almaty, Kazakhstan, during the first official visit of the Europe Office Director. Representatives of the government, UN agencies, the European Union and other international organizations and the scientific and expert community participated in the meetings. The possibilities to strengthen the capacity of UNEP's sub-regional office for Central Asia based in Almaty, ways to promote UNEP's mandate and increase its visibility in Central Asia, were also discussed.

Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

The thematic focus areas of the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (2021) were considered by the 25th session of the Committee for Environmental Policy (CEP) on from 13 to 15 November. In close collaboration with UNECE and OECD, UNEP contributed to the preparation of a CEP Information paper, based on which the CEP members analysed the short-listed themes and chose (i) Greening the economy in the pan-European region: working towards the sustainable infrastructure; and (ii) Applying circular economy approaches to sustainable tourism. UNEP will collaborate closely with the CEP and its UNECE-hosted secretariat as well as other partners in preparations for the regional conference, which is expected to result in new commitments on green and circular economies.

³⁴ <https://carececo.org/en/main/news/ispolnitelnyy-direktor-rettsa-prinyal-uchastie-v-meropriyatiyakh-v-regione-priaralya/>

Geneva Environment Network

The network³⁵ regularly briefed and debriefed permanent missions, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, business organizations and academia on major environmental negotiations. Two events were organized in preparation of the climate COP25, one focusing on human rights and land, and a second on nature-based solutions, migration and just transition issues, with the participation of Chile and the climate secretariat. The network also hosted a presentation of the GEO-6 report and contributed to the launch of the Plastic Waste Partnership under the Basel Convention.

Special events took place in Geneva to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Geneva Environment Network and the International Environment House, with the participation of the UNEP Executive Director. On 25 November, the *PechaKucha Night @ International Environment House* was a fun and entertaining evening with environment-themed stories.³⁶ On 26 November, a High-Level Discussion focused on the role of Geneva in placing environment on the highest political, well attended by the international environmental community in Geneva.³⁷

Training for French-speaking negotiators

To address the cross-cutting dimension of development challenges across issues such as global warming, migration, security, public health or economic and social inequalities, the negotiation of multilateral agreements needs to adapt and improve integrated approaches. To respond to this need, the International Organization of the Francophonie, with UNEP, UNCTAD, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the climate secretariat, the UN SDG Laboratory Geneva and the Graduate Institute Geneva, organized the first joint training for French-speaking climate, trade and digital negotiators³⁸ from 13 to 15 November in Geneva, Switzerland.³⁹ Negotiators interacted with experts from various backgrounds to identify bridges between subjects and ways to have a global vision for development. The goal is to lay the groundwork for better integration of topics at the national and international levels.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

The intersessional meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean⁴⁰ took place from 5 to 6 November in Bridgetown, Barbados. The meeting adopted recommendations to advance the regional environmental agenda and to strengthen the forum, including

³⁵ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/>

³⁶ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/25nov2019.html>

³⁷ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/26nov2019.html>

³⁸ Negotiators were from seven countries: Benin, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Mali and Morocco.

³⁹ <https://www.francophonie.org/quelles-passerelles-entre-les-negociations-sur-le-climat-le-commerce-et-le-numerique-862>

⁴⁰ <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/un-environment-event/xxi-forum-ministers-environment-latin-america-and-caribbean> ; <https://today.caricom.org/2019/11/13/the-environment-is-our-most-important-asset/>

the environmental data framework and new initiatives to address key issues for the region as emergencies and ecosystem restoration. The Forum was presided by the Minister of Environment and National Beautification of Barbados. Participation comprised high level officials from 26 countries, several regional cooperation agencies and all members of the Forum’s interagency Technical Committee made up of UNDP, UNEP, the InterAmerican Development Bank and the World Bank.

High-Level Forum for Ministers with Responsibility for Waste

The 3rd High-Level Forum for Ministers with Responsibility for Waste was held from 16 to 17 October in St Kitts. The forum was organized by UNEP and the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association, with the support of Netherlands to the Caribbean Environment Programme’s SIDS approaches to waste management. Representatives from 17 Caribbean islands and territories as well as donors, academic and development partners reviewed waste management priorities, progress and challenges, such as:

- Improvement of waste infrastructure in **Grenada**.
- Diverting of resources from landfill sites and improvement of recycling and resource recovery in **Martinique** and as highlighted by the **Organization of Eastern Caribbean States**.
- Strengthened partnerships including that of the French and Dutch governments and the increased presence of development partners.
- Scaled up communication efforts including the launch of the Caribbean “Breaking Up with Plastics” video, Clean Seas Caribbean and the “Play It Out Concert” held in Antigua early 2019.
- Improved capacity to manage special wastes through the development of a disaster waste management project by UNEP.

WEST ASIA

Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)

At the 31st Session of CAMRE⁴¹ held on 24 October in Cairo, Egypt, UNEP presented a keynote paper on innovative solutions for solid waste to the Ministerial segment. The Council of Ministers decided that the theme for its next session will be e-waste “electric and electronic waste, facts and solutions”.

CAMRE adopted a series of decisions tackling a wide range of issues including the preparations of the Arab group for MEAs, UNEA 5 and strengthening the institutional relationship between the League of Arab States and UNEP. The Council requested UNEP’s support in the state of the environment reporting in countries in the region affected by disasters and conflicts.⁴²

Arab Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production

At the 6th Arab Roundtable Meeting on Sustainable Consumption & Production (SCP) held in Cairo, on 10 - 11 October, UNEP, UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) and partners

⁴¹ <http://bit.ly/37WvyyX>

⁴² Comoros, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

discussed progress on SCP in the Arab region and the role of green technologies in advancing it. Case studies and good practices were shared from across the region.

UN regional collaboration

The 2nd Arab States Regional Directors Meeting took place on 15 October in Beirut, Lebanon. Interagency consultations took place and subsequently an agreement reached on operationalising points 2 to 5 of the Secretary-General's regional reform agenda. This work will be supported by two newly established regional taskforces on knowledge and data management and on annual reporting. UNEP is a member of both of taskforces.

Kuwait Regional Air Quality Centre

UNEP and the Kuwait Environment Public Authority and Supreme Council for Planning and Development signed a Letter of Intent to establish the Kuwait Regional Air Quality Centre. The Centre will be established and funded by the Government of Kuwait under the UN Cooperation Framework. UNEP will lead the technical design and operation of the Centre.

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 Goals (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.”⁴³

National Adaptation Planning: Under the National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme, training was conducted in **Timor Leste** and **Nepal** on 9-15 October, to build country capacity to participate effectively in inter-governmental climate change processes. The capacity building focused on the Directors and Focal points of the respective country climate change directorates, on local experts and on other government officials.

Climate Adaptation and Conflict: UNEP held a training on Conflict Analysis and Sensitivity in Juba, South Sudan, on 2 October. The training aimed at improving the capacity of national climate change adaptation experts and project managers in **South Sudan** to better address the full range of knock-on consequences of climate change, particularly in fragile and conflict prone or affected context.

Nature-based solutions: The Green Climate Fund approved a \$10 million project that is expected to benefit 10 per cent of the population of **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**. The project will invest in nature-based solutions in four cities to build resilience towards ever-increasing floods caused by climate change.

Climate information and early warning for resilience: The UNEP-International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP) organised a consultation workshop from 21 to 23 October in Beijing, China to identify opportunities and concrete ideas for South-South cooperation on climate information and early warning for resilience.⁴⁴ The workshop featured 30 experts from the Green Climate Fund, UNEP, **China and Central Asia countries**. It identified a few common regional issues to be tackled jointly with the engagement of Chinese experts and through South-South Cooperation. These include monitoring climate risks and emergency in the Aral Sea basin, capacity building and early warning, water management and agriculture development among others.

Climate Change Insurance: The Pacific islands aim to develop a new mechanism to manage financial vulnerability and risks to the impacts of climate change and improve resilience through the development of a Pacific Islands Climate Change Insurance Facility (PICCIF). UNEP organized a Task Force meeting for the Facility in **Samoa** from 31 October to 1 November, where a roadmap for the operationalisation of the Facility was developed.

⁴³ Linked to UNEP resolution UNEP/EA.2/Res.6 and SDGs 13.1, 13.2, 13.3.2, 13.a and 13.b.

⁴⁴ <http://www.unep-iemp.org/index.php?menu=18&id=187>

Expected Accomplishment – 1b

“Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies.”⁴⁵

Investment for clean energy technologies: UNEP and the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in November. The partnership will enhance investment opportunities for both public and private finance to support the dissemination of clean energy technologies. The partnership will support the early stage development and project finance of renewable energy projects, and the development of financing mechanisms to allow access to smaller-scale sustainable energy and energy-efficient appliances for household and productive use.

Gender and NDCs:

- UNEP, with UN Women and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Partnership, organized a discussion on Gender and NDCs in October 2019, hosted by the Government of the **Philippines**. The discussion was to help strengthen the understanding and capacity to develop and implement gender-responsive climate action within the energy and agricultural sectors which would broaden the scope of NDCs by integrating gender dimensions.
- Through the EmPower project, UNEP is implementing women-led renewable energy pilots in **Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh** supporting women’s livelihoods and entrepreneurship in renewable energy. In October, UNEP conducted pre-feasibility studies in four provinces of Vietnam that identified a number of livelihood options for women where renewable energy can support the economic productivity and strengthen communities’ capacity to adapt to climate change.



A group of indigenous women who have started a cooperative to dry products (fruit, vegetables, medicines, etc.), in the Bac Kan province, north of Viet Nam (EmPower project) (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

⁴⁵ 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).

Climate action enterprises: UNEP supported the exchange of approaches and skills between **Uganda** and **Kenya**, in October, for the establishment of climate action enterprises. The focus was on decentralized solar dryers for value addition in agro-value chains.

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.”⁴⁶

Peatlands and other wildfires: The *Integrated fire management to reduce wildfires, improve peatlands management and reduce greenhouse emissions* project received, in October, approval for \$1.75m funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project will help communities, partners and governments in fire vulnerable peatland rich countries work together to prevent, prepare for, and cope with peatland and other types of wildfires.

REDD+:

- The UNEP-GCF Paraguay project ‘Results-based payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017’ was approved on 12 November, with a GCF budget of \$ 50 million. This is the first tranche of the total payment of \$ 72.5 million.
- UNEP’s supported **Argentina** which completed its first REDD+ Safeguards Summary of Information in October.
- UNEP organized in October a technical exchange on forest finance products between FINAGRO and FIRA, the respective agricultural development banks of **Colombia and Mexico**. Furthermore, a series of virtual exchanges via webinars on forest finance amongst national development banks in the region has been completed.
- **Peru** presented at the National Convention on Savings and Loans Cooperatives, in October, the UNEP-supported work on engaging the financial sector for reduced deforestation and the adoption of Ecosystems-based Approach practices.
- A national consultation workshop on **Myanmar**’s draft first Summary of Information on Safeguards (SIS) was held on 24 October.
- UNEP supported **Zambia** to develop the SIS webpage⁴⁷ and database as well as gathering feedback from the country stakeholders.

Palm oil policy review: One year after **Indonesia** adopted its palm oil moratorium policy,⁴⁸ UNEP and the Indonesian Coordinating Ministries of Economic Affairs and of Environment and Forestry initiated technical discussions in October to review the implementation of the policy.

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/zambia_final_soi_march_version_1_.pdf

⁴⁸ <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4910673/Inpres-Moratorium-Sawit.pdf>

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.”⁴⁹

Expected Accomplishment – 2a

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

Ecosystems-based 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. A part of this work, a seminar on *Environment, Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction* was held in October in Geneva, Switzerland, engaging 45 participants – including representatives from 11 permanent missions. A national workshop on Eco-DRR was also held in the Sultanate of **Oman** in November. These meetings raised awareness and aim to enhance alignment with and reporting against the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- UNEP also launched the *Disasters and Ecosystems: Resilience in a Changing Climate Sourcebook*. Our Eco-DRR team won an award for the ‘Visualize Risk’ Challenge, sponsored by the Labs team of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) hosted by the World Bank Group, in partnership with Mapbox and the Data Visualization Society. The team had submitted an example based on floods in Africa for a geospatial tool highlighting hotspots for ecosystem restoration and/or conservation to reduce disaster risks.
- In collaboration with UNDRR and the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), UNEP is also providing technical support to Member States on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Monitor. The project team presented at the UNDRR Technical Forum in November 2019 on Ecosystems and Targets C, D and E of the Sendai Monitor, and will produce guidelines on Nature-based Solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as future trainings.

Environment and security: UNEP is working with the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel to analyze environmental stressors that could contribute to further insecurity in that region. UNEP is also working with UN partners including FAO, UN Habitat, IOM and UNDP to develop an action plan on natural resource management and climate resilience, to be implemented under the auspices of the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa.

⁴⁹ 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.

Expected Accomplishment – 2b

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

Environment and emergencies

- UNEP, together with the Joint Environment Unit partnership with OCHA, training 44 national experts at two courses on Environment and Emergencies in October in North Macedonia and Slovenia. This increases the pool of environmental experts that may be deployed to emergencies.
- UNEP also supported the delivery of the training on hazardous waste and chemicals emergencies for government officials, emergency workers and experts from the Economic Commission for Western African States (ECOWAS) countries in November in Nigeria. The training also engaged a facilitator from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation who was supported by a UNEP Chemicals and Waste expert and a representative of the Basel Convention Coordination Centre.

Innovation: As part of UNEP’s Environment in Humanitarian Action (EHA) work, the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT+) tool, which enables rapid environmental assessments to be carried out by humanitarian actors, is being piloted in **Myanmar** by the Norwegian Refugee Council and Colombia by UNHCR.

Expected Accomplishment – 2c

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

Debris recycling: UNEP has maintained its support to Iraq’s post-conflict recovery, expanding work on debris recycling to assisting national authorities on the clean-up of oil contamination.

Oil contamination and remediation: As part of the UNEP-Norway Oil for Development partnership, and in cooperation with the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), a four-day training course on tackling oil contamination was organized in Kirkuk, **Iraq**. The workshop was hosted by the state-owned North Oil Company, whose oil infrastructure was heavily damaged during recent fighting in the north. The workshop included 30 representatives from the Ministries of Environment and Oil who will establish a bioremediation cell. RSK, a UK-based environmental consulting company with offices in Basra, is working with UNEP to conduct laboratory analyses to monitor the results of this bioremediation trial over the next four months. Government partners have expressed a strong interest in replicating and scaling-up bioremediation techniques in cleaning-up oil spills given its relative simplicity and cost-effectiveness.

Environmental policy support:

- In **Sudan**, UNEP has finalized an Environmental Governance Paper as an important reference in the establishment of the new environmental authority within the government and presented it to the

Prime Minister. In addition, UNEP has developed an Environment Background Paper for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to inform Sudan’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. UNEP has also contributed to the 2020 Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview.

HAITI PROJECT OFFICE

UNEP has conducted an internal peer review of its Haiti project office. This review was a component of UNEP’s actions to strengthen internal oversight and project management. The results will also help identify options for stronger delivery models in conflict, post-conflict and crisis contexts that will inform the development of the next Medium-Term Strategy.

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.”

Protected areas: UNEP organised the Protected Areas Managers Day in the Sutjeska National park in October in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to promote the improvement of protected areas management and enhanced collaboration.

Wildlife and land use planning: In November, UNEP worked with the governments of **Botswana** and **Zimbabwe** to build a systems model for integrated land use planning in a priority elephant corridor. Supported by the European Commission, UNEP convened experts from wildlife, tourism, agriculture, water and community rural development to build a model for change. This evidence- and data-driven process will be used to inform planning and investment decisions as well as new policies to support the coexistence of people and wildlife.

Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes: In October, UNEP launched the consultation process for the new Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact programme supported by the Global Environment Facility. The programme is a partnership between UNEP, the World Bank, IUCN, and WWF for approximately \$57 million and leveraging just under \$400 million in co-financing. UNEP will lead on regional support for learning, capacity building and private sector partnership mobilization.

Coral reef protection: Green Fins is a UNEP initiative to protect its coral reefs from the negative impacts associated with diving and snorkelling, and it is coordinated by the Reef-World Foundation. Egypt joined the Green Fins Initiative in October. Green Fins Egypt⁵⁰ is being adopted for implementation by the Egyptian Chamber of Diving and Water Sports, and its launch was made possible thanks to financing support from UNDP.

Ecological Quality: In October 2019, at the annual meeting of the focal points of the Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre, UNEP Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) launched a

⁵⁰ <https://www.greenfins.net/news/egypt-launch>

regional synthesis report entitled *Development of NOWPAP Ecological Quality Objectives targets aligned with SDG indicators*.⁵¹

International Snow Leopard Day: On 23 October, UNEP's Wild for Life campaign and Vanishing Treasures project⁵² collaborated to launch the RunWild⁵³ challenge in Adidas's Runtastic app. The challenge enabled runners to compare their running distances with the real-life snow leopard, Uuliin, to raise awareness on the plight of this critically endangered species. Eight celebrities with a combined reach of 43 million people promoted the challenge, and half a million people registered to participate. The Wild for Life website had 35.6 thousand pageviews and website visits spiked by 40 per cent, including in cities which represent large trafficking and demand hubs for illegal wildlife trade products, including snow leopards.

Expected Accomplishment – 3b

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

Economics of biodiversity:

- On behalf of UNEP, the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) provided evidence to the **UK** government on the value of nature. UNEP-WCMC compiled evidence of the economics of biodiversity for the UK government as an input to the review which will provide a novel framing of the economic significance of biodiversity (loss) and suggest methods and policies to integrate nature in the economy. The report will be published in the lead-up to the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference.
- The TEEBAgriFood⁵⁴ Framework was adopted and endorsed by the inter-institutional and high-level Steering Committee in **Malaysia**. **China** and **Indonesia** further refined the policy questions and agricultural sectors that the framework will analyse. In Indonesia, the TEEB office provided a one-day training to the staff of the Ministry of Planning on the framework implementation and conducted a rapid assessment of cacao agroforestry systems.

Coral warming identification tool: In November, at the global 2019 Adobe MAX Creativity Conference⁵⁵ in Los Angeles, USA, the creative community got together to raise awareness on globally widespread coral warming and loss to support ambitious policy support and funding for coral reef conservation. Under heat stress, corals glow and this feature can be used to identify where corals are

⁵¹http://pomrac.nowpap.org/Pub/DOC/FPM16/16Inf4_Regional%20synthesis%20on%20NOWPAP%20EcoQO%20targets.%20phase%201.pdf

⁵² <https://vanishingtreasures.org/>

⁵³ <https://www.runtastic.com/blog/en/run-wild/>

⁵⁴ TEEBAgriFood=The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for Agriculture and Biodiversity;

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

⁵⁵ <https://max.adobe.com/>

affected. UNEP and partners⁵⁶ launched a campaign⁵⁷ at Adobe Max to alert on the need for urgent action to protect coral reefs from global warming.

Natural capital accounting: UNEP led a **regional** training workshop on Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) from 28 to 31 October in Pretoria, South Africa, with 17 participating countries.⁵⁸ Training sessions included valuation of ecosystem services, use of NCA to inform policy, and development of strategies for NCA in the lead up to the 2020 UN biodiversity conference (CBD COP15).

Conservation in sustainable development planning: In October, UNEP within the framework of Poverty-Environment Action initiative conducted an introductory training on mainstreaming environmental considerations into the National Indicator Framework for the **Myanmar** Sustainable Development Plan. This will form the basis of ongoing work with Environmental Conservation Department to develop a system for gathering environmental statistics and related information to report against the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan.

Peatland Strategies: The Global Peatlands Initiative provided policy advice to the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in a workshop from 28 to 29 October to exchange on existing and planned peatland strategies in European countries. The co-hosts BfN, Ramsar and Michael Succow-Stiftung Foundation brought together experts and stakeholders from EU Member States and other European countries to exchange knowledge and experiences on existing and planned national peatland strategies.

⁵⁶ Partners included The Ocean Agency, Adobe, Pantone, We Transfer, the World Surf League and PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors).

⁵⁷ <https://www.cleaneas.org/impact/getting-creative-coral-reef-conservation>

⁵⁸ Botswana, Ghana, Egypt, Eswatini, Rwanda, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

SUBPROGRAMME OBJECTIVE:

“Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development.”⁵⁹

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.”

Sustainability in UN Common Premises

- Conducting an initial environmental assessment on existing or planned buildings is now mandatory as part of the process of establishing UN common premises.⁶⁰
- The UN Task Team on Common Premises⁶¹ is considering the adoption of the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) tool⁶² that will help UN entities and UN common premises design green premises. The tool can be useful for refurbishment works for example in the ongoing renovation of the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON). UNON is also currently implementing an Environment Management System⁶³ to reduce its environmental impact and increase its operating efficiency.

Environment and human rights: UNEP advanced its strategic partnership with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights through a four-day consultation from 5 to 8 November in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting concluded with a proposed two-year work plan to implement the Memorandum of Understanding signed in August.

Data Reporting for MEAs: UNEP held an expert workshop on the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) roll-out for African Countries in Nairobi, Kenya. Nine African countries tested the tool and provided improvement recommendations.⁶⁴ DaRT is the first tool supporting Parties to effectively use synergies in the field of national reporting, helping Parties retrieve biodiversity related information from various sources and report to several MEAs.

Pacific Judicial Capacity: UNEP with the Asian Development Bank and the Supreme Court of Fiji brought together over 120 judges from the **Pacific region and beyond** in October to share experiences and ideas on how the judiciary will play a role in fighting climate change.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Highlights support implementation of UNEA resolutions 2/2, 2/5, 2/17, 2/19, and 2/21.

⁶⁰ <https://undg.org/document/process-to-establish-un-common-premises-flowchart/>

⁶¹ <https://undg.org/business-operations/task-team-on-common-premises/>

⁶² See <https://www.edgebuildings.com/> Developed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and introduced by the UNEP Greening the Blue Team this innovative online platform, a green building standard and a certification system for over 150 countries

⁶³ See <https://www.greeningtheblue.org/news/unon-launches-environmental-management-system> On 3 October 2019, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme and Acting Director-General of UNON, signed a UNON Environmental Statement as part of the journey toward ISO certification.

⁶⁴ The DaRT tool will facilitate knowledge management for national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions

⁶⁵ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/view-bench-pacific-judges-weigh-climate-change>

Coherent SDG Implementation: UNEP signed an agreement with **Burkina Faso** in October that facilitated, *inter alia*, the start of testing of SDG indicator 17.14.1 to assess the mechanisms that enhance the coherence of national policies, strategies, projects and programs. In **Guyana**, a study was conducted to assess Guyana's institutional framework and governance structure related to environmental policy. The objective of the study was to develop guidelines to improve coordination in reporting on SDGs and MEAs.

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.”

International environmental law course: The 16th joint annual UNEP-University of Eastern Finland MEA Course was held from 13 to 24 October in Siena, Italy.⁶⁶ The theme of this year's course was *Emerging Issues in International Environmental Law*.

Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development: Myanmar conducted a training in October for about 30 Environmental Conservation Department staff on the development of the National Indicator Framework for the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan that will form the basis of ongoing work with the Environmental Conservation Department to develop a system for gathering environmental statistics and related information. **Indonesia** launched *the Blue Financial Instrument Framework* at the Archipelagic Island States (AIS).⁶⁷ **Lao PDR**, conducted a training on Investment Profile and Investment related Regulations for Luang Namtha province with authorities from five districts of the province. On 25 to 29 November, a Financing Model Consultation was held to discuss how investment proposals will be assessed by other line ministries to ensure quality investment projects.

Faith for Earth

- The 8th meeting of the Council of Ministers of Environment⁶⁸ from 57 Islamic countries adopted (i) a strategy on the activation of cultural and religious factors in protecting the environment to achieve sustainable development, and (ii) guidelines on strengthening the role of youth and civil society in the protection of the environment.
- Bishops and religious leaders from the Nordic countries, U.S. and Canada met from 8 to 10 October in Skálholt, Iceland with major groups and stakeholders for the *Faith for Earth Initiative* workshop. They discussed the root causes of climate change and other sustainable development challenges and encouraged the creation of a “Faith for Earth Coalition” that would allow faith leaders to set shared objectives to address climate change and environmental degradation.

⁶⁶ <http://www.uef.fi/en/web/unep/previous-courses>

⁶⁷ <https://www.aisforum.org/>

⁶⁸ The Conference was held 2-3 October 2019 in Rabat, Morocco under the patronage of H.E. King Mohamed VI

- The Danish Ministry of Development Cooperation, Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, organized an expert meeting from 07 to 08 October focusing on the linkages between freedom of religion, climate change, health and gender issues as three parallel priorities.



Iceland's Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, H.E. Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, addresses the Faith for Earth Initiative workshop on 8 October 2019, Skálholt, Iceland (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Policy and Programme Division)

Poverty - Environment Nexus

- The UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development⁶⁹ has developed, with GIZ, a technical assistance project to exchange experience between **Indonesia** and **South Africa** on green bonds. The project, endorsed by the Government of South Africa, will help the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal to establish green bonds at municipality level and review a guidance from January 2020 to July 2021.
- At the workshop 'Advancing the Human Right to a Healthy Environment: Operationalizing the MoU between UNEP and OHCHR' held from 05 to 08 November in Nairobi, UNEP presented the collaboration opportunities on social and environmental aspects of Poverty-Environment Action.
- As of October, six full-fledged country projects (**Lao PDR, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal and Rwanda**) had been undertaken, and two Technical Assistance projects (**Indonesia and Tanzania**) were approved. **Bangladesh and Nepal** are expected to start full-fledged project implementation during the fourth quarter of 2019.

⁶⁹ Contributes to implementation of Resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.18

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).”

Antimicrobial resistance: The World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organization for Animal Health and UNEP collaborated during the World Antibiotic Awareness Week, held from 18 to 24 November, to spread awareness about antimicrobial resistance (AMR) crisis in **Asia and the Pacific**. A short film⁷⁰ on AMR was produced to promote positive behaviour towards mitigating AMR as well as to highlight AMR-related human, animal and the environment interactions.



A short film on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Asia and the Pacific, spreads awareness and promotes positive behaviour (screenshot above).

Lead management

- Draft technical guidelines on lead paint reformulation were developed⁷¹ and are under pilot testing in paint small and medium enterprises. Launch workshops took place in five National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPC), namely in Jordan, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and the last one in October in **China**.

⁷⁰<https://who.canto.global/v/AntibioticAwarenessWeek/smartalbum/video?viewIndex=0&gSortingForward=false&gOrderProp=uploadDate&from=thumbnail&display=thumbnail&column=video&id=8fvuu16stt5bb1pp1ja315kn3d>

⁷¹ http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/Documents/GEF-Project/Lead-Paint/Lead_Paint_TG_Draft_25032019.docx

- 73 countries (4 more than in 2018) participated in the **2019 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action** which took place from 20 to 26 October, focusing mainly on eliminating lead paint.⁷²
- Two new partners from **industry and NGO** joined the Lead Paint Alliance.⁷³

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.”

Gender and waste: The report *Gender and waste nexus: Experiences from Bhutan, Mongolia and Nepal*⁷⁴ was launched at the 8th World Congress of the International Solid Waste Association⁷⁵ held on 7 - 9 October, in Bilbao, Spain. The report provides a detailed analysis of the gendered nature of the waste sector and examines the relationship between gender and waste based on fieldwork in the capital cities of the three countries.

Plastic Waste Management: The Holistic Strategy and Action Plan for Plastic Waste Management in Greater **Hyderabad** Municipal Corporation (GHMC),⁷⁶ India, was finalized by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies-Centre Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (IGES-CCET). The strategy aims to ensure segregation, storage and collection of plastic waste both recyclable and non-recyclable as well as to promote scientific processing of plastic waste. A stakeholder meeting was organised by ICLEI-South Asia Office with GHMC.⁷⁷

Waste management in South Asia: The *Road map for sustainable waste management and resource circulation in South Asia 2019-2030* and its status report were approved and adopted by the Governing Council of **South Asia Cooperative Environmental Programme** during its high-level meeting (5 -7 November, Dhaka, Bangladesh).

⁷² https://www.who.int/ipcs/lead_campaign/en/

⁷³ Industry (Powder Coating Research Group - USA) at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30705/LPA-partner-PCRG.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> and NGO (Back to Basic- Kenya) at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30717/LPA-partner-BTB.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁷⁴ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29821/GaWN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁷⁵ <https://iswa2019.org/home/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/strategy-for-plastic-waste-management-in-city/article29858298.ece>

⁷⁷ <https://epaper.ntnews.com/m5/2398651/Hyderabad/02-November-2019#page/2/1> ; <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/021119/greater-hyderabad-municipal-corporation-tweaks-its-plastic-plan.html> ; <https://youtu.be/uP6UUKXfxds>



The SEA of Solutions 2019 Meeting held on 11-14 November 2019, Bangkok, Thailand (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

Some of the commitments announced during the 2019 SEA of Solutions Forum were:

- 48 retailers in **Thailand** will voluntarily terminate the distribution of single-use plastic bags in January 2020, which will be followed by a total ban on single-use plastic bags in January 2021.⁷⁸
- The Government of **Japan** will lead the G20 “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” and reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050.⁷⁹
- **Indonesia** will develop a Regional Capacity Center for Clean Seas (RC3S) in Bali.⁸⁰
- **Mae Fah Luang University**, Thailand will transform its campus into a living lab for circular economy, aiming to achieve 80% landfill diversion in the three years.⁸¹
- **Indorama** will invest \$1.5 billion towards its target of producing at least 750,000 tonnes of recycled PET per annum by 2025.⁸² Headquartered in Singapore, Indorama operates over 70 manufacturing sites in over 30 countries and is the largest producer of polyester products in the world with plants in five continents.
- **Coca-Cola** will switch from green to clear PET plastic bottles for Sprite™ throughout South-East Asia in 2020, to make these bottles easier to recycle.⁸³

⁷⁸ Announced by H.E. Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Kingdom of Thailand

⁷⁹ Announced by Mr. Tokuaki Shobayashi, Deputy Director General, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of Environment Japan

⁸⁰ Announced by Amb. Makarim Wibisono, Senior Advisor for Minister of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Republic of Indonesia

⁸¹ Announced by Dr. Chayaporn Wattanasiri, President, Mae Fah Luang University

⁸² Announced by Mr. Alope Lohia, Founder and Group CEO, Indorama Ventures Limited

⁸³ Announced by Ms. Belinda Ford, ASEAN Director of Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola ASEAN

Plastic Recycling: The Rae Town Plastic Recycling Pilot Project was launched in **Jamaica** on 29 October. The project will seek to reduce the volume of waste entering the Kingston Harbour and provide income-generating opportunities around plastic recycling for community members.⁸⁴

Waste Management Outlook Report for West Asia: The first regional report on waste management outlook has been finalized and presented at the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) roundtable in Cairo, Egypt held from 10 to 11 October.

Clean Seas: The Clean Seas “What’s in Your Bathroom?”⁸⁵ activation raises awareness about the damage of plastics in personal care products, from plastic packaging to the hidden micro-plastics in personal care products. Many consumers are unaware just how much plastic there may be in the cosmetics they use every day. Supported by UNEP’s Goodwill Ambassadors and other influencers, ‘selfie-style’ videos and photos shared on social media are used to promote easy and cost-effective alternatives.

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.”

Air quality monitoring: UNEP’s Air Quality project, which addresses air quality management in cities, supported a capacity building workshop on air quality monitoring jointly organised with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** from 23 to 25 September. The aim was to educate air quality managers to better design air quality measurement networks that support desired air pollution reduction and policy goals.

Electric 2- and 3-wheelers: The demonstration project on electric 2- and 3-wheeler urban freight was launched for the **Philippines** on 27 November by UNEP and Clean Air Asia in coordination with national counterparts. This work is part of UNEP’s project targeting Southeast Asia (Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) and East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda), funded by Germany’s International Climate Initiative. The project includes studies to better understand the number and role of 2- and 3-wheelers in the countries, the impact on the electricity grid when electric vehicles are mainstreamed, the potential for local manufacturing, development of appropriate policies and regulations to support electric mobility, and a demonstration project.

⁸⁴ <https://jis.gov.jm/unep-endorses-rae-town-plastic-recycling-pilot-project/> ; http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/rae-town-plastic-recycling-project-to-reduce-waste-entering-harbour_178486?fbclid=IwAR0Exmdv071_VvG7mF7mwZj6SvKdq0QDcPfOxvz8p_jRr8SjefD1llzdofQ

⁸⁵ <https://www.cleaneas.org/impact/whats-your-bathroom-hidden-plastics-your-beauty-products>

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 support to G20: On 10 October 2019 in Tokyo, Japan, as a direct contribution to the G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue, the International Resource Panel (IRP) launched a series of country fact sheets⁸⁶ for G20 countries with information on status and trends of natural resource use entitled *Natural Resource Use in the Group of 20: Status, Trends, and Solutions*. Following their positive reception, the G20 Japanese Presidency requested the IRP to prepare material and policy recommendations on Marine Plastic Litter for the G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue in 2020. Consultations with the upcoming G20 Presidency (Saudi Arabia) are ongoing.

Green Economy

- **Fiscal Policies for a Green Economy:** UNEP, with its partners in the Green Fiscal Policy Network,⁸⁷ organized a webinar with the Green Growth Knowledge Platform on *Measuring What Matters on Fossil Fuel Subsidies*. The webinar was attended by over 100 participants from around the world. UNEP presented a new methodology⁸⁸ for collecting and reporting data on fossil fuel subsidies under the SDGs, which was developed together with the OECD and the Global Subsidies Initiative. From 2020, UNEP will start to collect data on fossil fuel subsidies from UN member countries which will feed into the SDG Global Database⁸⁹ maintained by UN Statistics.
- **Green Economy Week:** The **Kyrgyz Republic**, under the lead of its Ministry of Economy, held its 5th Green Economy Forum in November in Bishkek. The Forum mobilized government representatives, actors across civil society, private sector and development partners. The week ended with a high-level Green Economy Forum where all partners committed to translate the green economy vision into action. The Kyrgyz Republic is a partner country of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE).

⁸⁶ <https://internationalresourcepanel.org/reports/natural-resource-use-group-20>

⁸⁷ <http://greenfiscalspolicy.org/>

⁸⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28111/FossilFuel.pdf>

⁸⁹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>



The fifth Green Economy Week held on 11 – 17 November 2019, in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Asia and the Pacific Office)

Expected Accomplishment – 6b

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

Green Economy Academy: Over 100 participants from 34 countries, representing governments, business, academia, trade unions and civil society gathered in ILO’s International Training Center in mid-October for the 2019 Global Academy on the Green Economy.⁹⁰ A week-long series of panel discussions, knowledge fairs and training courses allowed representatives from PAGE countries along with UN agency specialists and other partners to share policy-relevant and action-oriented knowledge on green and inclusive economies and initiate related South-South Cooperation.



The 2019 Global Academy on the Green Economy held on 14-18 October 2019, at the ILO International Training Center in Turin, Italy

⁹⁰ <https://www.un-page.org/2019-global-academy-green-economy-turin-italy>

Plastics Circular Economy: The Ellen MacArthur Foundation and UNEP launched the first annual *New Plastics Economy Global Commitment progress report*⁹¹ in the ‘Our Ocean Conference’ on 24 October. Over 200 businesses and 19 governments from across the world disclosed their actions to eliminate unnecessary plastic products and to undertake innovations so that all plastic packaging is 100 per cent reusable, recyclable, or compostable, as well as safely and easily circulated without becoming waste or pollution.



Andrew Morlet, CEO Ellen MacArthur Foundation, at the launch of the 2019 Global Commitment Annual Report on 24 October 2019 in Oslo, Norway.



One key commitment was on reducing the demand for virgin plastic as illustrated above.

Principles for Responsible Banking: Al Baraka Banking Group signed on 28 October the new Principles for Responsible Banking and became the first bank in the West Asia region to join the initiative.⁹²

Programme of Action for a Green Economy (PAGE): In November, UNEP presented the **India** PAGE 2019/20 workplan and the Green Economy Stocktaking Study to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India’s PAGE focal ministry. Both documents will guide India’s PAGE activities until 2022/23, which are envisaged to catalyze additional resources and partnerships in India, such as the One Planet Network or SWITCH Asia.

Transforming Tourism Value Chains: UNEP, through the One Planet Network, held three workshops in the **Dominican Republic** on the *Roadmap for Low Carbon and Resource Efficient Accommodation in the Dominican Republic*.⁹³ The first one, on 10 October, raised awareness among chefs and cuisine staff on the importance of sustainable food and food waste reduction. It trained chefs, cuisine staff and hotel managers. The other two, from 11 to 15 November, provided guidelines to hoteliers on preparing their single-use plastics reduction programmes. These workshops are part of the ‘Transforming Tourism Value Chains in developing countries and SIDS for more resource efficient and low-carbon development’ project.

⁹¹ <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/Global-Commitment-2019-Progress-Report.pdf>

⁹² <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/ai-baraka-banking-group-bsc-becomes-first-bank-west-asia-commit-un>

⁹³ https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_dominican_republic_1.pdf

Green Development: UNEP is leading a cost estimation exercise in Guyana for all 213 policy prescriptions of the **Guyana Green State Development Strategy - Vision 2040** in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. This exercise involved an intensive two-week consultation in October and November with 10 key ministries and statutory agencies, in which advice on aligning sector and agency plans to the Green State Development Strategy and estimating the related cost implications in the near and medium term was provided.

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 a workshop at the World Resources Forum⁹⁴ on 23 October in Geneva, focusing on 1.5-degree lifestyles based on the Anatomy of Action.⁹⁵ Experts from IGES and the Wuppertal Institute Scientific presented insights. A media influencer and a Youth for Climate representative addressed the importance of engaging individuals through positive social media messages and encouraging them to use their voting power.

Product Sustainability:

- Between October and November, UNEP held three webinars to promote the *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information* in **Brazil** (jointly delivered with the Ministry of Justice) and two global ones in partnership with the One Planet Network workstreams on Buildings and Constructions and on Sustainable Lifestyles. In addition, a webinar was held with partners in **Latin America** who will be offering technical assistance to companies to implement the Guidelines.
- UNEP released four case studies of the application of the *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information*, totalling 22 case studies⁹⁶ released over one year. These case studies illustrate how real claims perform *vis à vis* the Guidelines’ principles.
- On Product Lifetime Extension, UNEP developed one training material and did one webinar and two in-person trainings, in **India** and **Brazil**.⁹⁷

Sustainable Public Procurement: UNEP successfully organized the first pilot testing of the SDG 12.7.1⁹⁸ measurement methodology. Twenty-one countries and five provinces located in **Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America**, took part in this first assessment of the 12.7.1 composite index.

⁹⁴ <https://www.wrforum.org/>

⁹⁵ <https://www.anatomyofaction.org/>

⁹⁶ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/consumer-information-scp/product-sustainability-information-hub>

⁹⁷ <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/consumer-information-scp/product-lifetime-extension-hub>

⁹⁸ SDG Indicator 12.7.1: Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans (*No data for this indicator is currently available and its methodology is still under development and testing*)

The methodology was submitted at the end of November to the UN Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs for validation and possible upgrading to the tier 2 category.

Product Information and design: UNEP delivered a series of “Sustainable Consumption and Production Workshops” for the private sector in **Colombia** and **Costa Rica** jointly with the Ministries of Environment. More than 60 companies participated strengthening their knowledge on SCP, circular economy, eco-innovation and consumer information and ecolabeling, to drive sustainable consumption in Latin America with better product information and design.



Participants at the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) workshop held on 25-29 November 2019, Bogota, Colombia (Photo credit: UN Environment Programme/Economy Division)

Ecolabelling: A training programme was held in **Colombia** from 25 to 29 November in collaboration with the Colombian Accreditation Organization (ONAC). It aimed at strengthening national labelling infrastructure and support the Environmental Alliance of America.

Sustainable Cities Indicators: A National Forum of Sustainable Cities was held in Buenos Aires, **Argentina** on 28 November to introduce a newly created Sustainable Cities Platform within the Secretary of Government for Environment and Sustainable Development. This platform will promote exchange of best practices and replication of efforts from local actors in the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

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.”

Science-based partnerships for GCF project development:

- UNEP concluded an MoU with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES)⁹⁹ to receive technical support to prepare full Green Climate Fund (GCF) funding proposals for proposed projects in Africa and Asia-Pacific.
- UNEP and the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences (CAMS)¹⁰⁰ met on 24 October in Beijing, China, to identify future cooperation areas in the development and implementation of GCF projects. The aim was to formalise their partnership to help countries to build capacities for the collection, management and use of environmental data, information and knowledge for early warning, planning, policy-making, preparedness and response actions.



UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences (CAMS) meeting on the future of GCF projects held on 24 October 2019, Beijing, China

6th Global Environment Outlook updates

- UNEP presented on 3 October the key findings and messages of the GEO-6 to new members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- UNEP organised the 1st face-to-face meeting of the **Future of the Global Environment Outlook** steering committee from 31 October to 01 November in Prague, Czech Republic. UNEP’s Executive

⁹⁹ <http://www.rimes.int/>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.camsma.cn/>

Director delivered the opening speech via video conference. The steering committee approved the work plan, timeline and the Terms of Reference for the preparation of the options document and for conducting broad consultations on the future of GEO.

- The GEO for Youth African report was launched at the AMCEN meeting held from 11 to 15 November in Durban, South Africa. Around 300 hundred participants (mainly policy makers and development partners in Africa) were informed about GEO-6, its process and key findings across sectors in Africa.
- UNEP, with governments and regional partners, conducted several outreach events for GEO 6 products in Asia Pacific, targeting youth to diffuse the scientific knowledge and inspire actions. Together, these events reached an audience of over 450 knowledge users.

Policy and Innovation Forum

The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Annual Forum serves as a knowledge-sharing platform that brings together researchers to present research and innovation. At SEI's 30th anniversary on 15 October, the SEI Policy and Innovation Forum took place in Nairobi, Kenya. Its theme was environmental governance and diplomacy in the post-globalization era. The Forum also sought to celebrate the leadership by the Governments of Sweden and Kenya on global environment and climate diplomacy, and to showcase the role of research and science in strengthening environmental and climate diplomacy. It was held at a moment when the world is looking forward to the 50th Anniversary of the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment (the Stockholm Conference).

Climate change science

- UNEP developed inputs on the impacts of climate change on the environment for the World Meteorological Organization led *2019 Annual Statement on the State of the Global Climate*.¹⁰¹
- UNEP participated actively in the African Climate Risks Conference (7- 9 October, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) and shared information from the 's World Adaptation Science Programme with African experts and stakeholders.
- Staff from UNEP and partners were trained, with funding from the GEF, (13 - 15 November, Nairobi) on carbon accounting from land management practices using tools developed by UNEP, the Colorado State University and other partners. Some 20 participants completed the training and received their training certificates.

Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Environmental reporting on MEAs and SDGs:** To enhance collaborative environmental reporting on MEAs and the SDGs at the national level,¹⁰² the Global Environment Facility funded cross-cutting capacity development¹⁰³ projects in **Benin**¹⁰⁴ and **Mauritania**.¹⁰⁵ The inaugural project

¹⁰¹ <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/wmo-statement-state-of-global-climate>

¹⁰² In line with UNEA-4 outcome document.

¹⁰³ <https://www.thegef.org/topics/capacity-development>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.thegef.org/project/building-core-capacity-implementation-monitoring-and-reporting-multilateral-environmental-1>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.thegef.org/project/building-core-capacity-implementation-monitoring-and-reporting-multilateral-environmental>

steering committee meetings were held from 01 to 04 and 06 to 08 October respectively, with UNEP's participation. The mid-term review for the *Building National and Regional Capacity to Implement MEAs by Strengthening Planning, and State of Environment Assessment and Reporting in the Pacific Islands* project,¹⁰⁶ being executed by SPREP¹⁰⁷ in 14 Pacific Islands, was undertaken.

- **SDG indicators:** At UNEP's request, the Inter Agency and Expert Group on SDGs approved the reclassification of SDG indicators 14.1.1.a, 14.1.1.b, 14.2.1 and 15.9.1, based on the submission of the international standard methodologies and metadata for the indicators.
- **East Asia Regional Workshop on SDGs indicators:** The workshop was held from 8 to 10 October in Da Nang, Viet Nam, and brought together 20 participants from five countries.¹⁰⁸ The workshop enabled sharing and learning from the EC-UNEP partnership project on data and information sharing and reporting for SDGs. Experience on strategic data planning, coordination with line agencies and multi-stakeholders and the use of proxy indicators was also presented.
- **Earth Observations Award:** UNEP was awarded the *2019 Earth Observations for Sustainable Development and Goals Award for SDG Custodian Agency* by the Group on Earth Observations for its 'remarkable efforts to enable the official monitoring and reporting of SDG target 6.6 on the change in the extent of freshwater related ecosystems over time.' This workstream is an example of intra-UNEP collaboration, between the Science and Ecosystems Division.



The 2019 Earth Observations for Sustainable Development and Goals Award for SDG Custodian Agency presented to UN Environment Programme.

- **Integrated Environmental Assessment:** A national training workshop was held from 12 to 14 November in **Syria**, with 40 participants from different ministries. With UNEP's support, the workshop is expected to result in the development of the State of the Environment Report for Syria.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.thegef.org/project/building-national-and-regional-capacity-implement-meas-strengthening-planning-and-state>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.sprep.org/>

¹⁰⁸ From China (Hong Kong), DPR Korea, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam

- **Strengthening the Science-Policy- business interface in Africa:** AMCEN¹⁰⁹ endorsed the proposal for an Africa science-policy-business forum to contribute to the provision of information to policymakers for informed decision-making on environmental issues on the continent and enhance the engagement of the private sector in **the implementation of the SDGs.**
- **SDG Games:** UNEP co-organized the Nairobi UN SDG Games on 24 October, raising awareness on the SDGs and goals monitoring.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/conference/seventeenth-regular-session-african-ministerial-conference-environment-amcen>

IMPLEMENTATION OF UNEA RESOLUTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN PROGRAMMATIC UPDATES

Decision UNEP/EA.4/1: Proposed programme of work and budget for 2020 – 2021

The draft UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work roadmap¹¹⁰ was discussed at the 6th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held from 07 to 11 October in Nairobi, Kenya.

Decision UNEP/EA.4/2: Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

The Assembly requested the UNEA Bureau to define a theme for the next Environment Assembly no later than 31 December 2019, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. During the 6th Annual Subcommittee held from 7 to 11 October in Nairobi:

- The Envoy of the President of UNEA and the Chair of the Committee organized joint consultation meetings with regional groups A note¹¹¹ on consensual elements for the theme for UNEA-5 by the Presidency was shared with member States and further consulted on 31 October.¹¹²
- A note¹¹³ and a presentation¹¹⁴ were provided to Member States, which included three work streams: (i) Preparation of the commemoration of the creation of UNEP in 1972 (paragraph 8); (ii) Process for review by the CPR to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the UNEP governing bodies (paragraphs 9-13); and (iii) Preparation of an action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of “The future we want” (paragraph 14). Consultations were held with member States on all work streams.

Resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.22: Implementation and follow up of United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions

The 6th Annual Sub-Committee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives considered a paper prepared by the Secretariat, entitled *Implementation of UNEA Resolutions: Revised Options for an Improved Framework for Reporting, including Monitoring Mechanism Proposal*. This followed consideration by the 146th meeting of the CPR, of an earlier paper on options for an enhanced reporting

¹¹⁰<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29932/Roadmap%20for%20Mainstreaming%20UNDS%20Reform.pdf?sequence>

¹¹¹<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30005/Updated%20note%20on%20the%20theme%20UNEA5%20REV%20UNEP%203%20FINAL%20clean.pdf?sequence=13&isAllowed=y>

¹¹² This follows the letter of July 2019 from the President of UNEA a letter to Member States, major groups and stakeholders to provide views on the theme providing three alternative thematic area for consideration (<http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29393/Letter%20from%20the%20President%2bThought-starter%20UNEA%205%20theme%20July%202019.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>), and to the letter from the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to member States proposing a consultation plan (<http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29747/CPR%20Chair%20letter%20on%20consultations%20towards%20selecting%20the%20theme%20of%20UNEA5%20%28002%29.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>)

¹¹³<http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29932/UNEP.CPR.SC2019.6%20Note%20on%20implementation%20of%20UNEA%20Decision%204.2%20%28004%29.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

¹¹⁴<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29932/ASC%20presentation%20decision%204.2%20-%20%20Read-Only.pdf?sequence=35&isAllowed=y>

framework. Member States provided additional guidance and agreed to continue consultations on the proposals at forthcoming sub-committee meetings. It is expected that discussions will continue at the 148th meeting of the Committee. The Secretariat continues work on content development and technical ICT components.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Environmental and Social Safeguards in UN Programming

A series of knowledge exchange webinars inviting UN entities and NGOs to discuss implementation challenges in applying environmental and social standards in programming was launched by the Environment Management Group in October. These deep-dive discussions followed the release of the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming¹¹⁵ and explored the standards' implementation challenges. Two webinars have so far been organized focusing on accountability mechanisms and labour standards.

South-South Cooperation

South-South cooperation activities were focused on the development of the new UNEP South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy. Each iteration of the draft strategy involved internal consultations within UNEP and consideration of comments received from Member States and civil society during meetings and in writing.

Following the presentation of an initial draft strategy to Member States at an informal briefing, UNEP developed a revised Strategy¹¹⁶ and presented¹¹⁷ it in a formal briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 31 October 2019. A final draft strategy that incorporates inputs received from Member States and the Senior Management Team will be presented to the Committee of Permanent Representatives in December 2019.

¹¹⁵ https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/INF_2_UN_Model_Approach_ES-Standards_for_Programming.pdf

¹¹⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30166/SSTC%20Briefing%20Note%2031%20Oct-merged.pdf?sequence=10&isAllowed=y>

¹¹⁷ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30166/2019.31.10%20CPR%20-%20SSTC%20Strategy%20Presentation%20-%2003%20%2829%20Oct%202019%29%20-%20%20Read-Only.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y>

SECTION 3: RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

This section of the report focuses on human resources and management issues. It provides an update on 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.

HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW

General overview

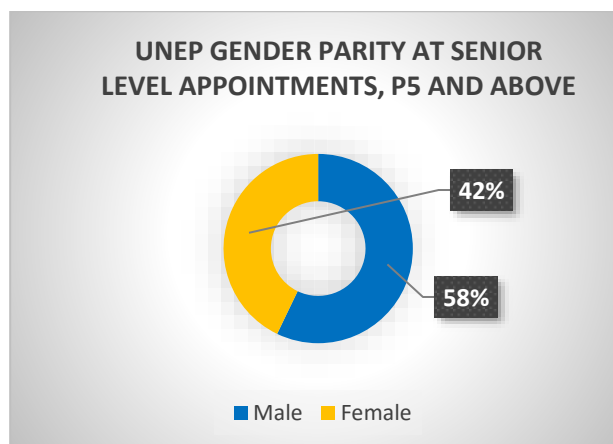
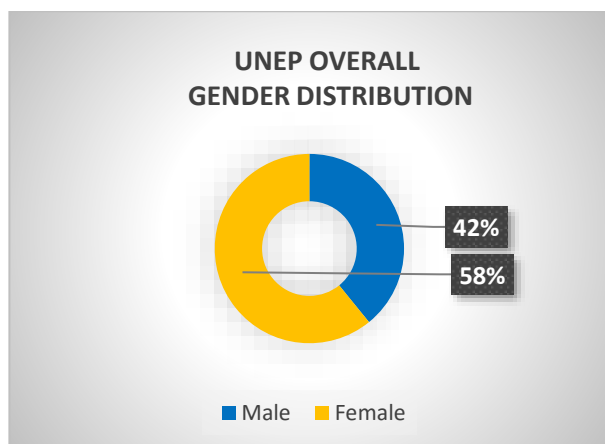
As at 30 November 2019, UNEP staff totalled 1236, comprising 739 professional personnel and 497 general service personnel. Of the 1236, 323 were staff of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements administered by UNEP.

Senior Staff

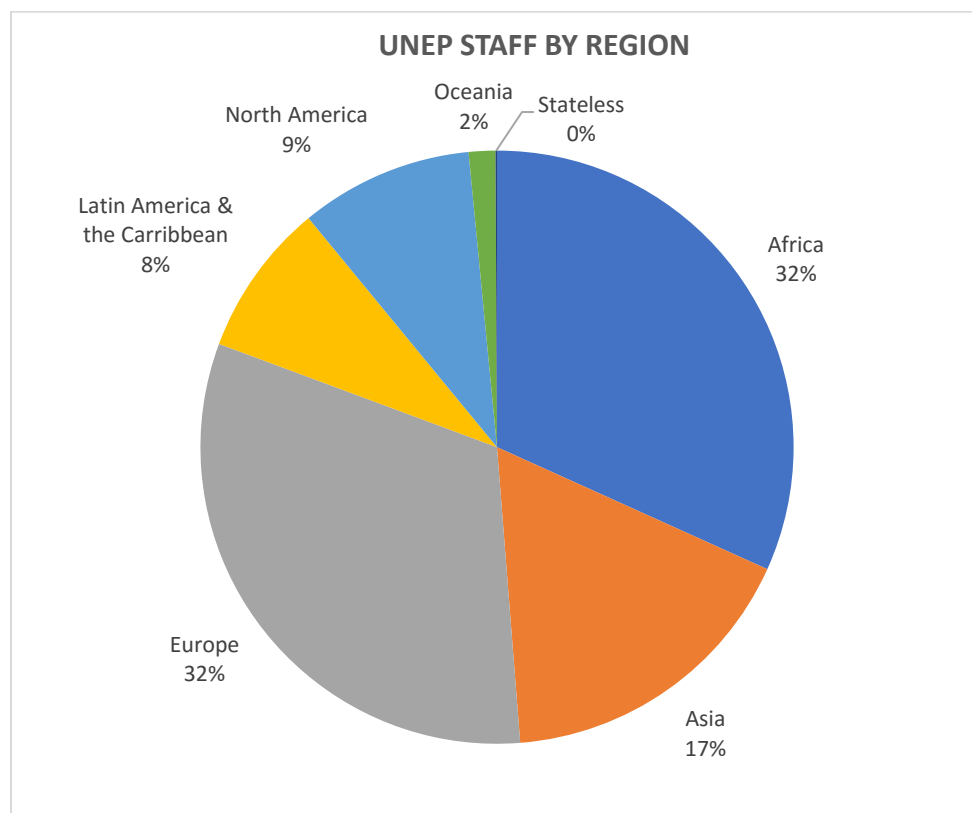
Level	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5
No. of Staff	1	3	9	52	133

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

Gender Parity



Regional representation



Key Human Resource Risks and Issues

In line with the Secretary General’s UN System-Wide Gender Parity Strategy and UNEP’s Gender Parity Implementation Plan, progress continues to reach the established targets, particularly at the senior levels.

AUDITS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

The implementation of the recommendations of Audits already completed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the development of audit assignments planned for 2019 are ongoing.

A. Ongoing OIOS audits

1. Management of Partnerships at UNEP
2. Recruitment Process at UNEP
3. Management of Data Classification and Data Privacy at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat
4. Grants Management at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat

B. Implementation of recommendations of completed OIOS audits

1. UNEP Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity¹¹⁸
2. UNEP Afghanistan Project Office¹¹⁹
3. Official travel at UNEP¹²⁰
4. Contract management at UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat¹²¹ (UNON Lead)
5. UNEP's Asia and the Pacific Office¹²²
6. UNEP's Abidjan Convention Secretariat¹²³
7. Environmental Governance subprogramme¹²⁴
8. Disasters and Conflicts subprogramme¹²⁵
9. Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme¹²⁶
10. Caribbean Environment Programme¹²⁷

Board of Auditors

The Board of Auditors team from Chile conducted the Internal Control and Management Audit (2019 Interim Audit) of UNEP Headquarters and the Regional Office for Africa from 7 to 29 October. The final report is not yet issued. Five audit recommendations from 2018 and prior years were closed. Implementation of other recommendations is ongoing.

The auditors will be conducting Internal Control and Management Audits of the Regional Office of Latin American and the Caribbean from 25 November to 13 December 2019 and the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat from 13 to 31 January 2020.

EVALUATIONS

During the reporting period:

- **Six** project evaluations were brought to completion this quarter, bringing the cumulative total of completed evaluations for 2019 to **forty-four**.
- **thirty-seven** project evaluations are currently active and ongoing.

The evaluation of the **Environment Under Review** subprogramme has progressed and a draft report will be completed and circulated for comments before year-end.

¹¹⁸ <https://oios.un.org/file/8094/download?token=blwEvwsg>

¹¹⁹ <https://oios.un.org/file/7508/download?token=AGngDa7P>

¹²⁰ <https://oios.un.org/file/7283/download?token=FiVPFxu2>

¹²¹ <https://oios.un.org/file/7424/download?token=rqeSewZD>

¹²² <https://oios.un.org/file/6986/download?token=SNM9Eu-S>

¹²³ <https://oios.un.org/file/7019/download?token=nz- EhsI>

¹²⁴ https://oios.un.org/file/6197/download?token=oWmAWD_Q

¹²⁵ <https://oios.un.org/file/6092/download?token=nHNvTA95>

¹²⁶ <https://oios.un.org/file/6365/download?token=J0EsYS9L>

¹²⁷ <https://oios.un.org/file/5675/download?token=VUSK8Y5t>

Selected learning points from recently completed terminal evaluations:

Delivering Sustainable Development and Enabling the Transition to Greener Economies through Sustainable Public Procurement.

Introducing complex approaches and processes like Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) in a country with immature SPP models and sparse relevant experience is a big challenge. It is therefore important that an assessment of the expected achievement of outcome and the likelihood of sustainability (institutional and financial frameworks with a focus on elements such as vision, policies, strategy, budget for the purpose, experience, readiness, cooperation culture, and competences) are considered when identifying country cooperation opportunities.

When working within challenging national institutional frameworks where results are difficult to accomplish at national level, a more realistic focus at sub-national level may provide an opportunity to achieve valuable outcomes, paving the way for later efforts at national scale. Continuous and dynamic dialogue between UNEP and the project partners strengthens the implementation process and makes adaptive project management possible.

Multiplying Environmental and Carbon Benefits in High Andean Ecosystems.

Different indicators are needed along the project impact pathway (output, outcome and impact). The present project was designed with a high level of detail for indicators at output level, with adequate quantitative, measurable information that had concrete baselines and protocols to measure. Also, they were directly linked to GEF indicators and tracking tools making the linkage of project monitoring to GEF reporting instruments easy.

On the other hand, the project used practically the same output indicators at an aggregate level to indicate achievement of outcomes. Therefore, the project design did not foresee the provision of additional information to measure outcomes and impact so that the achievement of these could not be assessed to the same level of objectiveness as the outputs.