

Dear Readers,

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the eleventh issue of the ACP MEAs 3 monthly Digest published on the first Monday of every month. As an informative publication, the Digest provides a collection of key information from various sources, including from programme partners on issues related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), environmental governance, ocean governance, sustainable development, and South-South Cooperation relevant for the implementation of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme.

The key highlights of this month's issue include:

- Restoring planetary health in the COVID-19 era
- Managing climate risks
- Creating a nature-positive future
- Enhancing the Effectiveness of Sub-National Biodiversity Policy
- Building synergy and collaboration on plastics
- From pollution to marine litter solution and launching of the global judicial portal

If your organization/department wishes to showcase any of your activities and/or share key information, please send a summary text by the 20th of the month to Mr. Ladu Lemi, communications focal point for the programme at ladu.lemi@un.org

Happy reading!



Credit: Julia Joppien

Sustainable Development Highlights

Restoring Planetary Health in the COVID-19 Era: Actionable Recommendations

Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the calls for policymakers to restore planetary health has increased due to the pandemic's wide-ranging social, environmental, and economic impacts. A report by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies' (IGES) which reviewed core concepts of planetary health and One Health notes that policymakers require technical assistance to translate support for a healthy planet into actionable recommendations and ambitious policy directions. The report offers recommendations and suggestions related to green and blue issues—ecosystems and water systems and ways on how to maintain modest momentum in allocating stimulus funds to interventions to address climate and pollution crisis while also ensuring that developing countries and disadvantaged stakeholders are not left behind. [Read more](#)



Managing Climate Risks, Facing up to Losses and Damages



Climate change is driving fundamental changes to the planet with adverse impacts on human livelihoods and well-being, putting development gains at risk. The scale and extent of future risks for a given location is, however, subject to uncertainties in predicting complex climate dynamics as well as the impact of individual and societal decisions that determine future emissions, socio-economic development and inequality patterns. Using a risk management approaches to understand climate-related losses and damages, a report explores how climate change will play out in different geographies over time and the possible approaches to reduce and manage risks with a focus on policy action, finance and the role of technology in supporting effective risk governance processes. [Read more](#)

Biodiversity Conservation Highlights

Global Leaders Pledge to End Deforestation by 2030



During the meeting of the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties (COP26) to Paris Agreement which aims to limit global warming to 1.5°C, nations agreed on the Glasgow Climate Pact, which states that carbon emissions will have to fall by 45 percent by 2030 to keep alive the 1.5°C goal. At the heart of the plan is leaders' commitment to a transformative action to preserve global forests crucial to absorbing carbon dioxide and slowing the pace of global warming by ending deforestation by 2030. [Read more](#)

Creating a Nature-Positive Future



The global biodiversity loss is indistinguishably linked to climate change and unsustainable use of natural resources which threaten species and their habitats. This biodiversity crisis is spurring world leaders into take a transformative change to combat both biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. However, despite the extensive benefits and increasing coverage of protected and conserved areas, the loss of global biodiversity continues, largely unabated. A report by UNDP notes that, to be effective, investments in effective protected and conserved areas is essential to protect nature, through biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation while ensuring quality. The report presents a path to enhance protected and conserved areas coverage and quality to secure global nature, with multiple co-benefits for people. [Read more](#)

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Sub-National Biodiversity Policy



Sub-national governments have a key role in delivering on national and international biodiversity commitments in order to achieve the target of the post-2020 Global biodiversity framework. Drawing on national policy practices from the global north, a paper published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides an analysis of sub-national strategies, plans and mechanisms to ensure policy coherence and co-ordination. It also examines the policy instruments that subnational governments can leverage to deliver positive biodiversity outcomes and highlights, among other things, the need to develop

clear and measurable biodiversity targets at sub-national level; incorporate biodiversity considerations into sub-national climate action plans and urban, rural and regional development strategies, plans and instruments; and promote nature-based solutions at a sub-national level to harness synergies between climate mitigation, climate adaptation and biodiversity. [Read more](#)

Chemicals and Wastes Highlights

Global Youth Program to Tackle Plastic Pollution in the Pacific

Due to the growing volume of plastic waste which ultimately ends into oceans, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is heading the Plastic Tide Turners program that is being implemented in 32 countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Under its Clean Seas platform, the program aims to engage youths across the globe to address the issue of plastic pollution that is widely threatening life in oceans, rivers and on land. In Pacific region, a global youth movement focused on emerging waste issues including plastic pollution is anticipated to reach the Pacific with an aim to motivate youth to alter their behaviour and norms around plastic usage both at home and in their communities. [Read more](#)



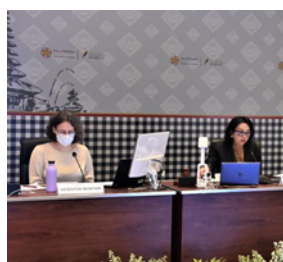
Building Synergy and Collaboration on Plastics: Towards Integrated Solutions to Marine Plastic Pollution

Having access to accurate plastic data and the capacity to translate it into actionable recommendations should be the basis of any national strategic priority setting and policymaking. In many countries, including ASEAN Member States, there are big gaps in data availability on plastic at many stages of its life-cycle, and expertise surrounding it is insufficiently coordinated in order to make integrated policy recommendations on both national and regional levels. A report released by the Institute for Global Environment Strategies (IGES) suggests that, analyzing currently available data to draw an overall picture of the plastic issue would be the first step to address the data gaps by identifying data collection capacity and data availability across the plastic value chain as well as any necessary information on the importance of integrated solutions to the plastic waste and marine plastic pollution [Read more](#)



Parties to the Minamata Convention Reinforce Commitment to End Mercury Pollution

During the first segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-4) held virtually in November 2021, delegates devoted a weeklong negotiation on the progress of the Convention. These negotiations culminated into the approval of the Convention's programme of work and budget for the coming year which lighted activities such as conferences and meetings, capacity building and technical assistance, scientific and technical activities, knowledge management and communication, legal matters, and overall management of the Secretariat. Parties stressed the importance of effectiveness evaluation to the Convention as a crucial element in meeting the main objective of



protecting human health and the environment from toxic mercury by eradicating anthropogenic mercury emissions and releases. [Read more](#)

Countering the Scourge in Single-use Plastics

As the world struggles to counter the surge in plastic pollution caused by humanity's decades-old addiction to disposable plastics materials that are choking the world's rivers and seas, threatening wildlife and contaminating the food chain, the COVID-19 pandemic has only made this problem worse as the use of disposable masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE) soars. Studies show that plastic pollution leakage into aquatic ecosystems has grown sharply in recent years and is projected to more than double by 2030. Although solutions to the plastic crisis are complex, improving regulation, ramping up recycling and introducing incentives to encourage a reduction in virgin plastic production is critical. Experts have also suggested that several actions can be taken by every person such as adopt a circular lifestyle, steer clear of plastic gloves, etc. to help tackle the mounting toll plastic on the environment. [Read more](#)



From Pollution to Solution: A Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution

In the recent years, the rate of plastic leakage into aquatic ecosystems has grown sharply and is projected to more double by 2030. If no actions are taken to reverse the trend, plastic pollution will have unprecedented consequences for human health, the global economy, biodiversity and the climate. One of the most drastic strategies for plastic waste reduction include an accelerated transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies, the removal of subsidies and a shift towards circular approaches. An assessment report on marine litter and plastic pollution shows that there is a growing threat in all ecosystems from source to sea and that while we have the know-how, there is need for a political will to tackle the mounting crisis. [Read more](#)



News from Partners and Associates

The Global Judicial Portal

The Global Judicial Institute on the Environment (GJIE) and UNEP have developed a new platform for judges to provide greater access to environmental jurisprudence. The Portal has three main components: a user-fed database of jurisprudence, a networking and forum section for judges, and a repository of useful judicial resources, including e-learning and training materials. The database component for the platform was "soft launched" in December 2020, with the remaining sections soon to follow. The Portal can be found at:

<https://judicialportal.informea.org/>



National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Environmental Rights

Despite the intertwines between human rights and the environment, environmental human rights violations continue to rise globally. Thus, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights are well-positioned to address the urgency of environmental issues.



With a growing awareness on the importance of environmental rights, more NHRIs are also including environmental rights activities in their work plans, and building knowledge, skills, and tools related to environmental rights. NHRIs can engage in environmental rights through several approaches including complaints-handling and investigation, inquiries, awareness, education, research, policy recommendations, engage with rights-holders and duty-bearers in relation to environmental rights, support victims and environmental rights defenders, as well as building a strong network of collaboration nationally and internationally. UNEP has partnered with the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs (APF), a network of 25 national human rights institutions (NHRIs) across Asia and the Pacific, to develop a new online course on NHRIs and Environmental Rights. The course is designed to support NHRIs to connect their human rights promotion and protection mandates and subsequent activities to environmental rights and to facilitate their alignment with the growing environmental rights jurisprudence. The course can be [accessed here](#).

Upcoming Events Under the ACP MEAs Programme



- Call for applications for the implementation of the ACP MEAs III program in the Abidjan Convention area (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at abdoulaye.diagana@un.org).
- ACP MEAs 3, CBD Secretariat Dialogue series of Synthetic Biology - December 2021 and January 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org).

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The ACP MEAs is a joint UNEP- EU-FAO-OACPS partnership programme. It aims to build the capacity of 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to fulfill their obligations to multilateral environmental agreements. Phase III (ACP MEAs 3) of this programme is being implemented in Africa by the African Union Commission (AUC), Abidjan Convention and Nairobi Convention, in the Caribbean by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cartagena Convention, in the Pacific by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is the civil society partner. This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or official opinion of the European Commission, UNEP or contributory organizations.