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Environmental Stewardship through the Arctic Council

As an Official Observer to the [Arctic Council](#), UNEP participated in the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in October to support the Council's environmental stewardship and sustainable development programs under the new U.S. Chairmanship. A special session was held for Observers to discuss the involvement of Observer States and Organizations in the work of the Council, particularly through Working Groups and Task Forces.

Patricia J. Beneke, UNEP's Regional Director for North America, reiterated the organization's support of the Arctic Council's environmental agenda and noted UNEP's ongoing engagement in the [Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna](#) (CAFF) Working Group. In particular, the SAO Chair commended the work of UNEP in supporting the [Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative](#) for the Americas Flyway.

Other key items on the Council's agenda in which UNEP is also engaged include: Arctic biodiversity; climate change; ocean pollution which includes the [Arctic Marine Strategic Plan](#) to address marine oil pollution, prevention and response; protection of indigenous people; and the development of an international agreement on Arctic scientific cooperation.



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French Ameri-Can Climate Talks in the Lead up to COP21 in Paris



Left to right: Patricia Beneke, UNEP; Kathryn White, President & CEO of UNA-Canada; and The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Building up to the Climate Conference in Paris (COP21), UNEP partnered with the French embassies in both Canada and the United States to organize and participate in the [FACTS \(French Ameri-Can Climate Talks\)](#) conference series. The events aimed to mobilize French, American, and Canadian public opinion on climate change and reinforce the dialogue between experts from these countries.

The FACTS series took place in twelve cities in the United States and Canada and involved renowned scientists, civil society representatives, NGOs, political figures, journalists and entrepreneurs.

UNEP Regional Director, Patricia J. Beneke, and Deputy Regional Director, Fatou Nodye, represented UNEP at the FACTS events and presented at four talks on a range of themes including: "Can Technology Halt Climate Change" in San Francisco, California; "Innovation and Engagement with the Private Sector" in Washington, D.C.; "Impacts of Sea Level Rise on Local Communities" in Miami, Florida; and "Health and Climate Change" in Toronto, Ontario.



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The Pope's Call for Moral Action on Climate Justice

Thousands gathered outside the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on 24 September to watch Pope Francis address a joint meeting of Congress. Supporting the Pope's message for climate justice was the "Moral Action on Climate Justice" rally on the National Mall that featured an all-star lineup of musicians, religious leaders and climate justice activists.

UNEP Regional Director, Patricia J. Beneke, and Deputy Regional Director, Fatou Ndoye, echoed the call for individual and collective action to care for the planet, and highlighted the importance of the UN's Sustainability Summit in New York and UN Climate Conference in Paris, as pivotal moments for leaders to address the most pressing and challenging issue of our time.

His Holiness Pope Francis also called for strong climate agreement during his [visit to the UN Environment Programme headquarters](#) in Nairobi, Kenya last month. Speaking from the heart of Africa to the world, he addressed the subject of climate change, an issue central to his tenure thus far, as Pontiff. UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, praised Pope Francis' moral leadership on the environment saying it added global momentum to efforts to close the emissions gap and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Speech by His Holiness Pope Francis](#)



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Ten Billion Bulbs: Introducing the Global Lighting Challenge

Led by the [Clean Energy Ministerial](#) and UNEP through its [en.lighten initiative](#), the [Global Lighting Challenge](#) (GLC) is a race to reach cumulative global sales of 10 billion high-efficiency, high-quality and affordable advanced lighting products, such as light-emitting diode (LED) lamps. The GLC was announced at the White House at the "Catalyzing Markets for Off-Grid Clean Energy Access" forum in Washington, D.C., on 22 October and will be officially launched at the Paris Climate Conference.

Globally, electricity for lighting accounts for approximately 15% of power consumption and 5% of greenhouse gas emissions. A transition to efficient LED lamps worldwide would reduce CO2 emissions by 801 million tonnes annually, equivalent to displacing 684 coal-fired power plants. Currently, there are 1.4 billion people around the world who lack access to modern energy services, including reliable lighting, and are using energy sources like kerosene that pose serious environmental and health risks.

The U.S. has endorsed the GLC since its preliminary launch in May 2015, and has agreed to highlight and help accelerate existing national and international efficient lighting adoption activities. In addition, the U.S. has agreed to seek supporting actions, consistent with the GLC's guiding principles, such as promoting super-efficient and high-quality off-grid lighting systems.



Global Lighting CHALLENGE

A Clean Energy Ministerial Campaign



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Portraying the Gravity of Food Waste through Art



Krysta Harden, Deputy Secretary, USDA



Artwork by Sami Khan, Global Winner, 23rd International Children's Painting Competition

More than a third of all of the food produced globally gets lost or wasted before reaching the dinner table. In the U.S. alone, approximately [60 million tonnes of food](#), worth an estimated \$162 billion, is wasted ever year.

To showcase the gravity of food waste, UNEP partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to display the top North American submissions for UNEP's [23rd International Children's Painting Competition](#) at the USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The exhibit features the global winner, Sami Khan, age 13, from Fremont, California. His entry was chosen from over 65,000 submissions from around the world.

"I was amazed by the vision and creativity the students showed when it came to understanding the significant impacts food waste has on our planet," said USDA Deputy Secretary, Krysta Harden. According to Fatou Ndoye, UNEP Deputy Regional Director, "The paintings dramatically illustrate the devastating impact that food waste and loss has on the environment. We strongly encourage governments and citizens alike to address this critical issue through efforts like our [Think.Eat.Save](#) and [Champions 12.3](#) initiatives."

The exhibit is open to the public and is seen by 4,000 - 6,000 employees and visitors per day.



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Achieving the First U.S. Food Waste Reduction Goal

The [2015 Food Recovery Summit](#) was held in Charleston, South Carolina from 16-18 November, co-hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in conjunction with the Southeast Recycling Development Council. UNEP was one of the organizations featured in high-level discussions and hands-on practical sessions aimed at preventing food waste, expanding food reuse and donation, and increasing the recovery of discarded food.

In September, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the EPA announced the U.S. commitment to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by the year 2050. The Food Recovery Summit brought together stakeholders and representatives that can influence, contribute or control components of the food life cycle that will help to achieve this important target.

The [Think.Eat.Save.](#) initiative was featured as a global communications vehicle to stimulate behaviour change to prevent food waste. The Think.Eat.Save. campaign is a partnership between UNEP, [FAO](#) and Messe Düsseldorf, in support of the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge, which has added its authority and voice to efforts to stimulate global, regional and national actions, to encourage more sectors of society to act, through the exchange of inspiring ideas and projects.



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Addressing the Illegal Wildlife Trade and Conserving Biodiversity

The illegal trade in wildlife topic was prominently featured in the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September in New York. A high-level side event was hosted by the WCS Central Park Zoo to celebrate the passage of the [UNGA Resolution on Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife](#) which included remarks from Member States, UN agency and civil society leaders.

On 30 September, Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, gave a [speech](#) at an event hosted by the International Conservation Caucus Foundation which brought together government officials, including the Presidents of Gabon, Malawi and Tanzania, as well as heads of multilateral and UN agencies, to urgently address the wildlife crime crisis.

In November, at a workshop on [International Law and Wildlife Well-Being](#) hosted by the American Society of International Law at George Washington University, UNEP Programme Officer, Monika Thiele, participated in a panel on the "Role of Environmental Conventions and Organizations." She presented on the legal framework guiding UNEP's work in preventing and combating the illegal wildlife trade, which included references to the recently adopted UNGA Resolution, as well as the critical role of UNEP's Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in addressing wildlife crime. She also highlighted the importance of UN interagency collaboration and advancement of the recently adopted [Sustainable Development Goal on biodiversity](#).



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International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action 2015



Lead poisoning is entirely preventable, yet childhood lead exposure is estimated to contribute to about 600,000 new cases of children with intellectual disabilities every year. Over half of the nations in the world continue to allow the use of lead in decorative paint, even though good substitutes without lead are available.

The International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action was held from 25-31 October to raise awareness and highlight efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning. The [Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint](#) held a briefing for governments on "The Elimination of Lead in Paint: How Countries Can Take Action." The event was hosted by the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and co-sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization and the U.S. Government.

During the meeting, the [Toolkit for Establishing Laws for Lead in Residential Paint](#) was presented, along with case studies by Uruguay, the Philippines, Kenya and Canada, which detailed the countries' experiences in the development of lead paint regulations and legislation. The work in these countries can serve as a model for the efforts of other governments to take action to eliminate lead paint globally by 2020.



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Celebrating 20 Years of Protecting the Marine Environment

The 20th anniversary of the [Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities \(GPA\)](#) was commemorated on 17 November in Washington, D.C., the original location of the signing of the Declaration in 1995. The GPA is the only global intergovernmental mechanism directly addressing the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.

Organized by the UNEP Regional Office for North America and hosted at the UN Foundation, the meeting featured expert panelists on marine litter, wastewater, and nutrient runoff. Moderated by Patricia J. Beneke, UNEP's Regional Director with welcoming remarks from the UNEP's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation Director, Mette Wilkie, keynote speakers included Ambassador Judith G. Garber from the U.S. Department of State and by Dr. Richard Spinrad, Chief Scientist from the

A reception followed with remarks from special guests Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Jane Nishida; and renowned marine life artist and conservationist, [Wyland](#).

Two important reports were launched at the event: "[Biodegradable Plastics & Marine Litter: Misconceptions, Concerns and Impacts on Marine Environments](#)" and "[Economic Valuation of Wastewater](#)."



Left to right: Patricia Beneke, UNEP; Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI); and Wyland, marine life artist and conservationist



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Champions of the Earth: Making Progress Towards the Future We Want

Government leaders and heads of leading organizations were among the 300 guests of the [2015 Champions of the Earth Award Ceremony](#), hosted by UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, and UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Ian Somerhalder and his wife, actress Nikki Reed, in New York City on 27 September.

The ceremony recognized the [National Geographic Society](#) for Science and Innovation; [Natura Brasil](#), the largest Brazilian cosmetics manufacturer, and CEO of Unilever [Paul Polman](#), for Entrepreneurial Vision; [HE Sheikh Hasina](#) of Bangladesh, for Policy Leadership; and the [Black Mamba APU](#), an all-female, anti-poaching unit from South Africa, for Inspiration and Action.

The awards were officiated by and presented by Mr. Steiner, UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, Gisele Bundchen; World Bank Special Envoy for Climate Change, Rachel Kyte; HH Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah; and Vogue Italia's Editor-in-Chief, Franca Sozzani.

The Champions of the Earth award is the United Nations' highest environmental honor recognizing visionary people and organizations all over the world that exemplify leadership and advocate action on sustainable development, climate change and a life of dignity for all.



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Transforming Our World: Sustainable Development and Climate Action



The “[Transforming Our World: The United Nations, Sustainable Development and Climate Action](#)” symposium that was held on 9 September 2015 in Berkeley, California, raised awareness of the universal [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and provided insights on ways towards reaching a climate accord at the UN climate change conference in Paris. Featured speakers included Jared Blumenfeld, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Pacific Southwest Region and representatives of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NGO and university officials.

Panelists showcased the work being done to advance the sustainable development agenda in areas such as: global air quality, oceans, illegal trade in wildlife and climate change. The event, hosted by UNEP, the United Nations Association East Bay Chapter and UC Berkeley, brought together more than 150 policy makers, civil society representatives, the academic community and government representatives, including the City of Berkeley Mayor, Tom Bates. A welcome addition to the symposium was recognizing the North American winner for the UNEP [24th International Children’s Painting Competition](#), Gloria Yang, age 14 from Fremont, California.



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Global Environmental Outlook Undergoes North American Assessment

UNEP has embarked on the sixth flagship edition of the [Global Environment Outlook 6 \(GEO-6\)](#) to be launched in 2018. The assessment will create a comprehensive picture of the environmental factors contributing to human well-being. Parallel to the global assessment, six regional assessments will be completed in 2016, including the North American assessment, which will provide a comprehensive analysis on the state and trends in the environment with policy-relevant information to support environmental management in the region.



The North American regional assessment effort, covering Canada and the U.S., was launched earlier this year at the [Regional Environmental Information Network \(REIN\) Conference](#) in Gatineau, Quebec, as a consultation with relevant stakeholders. At the meeting, experts identified priority areas, environmental trends and emerging issues, and drafted regional outlooks. The first draft of the assessment is currently under review before being shared with governments, regional stakeholders, scientific and technical experts and the broader GEO-6 assessment community.

The GEO-6 assessment will lay the foundation for continued socio-environmental assessments across relevant scales, enabling and informing societal transitions and the tracking of [Sustainable Development Goal](#) targets, as well as previously agreed-upon international environmental goals.



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Help shape the global agenda for a Healthy Environment for Healthy People
Have your say in the global thematic report
www.myunepa.org

The [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA\)](#) was created by the United Nations to gather environmental ministers from all nations to take action and agree on policies that will ensure a healthy environment for our generation and those to come. The 2nd Session of UNEA will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 23 – 27 May, 2016 under the theme “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.” The discussion will focus on how to achieve a Healthy Environment for Healthy People.

Engage with the UN and help inform policy makers and visualize what matters most to you and others around the world by participating in the [Global Green Survey](#) and contribute to the [Global Thematic Report](#).



Vote on the Green Global Survey



Thematic E-Discussions



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Join the Momentum for #ClimateAction at #COP21

- **FOLLOW** UNEP on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for updates from COP21. UNEP's social media team will be capturing the most meaningful and interactive moments and sharing them.
- **CHANGE** your social media banners to the official [UNEP banners](#).
- **RETWEET** #Climate. Change. Courage. #COP21 has begun - be part of #ClimateAction!
- **POSE** for a picture with the #EarthToParis sign and your message to COP21 so UNEP can tweet it to our followers. Schedule a photo time by emailing socialmedia@unep.org
- **SEE** [UNEP side events at COP21](#) from the Sustainable Innovation Forum (SIF15), largest business focused event at the COP, to the Kitchen of Solutions display at Grand Palais to provide practical tips on how to reduce food waste
- **VISIT** UNEP COP 21 Website: <http://web.unep.org/climatechange/cop21>



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Survey on Environmental Information Developed by UNEP

An important element of UNEP’s mandate is to provide information on the environment, including emerging environmental issues. In generating this information, UNEP collaborates with many partners who also use and further disseminate this information. In order to further improve the effectiveness of our services and to better meet the needs of our clients and partners, we invite you to participate in a survey on the involvement of major groups and stakeholders in the generation, utilization and dissemination of environmental information developed by UNEP.

Your participation in the survey is most appreciated. Please respond by 15 December 2015.



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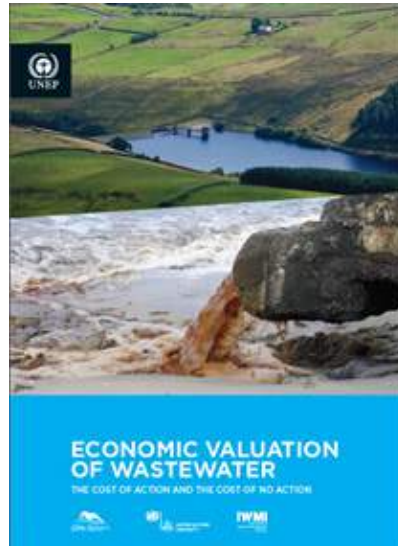
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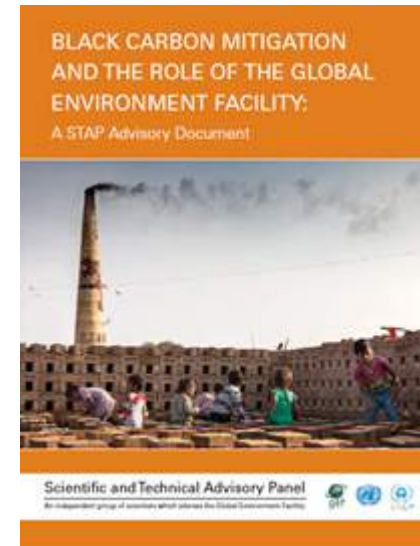
This report recommends a precautionary approach toward microplastic management, with an eventual phase-out and ban of their use in cosmetics and personal care products.



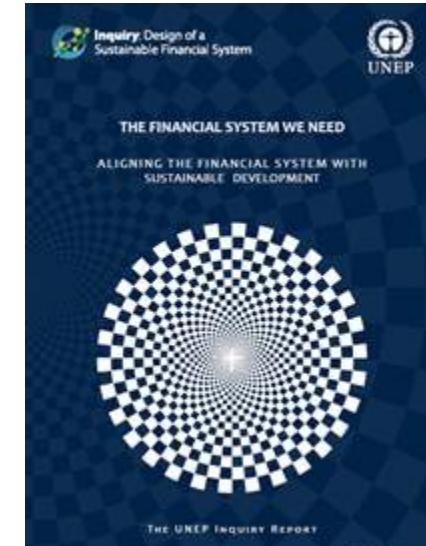
This book presents the results of an analytical study on the economic valuation for wastewater, comparing the cost of no action versus the cost of effective wastewater management.



The sixth Report provides a scientific assessment of the impacts of the submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) on anthropogenic emissions of



This publication recommends investments to reduce black carbon in order to improve air quality, climate change mitigation, reduced climate vulnerability, and transfer of low-carbon technologies.



This global report of the UNEP Inquiry argues that there is now a historic opportunity to shape a financial system that can more effectively finance the development of an inclusive, green economy.

[See More](#)



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The mission of the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America is to promote effective responses to global environmental challenges and to foster cooperation between the governments of the United States and Canada to address environmental issues, strategically and effectively.



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