

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

141st Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 6 February 2018

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

New UN Environment website launched

In October 2017, the new UN Environment [website](#) was launched: a highly responsive, mobile-friendly digital presence that befits UN Environment's status as the world's leading advocate and authority on the environment. It is the result of an 18-month journey that has included a thorough analysis of our old site, the development of a new strategy for digital content, and user tests with citizens, policymakers (including members of our Committee of Permanent Representatives), scientists, and journalists.

United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative

[UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative celebrates its 25th year anniversary in the regions](#) with its stakeholders by hosting five regional roundtables – in Buenos Aires for Latin America, in Johannesburg for Africa, in Geneva for Europe, in New York for North America and in Tokyo for Asia and the Pacific.

First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, 24-29 September 2017, Geneva

The [First meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) took important decisions related to technical, administrative and operational matters required for the successful implementation of the Minamata Convention, including on the financial mechanism and the establishment of the Secretariat for the Minamata Convention.

Twenty Ninth Session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment, 19 October, Cairo

The Deputy Executive Director represented UN Environment at this meeting. The meeting was expected to adopt the draft decisions prepared by the [Joint Committee on Environment and Development](#). Issues pertaining to sustainable

Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, 4-7 December 2017, Nairobi

- The [Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#) with the theme 'Towards a Pollution-Free Planet', registered 4,921 participants, from 157 countries, 65 of whom were ministers. 35 UN Agencies were represented, including 21 international organisations. Over 310 accredited civil society organisations attended, registering 450 participants.
- Almost 2.5 million [pledges](#) were signed by individuals across the world, to take action to reduce pollution under the [#BeatPollution campaign](#).
- Leadership and multi-stakeholder dialogues sessions were successful
- 11 Resolutions, 3 Decisions and a Ministerial Outcome Document were adopted.
- The Science-Policy and Business Forum attracted 1,900 registrants, 800 of whom drawn from the academia, technology centres, philanthropy, foundations and the private sector.
- At the official Gala Dinner of UN Environment Assembly, [UN Environment honoured seven new Champions of the Earth](#) and introduced the inaugural class of six Young Champions to an audience of 600 dignitaries.
- They will each receive USD 15,000 in seed-funding, tailored training and mentoring to support the implementation of their environmental projects.

One Planet Summit, 12 December 2017, Paris

- [The One Planet Summit](#), which was co-hosted by the Government of France, the United Nations and the [World Bank](#). The Summit was convened by President Macron with the aim to bring together public and private finance sector and determine the accelerated efforts needed to fight climate change.
- The Executive Director and [BNP Paribas](#) management announced the partnership that commits US\$ 10 billion in climate finance into commercial projects addressing agricultural and

development, the environmental dimension of the Agenda 2030, the environmental indicators of the SDGs, biodiversity, climate change, chemicals and waste, desertification, environmental security were also addressed during this meeting.

Launch of the Greening the Blue Report

On 2nd November 2017, the UN-wide [Greening the Blue Report](#) was launched, featuring the environmental footprint of UN facilities and operations and efforts made by UN entities to reduce it.

The Coral Reefs Declaration

The [Coral Reefs Declaration](#) was signed by UN Environment at the Ocean Summit in Malta. Preparations are ongoing for the [International Year of the Reef](#) (2018) and forthcoming campaign on coral reefs.

CleanSeas Campaign update

- 40 Countries have now joined the [CleanSeas](#) campaign, making major commitments to reduce plastic pollution.
- A [Turn the Tide on Plastics boat](#) with CleanSeas branding participates in the [2017/18 Volvo Ocean Race](#), raising awareness about marine litter, with special Ocean Summits being held when the race comes into ports.
- A major partnership was signed with the [World Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#), encouraging 200 member associations to commit to reducing plastic at their establishments by 2023.

UN Environment Live

The work on early warning and foresight process are progressing well, based on the notion of the [UN Environment Live](#). As part of the enrichment of content related to Big Data, three key deliverables to support timely decision making and policy were implemented in the last six months: monthly Foresight Briefs; quarterly Sustainable Development Goals Policy Briefs; and the innovative World Environment Situation Room which has demonstrated its potential during the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

New International Resource Panel Co-Chair

forestry development in rural areas of South and South East Asia.

- The Deputy Executive Director gave remarks at the Financing Energy Efficiency in Buildings Side Event where he emphasized the importance of energy efficiency as one of the avenues to reach the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- [The Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility](#) was selected by the [Green Climate Fund](#) as one of the 30 shortlisted projects (out of 350 applications) highlighted during Summit. The project, which focuses on sustainable agriculture and renewable energy in rural areas in Indonesia.

UN Environment partnership with Rabobank

- UN Environment established a new partnership with [Rabobank](#), one of the world's largest agricultural lenders, with a view to create a new agricultural lending window worth US \$1 billion for climate-smart agriculture.

UN Climate Change Conference, 6-17 November 2017, Bonn

- The 23rd Session of the UN Climate Change Conference took place in Bonn, Germany, under the Fijian Presidency. The Executive Director launched the [8th Emissions Gap Report](#)
- UN Environment, together with [Sustainable Energy for All](#), took the opportunity to convene a number of Chief Executive Officers to discuss paving the way forward in transforming markets for lighting, appliances and equipment in developing and emerging economies.
- UN Environment also launched the [Global Centre of Excellence on Climate Adaptation](#), the [third Adaptation Gap Report](#) and showcased the revitalized [UN Climate Resilience Initiative](#) that highlighted the necessity that climate resilience is for all.
- Parties adopted a decision requesting UN Environment to continue hosting the [Climate Technology Centre and Network](#), the operative part of the Convention's Technology Mechanism.

Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative's campaign to close the Environmental Social and Governance guidance gap

The Lima Stock Exchange, the [London Stock Exchange Group](#) (London Stock Exchange and Borsa Italiana), and New Zealand Exchange have issued guidance on sustainability reporting to its listed companies. Since the [Sustainable Stock Exchange](#)

The [International Resource Panel](#) announced the selection of a new Co-chair for the Panel after reaching agreement with Ms. Izabela Teixeira, former Minister for Environment of Brazil, to take up the post alongside the existing Co-chair Janez Potocnik, former EU Commissioner for Environment and Research.

[campaign](#), to close the Environmental Social and Governance guidance gap has started, 19 stock exchanges have provided guidance and further 12 have committed to doing so.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME IN THE REGIONS

AFRICA

First Uganda Conservation & Tourism Investment Forum, 6 October, Kampala

The Executive Director attended the first [Uganda Conservation & Tourism Investment Forum](#). The primary objective of this visit was to express UN Environment's support to Uganda's efforts to conserve and protect nature, wildlife and environment, and encourage the Private Sectors to invest in a multiple opportunities available in the ecotourism in Uganda.

In his speech, the Executive Director affirmed the UN Environment's readiness to establish a partnership with Uganda to support and promote tourism and conservation program, also in sharing Uganda's best practices more widely in Africa.

UN Environment Executive Director's visit to Botswana, 9-11 October

- The primary objective of the visit was to honor the Government of Botswana invitation, express UN Environment's support to Botswana efforts to conserve and protect nature and wildlife; attend the Fifth Anniversary Meeting of the [Gaborone Declaration of Sustainability](#) in Africa; and reiterate UN Environment invitation to Botswana authorities to attend the Environment Assembly.
- In his meetings with the National authorities UN Environment was requested to support and address the trans-boundary water issue with regards to Okavango river basin.
- The Executive Director committed to revive the cooperation between Angola, Botswana and Namibia and try to overcome these issues.
- The Executive Director expressed his willingness to cooperate with Botswana and share their experience and best practices with other countries. During his remarks at the opening Ceremony of the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa, the Executive Director affirmed the UN environment readiness to establish a partnership with Botswana to support and promote their national tourism and conservation program, he reiterated the opportunities within the tourism industry as one of the main promising industry in Africa, which has no limitation in creating jobs and a huge opportunities for young generation. He encouraged African countries to protect their unique and rich wildlife, ecosystem and biodiversity and therefore ensure incomes for their communities.

UN Environment Executive Director's visit to Madagascar, 27-28 October

- UN Environment expressed its commitment to support Malagasy's authorities in implementing policies and actions to protect the environment, the unique and specific wildlife species, and combat the illegal trade in natural resources.
- During his meetings with the national authorities and the United Nations Country Team, the Executive Director agreed to explore the possibility to organise a World Environmental day in Madagascar to get the global attention on environmental issues and challenges currently faced by them, support in finding and implement the right policies and actions to protect their very rich flora and fauna species, and benefit more from tourism industry. The Executive Director also agreed to share UN Environment Faith-Based Organization strategy with the Norwegian Missionary Society and see how we can use their voice/network to reach out and build awareness on environmental issues.

Nigeria enhances the environmental sustainability of the development of projects

The Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria is taking positive steps to enhance the environmental sustainability of development projects in the country through a review of its [Environmental Impact Assessment Act of 1992](#). UN Environment facilitated a technical and stakeholder review workshop, held in Abuja between 23 and 26 October 2017, to assess the existing legislative framework, intended to identify and address regulatory gaps, and proposed the expansion of the Act's legislative coverage to reflect global trends of good practices, including the incorporation of climate change, strategic environmental assessments, health and social assessments and environmental audits. The draft bill is now ready to be tabled for submission to the National Assembly.

The 8th Annual High-Level Retreat of African Union Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, 24-25 October, N'Djamena

The theme for this Retreat was "The Emerging Global Order, Multilateralism and Africa". Organized by the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Chad. The African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes provided technical support for the Retreat. UN Environment was invited to the retreat to bring in the environmental and climate change dimension into the discussions.

First Dialogue on Environmental Diplomacy for the Africa Diplomatic Corps based in Addis Ababa, 1 November 2017

The Environmental Diplomacy meeting was organized by the UN Environment to expose the African Diplomatic Corps to a variety of issues and policy choices as they relate to Africa Sustainable Development Agenda while raising awareness on critical issues related to the partnerships the Africa region has with other regions of the world. UN Environment will continue playing the role of capacity strengthening and awareness creation on environmental issues and diplomacy to the diplomatic corps in the region.

Launch of the Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework

UN Environment in collaboration with [UN Women](#), the [African Union Commission](#), the [Pan African Climate Justice Alliance](#), and other partners launched the [Africa Women Energy Entrepreneurs Framework](#) in the margins of the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, as a follow up to the call by the [16th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment](#) to empower women to overcome energy access challenges in Africa. The Framework seeks to strengthen political will and commitment from governments and development partners to attract investment to tackle the issue of access to clean and affordable energy in Africa.

Connecting Kenya County First Ladies to Beat Pollution and Contribute towards a Pollution Free Planet

The UN Environment and the County First Ladies of Kenya joined efforts to fight pollution and contribute in paving the way towards a pollution free planet. A round table discussion was organized on 30 October 2017 at UN Environment to discuss the issue of pollution. The outcome of the County First Ladies round table feeds into Kenya's effort to combat pollution. It also supports Kenya's strategy to mobilize citizens and policy-makers at all levels to accelerate the implementation of the ban on plastic bags.

ASIA AND PACIFIC

BNP Paribas Sustainable Future Forum 2017, 26 October 2017, Singapore

[BNP Paribas](#) is an international financial institution that in 2016 started hosting the [Sustainable Future Forum](#), looking into the business case of environmental sustainability. The 2017 Forum focused on "Investing for tomorrow's success". The Executive Director delivered a key note speech focusing on the role of the private sector to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

[Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 23-28 October, Manila](#)

"Their Future is Our Future—Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People" was the theme of this session, linking the future of wild animals to the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Executive Director conveyed a message to participating delegates highlighting success stories of political commitment to tackle important environmental issues.

[Annual General Meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, 9-11 December, Beijing](#)

The Council is a high-level international advisory body funded in 1992. Over the years, the council has promoted policy-science interface and provided policy advice on environment and development. The Executive Director, as one of the vice chairs of the Council, participated in the General Meeting.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

UN Environment Project Office in Colombia

The Project Office of UN Environment in Colombia started operations on 1st November 2017. As requested by the government, the office will focus on issues related to illegal gold mining in two of the regions most impacted by the conflict: Chocó and Bajo Cauca. The implementation of UN Environment's project "Environmental solutions for peacebuilding and resilience in Colombia" has started, and a Project Steering Committee involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the High Commission for Post-conflict, Human Rights and Security has been established.

Annual Retreat of the UN Colombia Country Team, 28-29 November 2017

UN Environment's participation at the annual retreat of the UN Colombia Country Team helped to identify illegal mining as one of the priorities of the UN system in Colombia for 2018; addressing this priority will contribute to the implementation of at least 5 resolutions adopted at the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in the country. In this context, UN Environment is promoting an inter-agency alliance with the [International Labour Organisation](#), [United Nations Office on Drug and Crime](#), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and UN Women, with the objective to support integrated social, environmental and economic post-conflict recovery of the areas affected by illegal mining.

Contribution Agreement between UN Environment and UN Women

A contribution agreement between [UN Women](#) and UN Environment for the implementation of the joint pilot project "Supporting the peace-building process in Colombia by strengthening women's engagement in natural resource governance" was signed, the project governance mechanism has been established and the 2018 activity plan has been discussed and agreed. The project will kick-start in January by bringing the environmental dimension into 4 workshops organised by UN Women and Colombia's Territorial Renovation.

Montreal Protocol in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

All countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region are now in compliance with the [Montreal Protocol](#) commitments. Chile and Trinidad and Tobago have ratified the [Kigali Amendment](#).

Hurricane support in Dominica

UN Environment supported the government of Dominica to respond to the challenges posed by disaster waste after category 5 Hurricane Maria hit the island. Two experts were deployed through the [UN Environment and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Joint Unit](#), supported by the [Regional Humanitarian Affairs Office from the Latin America and Caribbean office](#).

Provisions for Women, Natural Resources and Peace as part of the Colombia Peace Agreement starts

A pilot programme will support the implementation of the gender equality and women's empowerment provisions of the 2016 [Peace Agreement](#) between the Government and the The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, in relation to environmental governance and natural resource management. As well as field-based demonstrations, the project has also developed a special initiative on strengthening women's participation in natural resource conflict mediation, which seeks to leverage high-level networks, such as the [Nordic Women Mediators Network](#).

Santiago Respira Campaign, Chile

Since its launch in October 2016, the global [BreatheLife](#) campaign has grown considerably, with cities, regions and countries joining at a consistent pace. The [Santiago Respira](#) campaign, Santiago, Chile, (the first BreatheLife city) has rolled out air pollution regulations that includes actions like banning wood burning stoves and increasing vehicle emissions regulations and enforcement. The ban on wood burning alone will reduce the city's air pollution by 24% and prevent 718 premature deaths a year. Hospitals have already seen a 38% reduction in air pollution related emergency room visits since the regulations came into force

11th Latin America and Caribbean Carbon Forum, 18-20 October, Mexico City

In the Latin American and Caribbean regions, the capacity of over 480 local, regional and international participants, from the private, public and financial sectors of 38 countries, to participate in the carbon markets that will emerge under the [Paris Agreement](#) was advanced at the Participants agreed to develop concrete initiatives designed to enhance the capacities of stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of [Nationally Determined Contributions](#) through new and existing market mechanisms, including the mobilisation of private investment for climate action, the role of carbon pricing in delivering on the Paris Agreement, and climate finance and cross-border cooperation. In addition, UN Environment has been designated as the lead agency, together with the World Bank, on anticipated legal issues relating to the carbon markets.

EUROPE

'Clean Air for All' Conference, Sarajevo

Led by UN Environment in Sarajevo, with major national and international stakeholders, kicking off work on the 'Air Quality Initiative and Response', which is mobilizing political support for Bosnia and Herzegovina to fight poor air quality.

Media Workshop about the 'Theoretical Basis to a Green Economy', 7 November, Kiev

Journalists attended a media workshop led by UN Environment with support from the Ministry of Ecology of Ukraine in Kiev learned about the theoretical basis to a [Green Economy](#). They also had a hands-on opportunity to meet pioneers leading the transition in Ukraine, and to question high-level decision-makers. The event, organized under the [European Union's Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighborhood \(EaP GREEN\)](#) project. The Kiev workshop is the latest in a series organized by UN Environment and recognizes the role the media has in the Green Economy transition.

New Biomass Energy Plant developed

Banja Luka the second-largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina will develop a new biomass energy plant with support from UN Environment under the [District Energy in Cities Initiative](#).

Loans worth €8.4 million have been secured from the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) to develop a new renewable power plant and establish a new district heating company. The switch from oil to biomass will cut CO₂ emissions by 91% and sulphur dioxide emissions by 94%.

Banja Luka becomes the first pilot city in the world to attract private investment and a loan from an international institution under the Initiative. Together with the [Climate Technology Centre & Network](#) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a city-wide analysis was undertaken to assess the status of the district heating network. This was then followed by a more detailed feasibility study carried out under the auspices of the District Energy in Cities Initiative.

A course entitled “Peace and Security in the 21st Century: Understanding the Environment-Security Nexus” co-organized by UN Environment and the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (@Parlicentre) opens in London.

Participants will acquire knowledge on environmental aspects of the international security regime from thematic focuses such as water security and climate change to questions of a legal and institutional framework of the nexus, and private sector involvement, improving their analytical skills and learning to create solutions to problems of environment and security at the national and global levels. This training supports the knowledge-based policy transformation initiative embarked upon by UN Environment.

Side event at the 23rd session of the Committee on Environment Policy titled “Environmental Dimensions of the Belt and Road Initiative: opportunities and challenges”, 14 November 2017

UN Environment together with [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#), co-hosted this event, which was supported by Norwegian funds and chaired by Switzerland. Its objective was to relate the initiative and engagement by UN Environment to environmental work in the region, in particular the Environment for Europe process, [Green Action Task Force](#), [Batumi Initiative on Green Economy](#) and work of both organizations in Central Asia. An informal network of interested European countries and international organizations is being rolled out as a follow up.

Media Field Trip examining air pollution in Bosnia and Herzegovina and contaminated soil in Serbia, 23-26 October 2017

This resulted in coverage from BBC World (<http://bbc.in/2AAjdnc>), Italian state broadcaster RAI (<http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/media/ContentItem-2825e291-c75c-48af-90fa-2865ae99a5c9.html>) and over 30 regional media articles.

In Serbia, the media trip coincided with a joint mission of Serbian and Italian Environmental Protection Agency experts to the two major hotspots: abandoned industrial sites in the cities of Sabac and Loznica, with a significant legacy of historical pollution. Two pilot Site Characterization Plans will be developed based on mission findings and will serve to kick-off the clean-up and remediation across Serbia, while building oversight capacities of national authorities. This activity supported by the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea comes as a support to a three-year UN Environment – [Global Environment Facility](#) funded project on Sustainable Land Management in Serbia.

WEST ASIA

9th Capacity Development Workshop for Climate Change Negotiators from the Arab Region, 9-12 October 2017, Cairo

Negotiators were briefed on the latest developments in the financial and technology development mechanisms and how they can be accessed through special sessions with the [Green Climate Fund](#) and the [Climate Technology Centre and Network](#). The workshop was co-organized with the [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia](#), the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#), and League of Arab States. This series of workshops proved to be of value to governments in preparing for the Conference of Parties of the Climate Convention and the [Paris Agreement](#).

19th Session of the Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) and 29th Session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE), 15-19 October 2017, Cairo

The 19th Session of the [Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region](#) and 29th Session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment was held in Cairo, Egypt. Agenda items focused on a range of issues including the evolving approach for the Third Session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly and the region's engagement therein. This included discussions around a potential draft resolution on the state of environment in Palestine as well as the other resolutions to be presented, including voluntary commitments to combat pollution. UN Environment provided focused inputs on environmental governance, based on a decision of the previous session, which included an assessment, strategy and action plan on environmental governance in the Arab region. The Session issued 19 decisions requesting cooperation with and assistance from UN Environment. The decisions tackled issues of the environment dimension of sustainable development, ecosystems, desertification, conflicts, disaster risk reduction and early warning, pollution, education, international cooperation, and others. The decisions highlighted that sand and dust storms are a critical challenge to the region and requested UN Environment to focus on this issue.

The Strategic Partnership Framework between the UN and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain

The Strategic Partnership Framework was signed on 24 October by heads of UN agencies and the Minister of Foreign Affairs at a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Framework is designed to focus on the priority issues for Bahrain and how the UN can support its response in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Environment, as the largest UN system entity present in Bahrain has provided ongoing support to the process, both in terms of the defining the environmental priorities, outcomes and outputs within the Framework, but also on overarching guidance on the development of the framework itself, drawing on its role as a member of the Peer Support Group of the Regional UN Development Group. This has resulted in a framework that reflects both environmental priorities and related supportive interventions (defined through ongoing consultation with the Supreme Council for Environment) and that more broadly integrates environment as a cross-cutting issue, especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Waste Management Outlook for the West Asia Region

Work has been initiated in cooperation with the [International Environmental Technology Centre](#), the [Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe](#) and the [International Solid Waste Association](#). It is the first outlook of its kind in the Region aiming at assessing the status of waste and waste management in the region, looking into environment and health impacts, current policies and practices including financing and technology. The first inception meeting was held in Cairo in 2017, during which the scope and outline of the Outlook was agreed.

Integrated Waste Management Strategy in Lebanon

Support has been provided to the Ministry of Environment in Lebanon in drafting a framework and road map for an Integrated Waste Management Strategy. It proposes long-term and strategic actions such as adequate and sustainable legal and financial instruments to solve the chronic waste management crises in the country. It follows the 4R principles with emphasis on prevention and reduction of waste generation in addition to proper sorting, recycling, re-use and safe disposal.

Iran-Iraq Earthquake, 12 November 2017

[UN Environment and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Joint](#) Unit supported the deployment of the [United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination mission](#) in response to the **Iran-Iraq earthquake** which occurred on 12 November, 2017. A structural/dam safety engineer was mobilized with support of the [European Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#). The expert is supporting national authorities in performing emergency assessments and proposing mitigation activities related to the structural stability of the Dokan and Darbadikhan Dams and other infrastructure.

UN SYSTEM-WIDE COOPERATION AND COHERENCE

UN Secretary-General's Report on 'Repositioning of the UN Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Our Promise for Dignity, Prosperity and Peace on a Healthy Planet'

On 20 December, the Secretary-General issued his second report on ['Repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet'](#), in response to General Assembly Resolution 71/243 on the [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of United Nations operational activities for development](#).

The aim of the reforms is to significantly enhance the UN system's cohesion, accountability and effectiveness. As called for in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, the report includes (in its annex) the system-wide strategic document for collective action to support the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which was produced collaboratively through the [UN Development Group](#).

The report proposes a package of seven key areas of transformation, which taken together would allow for the emergence of a new generation of UN country teams, centered around a strategic [United Nations Development Assistance Framework](#) and led by an impartial, independent and empowered UN Resident Coordinator. A coordinated, re-profiled and restructured regional approach is proposed to fully support the work in countries, along with renewed spaces for Member States to guide system-wide actions and bring greater transparency and accountability for results. Steps will be taken for a stronger UN institutional response and system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A Funding Compact is also proposed to bring better quality, quantity and predictability of resources in exchange for accelerated repositioning and enhanced capacities of the system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with increased transparency and accountability for results.

UN Environment has been closely engaged in UN inter-agency consultations on the different components of the Secretary-General's proposals, through the [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination](#), which the UN Secretary-General convened 8-9 November 2017, and through the [UN Development Group](#), which the Deputy Secretary-General convened on 7 November at the Principals level. UN Environment contributed actively in the analytical work done over the last year through the UN Development Group, including its Assistant Secretaries General's Advisory Group, within which Elliott Harris represents UN Environment, as well as three other Non-Resident Agencies, as well as through the United Nations Development Group's various 'Results Groups'. In addition to contributing extensively through these inter-agency consultations, UN Environment has provided data, inputs and clarifications to studies prepared by external consultants, which informed the development of the Secretary-General's proposals.

The [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination](#), at its November meeting, also addressed how the different strands of UN reform, namely the repositioning of the UN development system; [restructuring of the UN's peace and security architecture](#) and [management reforms](#), are mutually reinforcing, and all aim to strengthen the UN's effectiveness in meeting all its mandates and to enhance leadership and accountability for results and the use of resources. The Chief Executives Board for Coordination further endorsed an '[Analytical Framework on Risk and Resilience](#)', developed through its [High-Level Committee on Programmes](#), which seeks to reach a harmonized understanding among sustainable development, humanitarian, peace and security, and human rights actors on the concepts of risk, prevention, and resilience, based on which to promote coherent and holistic analysis and joint planning. The framework will be a building block and output to be used in broader system-wide initiatives on resilience. UN Environment has heavily involved in the development of the Framework.

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

The following senior positions are currently advertised or in the process of being advertised:

- 1- D1, Regional Director, Europe, Geneva – advertised until 8 March 2018;
- 2- D1, UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, Vienna – recruitment under finalization;
- 3- D2, Cites - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Geneva - in the process of being advertised;
- 4- D2, Corporate Services Division Director, Nairobi – in the process of being advertised;
- 5- D2, Ecosystems Division Director, Nairobi – in the process of being advertised;
- 6- D2, Science Division Director, Nairobi –recruitment under finalization;
- 7- Assistant Secretary-General, New York – in the process of being advertised;
- 8- Assistant Secretary-General, Deputy Executive Director, Nairobi – in the process of being advertised.

UN Environment welcomes your kind support in circulating these job vacancies among your network of qualified professionals. For the Assistant Secretary-General's positions, and to ensure a wide pool of candidates, the Secretariat would welcome any nominations to supplement the Secretary-General's own search and consultations. Women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT AND MANAGEMENT REFORM

The final 2016-2017 Programme of Work Budgets will be available through the Programme Performance Reports. The table below provides the budget performance against the corporate budgets authorized by the Executive Director in 2017.

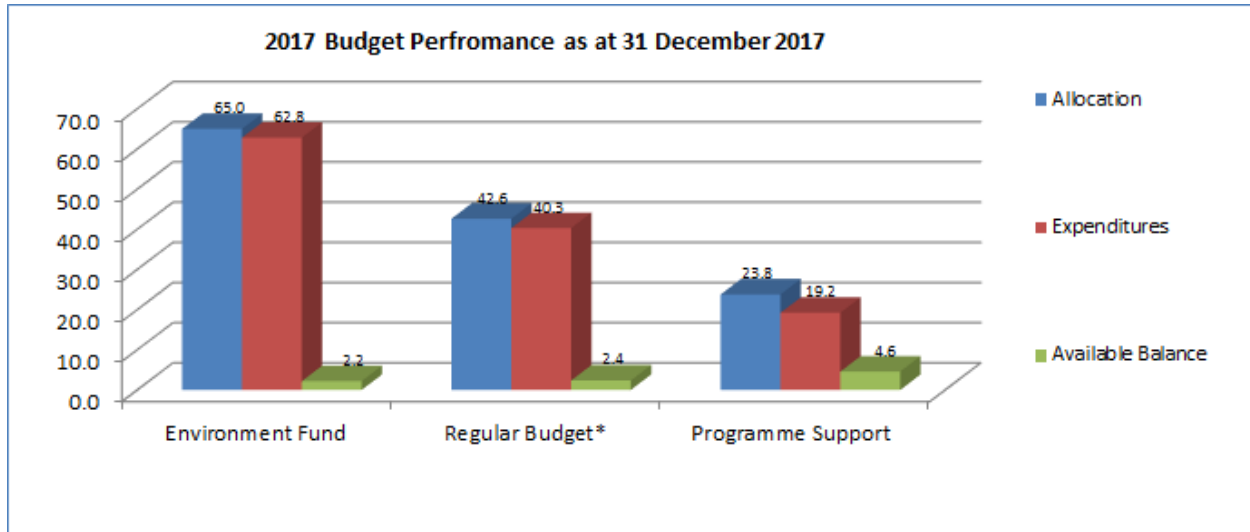
The Environment Fund authorized allotment for the year 2017 is US \$65 million out of which US \$ 62.8 million have been recorded as expenditures as at 31 December 2017 with utilization rate of 97%. It is important to note that the expenditure levels are not yet final pending the completion of the financial statements.

The Overhead Trust Account authorized level is US \$ 23.8 million out of which a total of US \$19.2 million has been expensed by 31 Dec 2017 with utilization rate of 81%.

Finally, the 2016-2017 Regular Budget allotment was increased to US \$ 42.6 million out of which the amount of US \$40.3 million was recorded as expenditures as at 31 December 2017 with utilization rate of 94%.

2017 Budget Performance as at 31 December 2017 (millions of United States dollars)			
	Allocation	Expenditures	Available Balance
Environment Fund	65.0	62.8	2.2
Regular Budget*	42.6	40.3	2.4
Programme Support	23.8	19.2	4.6
Total	131.4	122.3	9.1

* Budget reflect both 2016 remaining balances and 2017 allotments



Green Climate Fund Update

Submissions to the Green Climate Fund

UN Environment submitted 3 new Concept Notes (Antigua & Barbuda, Benin, and Kenya)¹ and 1 Project Preparation Facility Application (Colombia)². The Applications were submitted in the fourth quarter of 2017, and all the applications are under consideration by the Fund secretariat. UN Environment also submitted a Concept Note under the Private Sector Facility for Indonesia³. This Concept Note was short-listed out of a total of 350 concept notes for development into a full funding proposal.

UN Environment also submitted 2 Full Funding Proposals⁴ in October 2017 for the Green Climate Fund Board's consideration at its 20th meeting.

In addition, UN Environment has submitted 12 readiness proposals⁵ in October 2017 under the Green Climate Fund. Readiness proposals for Palestine⁶ and Myanmar were approved in late 2017, bringing the total number of approved Readiness proposals to 17⁷.

Implementation of Green Climate Fund Projects

UN Environment has begun implementation of its first approved Project⁸, having received a disbursement of US \$5,968,542 on 9 November 2017. The Project was formally launched by the Gambian Minister of Environment on 23 January 2018, and the first Steering Committee meeting was held on the following day.

¹ Proposals titled "Resilience to hurricanes, floods and droughts in the building sector in Antigua and Barbuda"; "Greening Kenya Industrial Zones: stimulating competitiveness and investments in the face of resource scarcity and climate change"; "Enhanced climate resilience of rural communities in central and north Benin through the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) in forest and agricultural landscapes".

² Proposal titled "Building resilience of vulnerable farmers and ecosystems in Colombia through innovative financing mechanisms".

³ Proposal titled "Bukit Tigapuluh Sustainable Landscape Project (Project Pangolin)".

⁴ Proposal titled "Increased Agricultural and Ecosystem Resilience through Agroforestry Ecosystem-Based Adaptation" for Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. UN Environment also resubmitted the proposal titled "Securing vulnerable coastal and marine livelihoods in Mozambique against climate-change hazards" following preliminary comments from the Green Climate Fund Secretariat in June 2017.

⁵ Readiness proposals submitted: Brazil and Mauritius (CTCN); National Adaptation Plan Proposals submitted for: Cameroon, Ghana, Iraq, Lesotho, Nigeria and Seychelles; Proposals to mobilize developing country financial institutions to access the Green Climate Fund submitted for Antigua & Barbuda, Cambodia, Guatemala and Philippines.

⁶ Green Climate Fund proposal titled Technology Road Map for the Implementation of Climate Action Plans in Palestine.

⁷ Readiness proposals have been approved by GCF secretariat for Albania, Egypt, Ghana (CTCN), Jordan, Maldives, Montenegro, Myanmar (NDA support and CTCN), Palestine (CTCN), Serbia, Tonga (CTCN). The fund has also approved the proposal for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) for Nepal. The Fund has also conditionally approved Benin, Comoros, Niger, Zimbabwe, and National Adaptation Plans for Pakistan.

⁸ Proposal titled "Large-scale Ecosystem-based Adaptation in The Gambia", which was approved by the Fund's Board in June 2016.

Implementation of readiness support to Albania, Ghana, Montenegro and Tonga has commenced, with initial stakeholder consultations having been undertaken, and national teams being established.

Engagement with the Fund Secretariat

The Green Climate Fund Secretariat hosted a parallel event on 5 December 2017 during the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Fund secretariat staff presented the work of the Fund and provided guidance on developing transformational climate change funding proposals. The session included presentations from representatives from Antigua and Barbuda and Namibia on the effects of the extremes of climate change in their countries. The event was very well attended and delegates expressed appreciation for the informative session.

On 10 December 2017, the UN Environment Executive Director met with the Fund's Executive Director in Beijing during the Meeting of the [China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development](#). The Directors discussed strengthening the partnership between UN Environment and the Fund, with a focus on improving the quality of UN Environment's proposals and supporting direct access modality.

ANNEX: LIST OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE

8th Edition of the Annual Emissions Gap Report released

Shortly before the [23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Climate Change Convention](#), UN Environment released the [8th Edition of the Annual Emissions Gap Report](#), also its most cited report. It assesses the gap between countries' climate pledges and the reductions required to keep global warming well below 2°C. It also presents opportunities to bridge that gap, including by non-state actors such as cities, regions and business. Special topics this year include sectoral emission reduction potentials, coal phase-out, short-lived climate pollutants and carbon dioxide removal. The report can be downloaded from <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report>.

Countries adopt new Article on Climate Change and Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development under the Carpathian Convention, 12 October

Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine adopted the new Article on Climate Change and the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development at the [Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention](#), administered by UN Environment. Under the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, developed in cooperation with [Eurac Research](#), the [Carpathian Countries](#) will work together to realize a climate-smart circular rural economy and promote agro-tourism, local products, organic production and rural innovation.

A New Report, 'Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Carpathians', provides basis for action, 12 October

UN Environment launched its [Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Carpathians](#), providing the scientific basis for policy and offering best practices. The Outlook is part of a series covering major mountain ranges worldwide. According to UN Environment's Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Carpathians, the Mountains are expected to experience a temperature increase of about 3.0-4.5°C over the course of this century. This will lead to profound consequences on the environment, economy and human wellbeing.

Czech Republic commits US \$900,000 to help safeguard Western Balkans from Climate Change, 27 November

Ahead of the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) in Bonn this past November, a donor agreement was signed between the Czech government and UN Environment. The two-year project aims at supporting the countries of the Western Balkans access climate funding and boost resilience to climate change in the region. The Western Balkan countries can already access the Green Climate Fund, but will require technical support to develop proposals in line with the Fund's investment criteria. [UN Environment's Office in Vienna](#) will provide the necessary technical assistance.

Energy, Air Quality and Climate Change Nexus

The interconnection between energy, air quality and climate change is of growing importance, and fast action on air pollution provides quick results and multiple benefits. A high-level-panel [side event](#) organized by the [Climate and Clean Air Coalition](#) at the [Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#) highlighted actions that national governments, cities, and businesses can take in key sectors to rapidly reduce air pollution. It focused on four specific air pollutants: methane, black carbon (soot), hydro fluorocarbons, and ground level (tropospheric) ozone, also known as short-lived climate pollutants. These pollutants have an outsized impact on health and the climate and actions to rapidly reduce them will also lead to reductions in other air pollutants and carbon dioxide.

Emission Inventories and Emission Reductions Co-benefits Estimation

To assist countries in taking immediate action to improve air quality and mitigate climate change, the [Climate and Clean Air Coalition](#) launched at the [Science Policy Business Forum](#) in December 2017 a new version of the [Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning](#) system - Integrated Benefits Calculator together with [Stockholm Environment Institute](#), Ghana, Kenya and [United States Environmental Protection Agency](#). This policy and planning tool, already tested in several countries, will be used to help 'design the future' to prioritize policy actions based on emission scenarios, including such that are consistent with countries [Nationally Determined Contributions](#). The tool enables the creation of air pollutants and greenhouse gases emission inventories, as well as assessing emission reduction co-benefits for human health, crop yields and climate.

United for Efficiency Highlights Energy-Efficient Products at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, 15 November, Bonn

The Executive Director launched the event, which featured 150 senior government officials, top business executives, and civil society leaders. [Mr. Bertrand Piccard](#) and the Solar Impulse Team opened [the event](#) during the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn. The objective of the high-level event was to highlight the important role energy-efficient products such as air conditioners and refrigerators have in delivering on the [Paris Climate Change Agreement](#).

[United for Efficiency](#) has received funds totaling \$5 million from the [Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#) and the [Kigali Cooling Efficiency Program \(K-CEP\)](#) to support developing economies over the next three years in planning and implementing energy efficiency policies for lighting and appliances. With these policies, countries can save up to 20 per cent in electricity consumption, while reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The funding will boost United for Efficiency's existing work in over 30 countries involving work on the five products which consume more than half of all electricity; lighting, refrigerators, room air conditioners, distribution transformers, and electric motors.

Presentation of UN Environment's Climate Change and Security Project

UN Environment presented its **Climate Change and Security** project at the [G7](#) expert meeting on Climate Change and Fragility "Pathways to managing the climate-fragility nexus" that took place on 26 October in Rome as part of the Italian G7 Presidency, as well as at the International Conference on "Enhancing Climate Diplomacy in a Changing Political Environment" in Brussels on 20 November.

The Project Development Stakeholders Consultation Workshop for Iraq (Second National Communication, National Adaptation Plan, Information System)

The Project Development Stakeholders Consultation Workshop for Iraq (Second National Communication, National Adaptation Plan, Information System) was held in Amman – Jordan from 27-28 November 2017: The objective of the mission is to assist the Ministry of Health and Environment of Iraq to complete the formulation of 3 projects on Second National Communication & Biennial Update Report (SNC & BUR 1), National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Environment Information System

Second National Communication & Biennial Update Report projects for Kuwait

Technical Review and Coordination of Second National Communication & Biennial Update Report projects for Kuwait was held in Kuwait from 18-20 December 2017: The objective of this technical review meeting is to monitor/review the progress of the project and provide the necessary technical guidance and support to the national team as well as brief the high-level management of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (KEPA) on the progress and challenges.

DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS

Successful Launch Of Pilot Project To Develop An Adaptation Of The Awareness And Preparedness For Emergencies At Local Level Methodology For Processing Of Gold Extracted Through Informal Mining In Post Conflict, Colombia

Thirty-four people were trained in a three-day workshop in Chocó, Colombia. The workshop aimed to help participants understand about the environmental emergency risks resulting from the processing of informally mined gold in urban areas of conflict-affected Colombia. Participants were drawn from gold whole sellers, jewelers, informal miners, civil protection, environment, education, health, police (including environmental police) and the fire brigade. Through a series of interactive sessions, they were helped to identify the possible risks associated with mercury and other gold processing chemicals in urban areas, and to begin to incorporate these issues into their environmental and emergency planning. The project is a first step for UN Environment's work addressing post conflict and informal mining issues in Colombia, at the request of President Santos.

UN Environment provides support to the Government of Iraq in territories formerly occupied by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

UN Environment conducted two scoping missions to Anbar (Western Iraq) and Mosul. Key issues include debris management given the high level of building and infrastructure destruction; pollution from damage to the industrial area and public utilities; and the targeting of water management infrastructure in the conflict.

On-going peace-building and post-conflict recovery process in Somalia

UN Environment has committed to increasing its engagement in Somalia by the end of 2017 to support the ongoing peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery process. On 7-8 November, UN Environment co-chaired a Sustainable Energy Forum with the Government of Somalia, aimed at bringing together key stakeholders who can drive renewable energy access forward in the country. UN Environment's work in Somalia is currently being defined. Among other areas, discussions are underway for UN Environment's new [MapX](#) platform to offer support the management of geospatial data for the Somalia Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, including using dynamic story maps to communicate the assessment findings and recommendations.

Afghanistan Resilience Consortium

A two-part toolkit for community-based resilience planning has been finalized by UN Environment as part of the [Afghanistan Resilience Consortium](#). The first part, "Hazard and Climate Vulnerability and

Capacity Assessment," contains nine participatory tools that aim to identify a community's underlying vulnerabilities to natural hazards and climate change. The second part, "Community-based Disaster Preparedness" planning, builds upon this process to analyze community-level vulnerabilities and capacities in order to create action plans for each natural hazard and climate risk.

Online Course launched to commemorate the International Day for Preventing and the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, 6 November 2017

To commemorate the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict on 6 November, UN Environment, the SDG Academy and academic partners launched a new massive open online course on '[Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace](#)'. The press release is available [here](#).

Deployment of Disaster Waste Management Experts in response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria

Hurricanes Irma and Maria have caused extensive damage in Dominica, with 80-90% of buildings damaged and 75% of trees reported blown down or having branches and foliage stripped. The Government of Dominica requested through the Caribbean Disasters and Emergency Management Agency the deployment of disaster waste management experts. Two experts have been deployed and worked on damage and needs assessments and advice on the management of debris and disaster waste going forward.

The Flash Environmental Assessment Tool

The Flash Environmental Assessment Tool, a tool used by first responders worldwide to assess the environmental and human impacts of chemical releases caused by disasters and conflicts, was officially launched in four languages at the Environment and Emergencies Forum. An online training on the tool is available on the Environmental Emergencies Centre (www.eecentre.org/feat). The online training was launched in Russian at the end of October.

UN Environment provides support to the Government of Iraq in territories formerly occupied by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

UN Environment conducted two scoping missions to Mosul and Anbar (western Iraq). Key issues include debris management given the high level of building and infrastructure destruction; pollution from damage to oil and industrial infrastructure and public utilities; and the targeting of water management infrastructure in the conflict. A [technical note](#) providing an overview of the main environmental consequences of the conflict was published in September 2017.

A three day workshop on contaminated site assessment was held in Baghdad for around 45 staff from the environment and relevant ministries to strengthen the capacity and advise the government in conducting their on-going assessment of contaminated sites in the areas retaken from ISIL. A rapid audit of the Environment Ministry's Central Environmental Laboratory was also conducted.

A field based debris quantification and modeling assessment for Mosul city including development of operational management scenarios is nearly completed. The assessment is being carried out in collaboration with Mosul Municipality and UN-Habitat and the modeling results will be discussed with national and local partners.

An Advisory Mission was organized by the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention in cooperation with UN Environment to the shared Mesopotamian marshlands between Iran and Iraq from 16 to 23 December 2017. The objective of the mission was to identify potential areas of mutual interest for Iraq and Iran as a first step towards future cooperation for the long term conservation and sustainable development of the marshes. A coordinated water bird count in the shared Hawizeh-Azim was conducted by a joint team of Iranian and Iraqi experts as a first practical in moving this joint cooperation forward.

ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

The Global Dryland Ecosystem Programme

The Chinese Academy of Sciences funded a five year **Global Dryland Ecosystem Programme** worth US \$1.2 million, covering typical dryland ecosystems in Central Asia, Mediterranean Region, Africa, North America and Australia. The programme aims to promote global research collaboration on dryland ecosystems, with an endeavor to develop a cross-cutting research programme under the Future Earth initiative. [The UN Environment-International Ecosystem Management Partnership](#) is coordinating the implementation of this programme.

Agreement between UN Environment and the Adaptation Fund Secretariat

UN Environment and the [Adaptation Fund Secretariat](#) signed an agreement on October 2017 to commence a project worth US \$5million in the Lake Victoria Basin. The main focus of the project is to enhance the resilience of the Lake Victoria Basin ecosystem and adaptive capacity of the communities in this region.

Policy Dialogue on Natural Capital Accounting, The Hague

A Policy Dialogue on **Natural Capital Accounting** was held in The Hague, Netherlands. The event brought together the experiences of Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services countries. It also included a session on business and natural capital accounting, organized by the [Natural Capital Coalition](#).

22nd Intergovernmental Meeting of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, 19-21 December, Toyama

The report of the UNEP Executive Director ([UNEP/NOWPAP IG. 22/3](#)) was presented to the meeting. The report summarizes the programme implementation in 2016 and 2017, including progress made by the Regional Activity Centers, resource mobilization, partnership building, public awareness, and the status of resolutions adopted at the Twenty First Intergovernmental Meeting. In addition, the report covers the status of Northwest Pacific Action Plan Trust Fund and contributions by Northwest Pacific Action Plan Member States.

Conservation Futures

UN Environment embarked on the new initiative ["Conservation Futures"](#) with the purpose of achieving a step change in the approach to the conservation of living natural resources. The specific objective of Conservation Futures will be to investigate, and subsequently proposing incremental and transformative changes necessary to reverse biodiversity loss and the impoverishment of ecosystems. An analysis on best practices in community engagement in wildlife management concludes that, despite widespread recognition of the importance of engaging local communities to combat poaching, words have not been matched by actions.

Interfaith Rainforest Alliance

Norway has provided funding for a new 3-year project "Interfaith Rainforest Alliance", implemented in partnership with the UN Environment [World Conservation and Monitoring Centre](#) and the [Rainforest Alliance Norway](#) and others, to bring moral attention and spiritual commitment to ending tropical deforestation. It is being developed as an international, multi-faith partnership that will rally spiritual and religious communities to act for the protection of rainforests and the rights of the indigenous peoples who safeguard them. The US \$6 million project is scheduled to start on 1 January 2018.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Capacity Development Tool launched by the Poverty-Environment Initiative

The [Poverty-Environment Initiative](#) has launched the capacity development tool, 'Mainstreaming Environment and Climate for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development: The Interactive Handbook to Strengthen Planning and Budgeting Processes'. It also released complete Arabic and Russian translations of the original 2015 Handbook. <http://unpei.org/pei-pep-publications>

Success stories and lessons learnt of the Poverty and the Environment Initiative in Asia Pacific

The Initiative held a Regional Workshop (Bangkok, Thailand, 22-23 November) that highlighted successes and lessons learned from the Initiative's current phase and focused on opportunities and challenges of Chinese investments under the [Belt and Road Initiative](#). More information can be found [here](#).

14th Joint UN Environment-University of Eastern Finland Multilateral Environmental Agreement Course, 9-19 October 2017, Chambéry, France

Twenty-five participants from 23 developed and developing countries elevated their understanding of international environmental law-making, negotiation and diplomacy in the context of 'Trade and Environment'. The course enhanced the capacity of participants, composed of government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations and private sector stakeholders, to engage in trade-related environmental negotiations, address trade and environment-related issues in their respective countries, and to implement trade provisions found in Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

East Africa Community Workshop on Green Customs, 11-13 October, Kigali

The capacity of a further 45 Customs Officers, representing the East Africa Community, to detect and prevent the illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive goods was enhanced through this workshop which established concrete recommendations, with timelines for action proposed for each of the participating countries. UN Environment agreed to support the integration of the [Green Customs Initiative](#) into the harmonised East African Community Customs Laws and into national Customs training curricula, facilitating the Initiative's development as an Eastern African regional programme and creating synergies between international, regional and national stakeholders to enable countries to meet their international obligations.

Memorandum of Understanding between UN Environment and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Engagement with legislators to strengthen national legislation, deepen public debate and enhance accountability in the management of natural resources was advanced through the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding between UN Environment and the [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association](#) in London on 21 November 2017.

UN Environment will provide training and development programmes to a network of over 180 parliaments and legislators across the Commonwealth, facilitating an international exchange on the sharing of best practices and enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to formulate and review appropriate legislation to pursue sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The programmes will also provide effective oversight on the negotiation and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the enforcement of national environmental law, with a particular focus on those relating to sustainable development, climate change, the green economy and the conservation of nature.

National Capacity Building Workshop on Controlling Illegal Trade in Chemicals and Waste, 13-15 December, Mumbai

The capacity of 40 national Customs officers to control the illegal trade in chemicals and waste was enhanced at the workshop which was held pursuant to a forthcoming Chinese import ban on certain types of waste, with India being considered a possible new destination for this waste. Officers were trained on the implementation of, and compliance with, the [Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm](#)

[Conventions](#), as well as other Multilateral Environmental Agreements relating to the illegal trade in chemicals or ozone depleting substances.

Update on the InforMEA Initiative

With over 120,000 unique visitors to the [InforMEA](#) Platform supported by the European Union, InforMEA's reach has more than doubled, and more than tripled in the developing world since the previous year.

The InforMEA Initiative's Steering Committee met again in June 2017 to steer the further development of the InforMEA platform and project. As a result:

1. The joint and free InforMEA learning section was expanded:
 - a number of universities in Kenya and around the world have integrated the courses into reading lists and curricular of environmental law programs.
 - 8000 new learners from 195 countries registered in 2017 for introductory courses on specific instruments, such as the Climate Change Regime or to learn about how multilateral environmental agreements collectively further Human Rights and support the trajectory to a pollution free planet. More than 2000 of them have already received their certificates of completion.
2. A new design for the InforMEA Portal and the learning section has been identified based on a usability survey which will allow access to InforMEA content through regional and topical lenses.
3. Joint national spaces for officials reporting to Biodiversity related Agreements will be created on the InforMEA Portal with support from the European Union and the Government of Switzerland and in partnership with related projects.
4. The document standard Akoma Ntoso as identified for the UN (referred to as AK4UN) by the Working Group of the Committee on Management of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination has been successfully tested on InforMEA data and a comprehensive transformation is envisaged for the next phase.

CHEMICALS AND WASTE

First meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, 24-29 September, Geneva

The [First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) was held in Geneva with more than 1300 participants from 164 countries and other stakeholder groups. 82 ministerial level participants attended a high-level segment hosted by Her Excellency Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation. The meeting took important decisions related to technical, administrative and operational matters required for the successful implementation of the Minamata Convention, including on the financial mechanism and the establishment of the Secretariat for the Minamata Convention. The meeting requested the Secretariat to continue to support countries towards the ratification of the Convention and Parties in implementing the Convention. The meeting decided that the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention is to take place from 19 to 23 November 2018 in Geneva. As at 31 December 2017, the Minamata Convention has 85 Parties.

6th Annual Workshop of the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste, 21-22 November, Shenzhen

UN Environment, together with the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of China Customs, hosted the 6th Annual Workshop of the [Regional Enforcement Network](#) for Chemicals and Waste. The meeting explored proposals for a follow-on phase of a strengthened Regional Enforcement Network, since the current phase will end substantive activities in December 2017. Therefore, the meeting was an important opportunity to receive country and stakeholder inputs on the future project currently under preparation. There was significant media presence and national coverage of the meeting in China, particularly given the well-received video address by the Executive Director.

Environmental audit of the sites affected by the dumping of toxic wastes from the “Probo Koala” Report

The environmental audit of the sites affected by the dumping of toxic wastes from the [“Probo Koala” report](#) has been finalized and the report launch is planned for January 2018 in Abidjan, in conjunction with the Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention (currently scheduled in the week starting 22 January, final dates to be confirmed by the Government).

UN Environment technical assistance on energy and solid waste management to UN peace operations in Mali, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The project is now in full implementation phase and a number of opportunities are being identified across the scope of work to make environmental improvements and efficiencies, as well as cost savings.

The National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Afghanistan

The National Implementation Plan for the [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) has been officially approved by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and translated into the country's two national languages: Dari and Pashto.

Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening: The 3rd Executive Board, 2-3 December 2017, Nairobi, Kenya

The Executive Board of the Special Programme met for 2 days to consider 33 applications submitted by developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Taking into account regional balance and special needs of least developed countries and Small Island Developing States, the Executive Board approved 17 projects amounting to US\$ 5 million. These include: Afghanistan, Belarus, Brazil, China, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Macedonia, Moldova, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, The Gambia, Uganda and Vietnam.

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Assessing Global Resource Use

[The International Resource Panel](#) launched a report, *'Assessing Global Resource Use. A systems approach to resource efficiency and pollution reduction'* during the [Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment](#), preceding the [Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#). The report was a direct response to [UNEA resolution 2/8](#) calling for the International Resource Panel to report on state and trends in sustainable material management. The report shows the state of the art on monitoring of sustainable material management and its link to pollution reduction, and it documents that end-of-pipe solutions to pollution is not enough, but that there are potential to address the pollution issues if we apply a broader set of resource efficiency policies. It furthermore calls for further assessments with better data and footprints to be elaborated, something that will be presented by the Panel in its next report scheduled for publication, and ready for the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment

Assembly in 2019. This report is called for in the Environment and Health resolution of Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and the response to this part of the resolution is thus already being elaborated.

Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information

The [Guidelines](#) were acknowledged by Member States at the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in the Environment and Health Resolution. These guidelines offer private and public sector clear guidance on making effective, trustworthy claims to consumers, on the sustainability performance of products and services. The Guidelines were developed by UN Environment and the [International Trade Centre](#) in a 2-year consensus building process with inputs from over 125 organizations under the [10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#) Consumer Information Programme. The Guidelines were [launched globally](#) at the [World Resources Forum 2017](#), and regionally at events in India and Brazil.

2017 Global Sustainable Public Procurement Review and Fact Sheets

UN Environment released the [2017 Global Review of Sustainable Public Procurement](#) which examines the state of Sustainable Public Procurement policies and practices undertaken by national governments worldwide in the last five years. It is published in close cooperation with the Sustainable Public Procurement Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. The report aims to track the progress made and deepen the collective understanding of the current barriers, needs, opportunities and innovations in sustainable public procurement. This research was recently complemented by the supplement titled "[Factsheets on Sustainable Public Procurement in National Governments](#)", which illustrates the current state of Sustainable Public Procurement policies, activities, programmes, and monitoring and evaluation systems in 40 national governments around the world.

Global Sustainable Rice Conference and Exhibition, 4-5 October, Bangkok

UN Environment and its partners in the Sustainable Rice Platform organized a first [Global Sustainable Rice Conference and Exhibition](#). Participants adopted a [Declaration on Sustainable Rice](#).

Biannual meeting of the International Resource Panel, Lima

During its 21st biannual meeting, held in Lima, Peru, the International Resource Panel agreed on a strategy for the work of the next four years. Key element of the strategy is the strengthening of work around state, trends and outlook of material consumption as basis for regular reporting. Furthermore work, requested by G7, around the link between resource efficiency and climate mitigation will be carried out.

International Resource Panel at G7 and G20 meetings, Berlin, 27-28 November

A number of Panel members had been invited, together with the Secretariat and UN Environment (Elliot Harris), to participate and present at the first meeting of the G20 resource efficiency dialogue, taking place in Berlin on 27-28 November. The event allowed work of the Panel to be showcased to this important forum. The Secretariat was invited to speak at the first meeting of the G7 resource efficiency alliance, taking place in Rome on 31 November. The content was an update on the work linking resource efficiency and climate mitigation actions, which is presently ongoing.

SwitchAsia-II Programme

The second phase of SwitchAsia, is a US \$5 million programme funded by the European Commission and implemented by UN Environment through its regional office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. The Programme started activities and focuses on Sustainable Consumption and Production to support poverty alleviation and efforts to combat climate change.

13th Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production, 24-26 October, Melaka

Participants from Asia and the Pacific countries representing governments, private sector, civil society groups, and academia attended the Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production. Organized by the APRSCP Secretariat in partnership with SwitchAsia and the 10YFP, the 13th Roundtable focused on "Enabling Sustainable Consumption and Production Towards Achieving Green Growth"

(<http://www.aprscp.net/>).

Green Growth Expert Connect Service goes live

The [Green Growth Expert Connect](#) service is now live online. Expert Connect gives policymakers free and direct access to technical and policy experts for quick and tailored guidance on a range of green growth topics, including fiscal reform, access to finance, indicators and metrics, natural capital approaches, sustainable trade, and government procurement. Experts are available to review draft strategies, analyse policy options, share experiences from other countries, and facilitate networking.

Report 'The Long View – Exploring Product Lifetime Extension'

The report provides recommendations on the opportunities available to consumers, private sector and especially governments, of developed and developing economies, to address product lifetime extension. Seven products representing different lifetime expectancies by consumers for their optimal replacement moments and actual lifetimes in selected countries are analysed: washing machines, refrigerators, TVs, mobile phones, laptops and clothing.

Launch of Integrated Green Economy Modelling Framework, 10 October 2017

This tool was launched by the [Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#) on 10 October 2017 through a webinar of the [Green Growth Knowledge Platform](#). The [Integrated Green Economy Modelling framework](#) provides a solid cross-sectoral quantitative tool to countries informing the design green economy policies, analysing environmental and social impacts, and helping the monitoring of some of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

ENVIRONMENT UNDER REVIEW

Third Global Environment Outlook Author's Meeting, 9-13 October, Guangzhou

From Oct. 9-13, 2017, the <http://web.unep.org/geo> team organized and delivered of the third Global Environment Outlook Authors' Meeting, with initial planning sessions for all authors, a full day of addressing the second-order draft comments and 4 days of moving the Policy and Outlooks chapters toward their first-order drafts. The meeting resulted in the development of preliminary draft review grids, revised Policy and Outlooks chapters, results from an Expert Elicitation workshop on assessing policy effectiveness, and a comprehensive workshop report summarizing the outcomes of the second Innovative Outlooks stakeholder visioning exercise. The key outcomes were:

- A technical summary will be produced for the [6th Edition of the Global Environment Outlook](#)
- The Secretariat will explore the possibility of publishing the 6th Edition of the Global Environment Outlook through a university press (e.g. Cambridge, Oxford).
- A preliminary first order draft of the Summary for Policy Makers will be produced in Singapore and will be finalized once the Policy and Outlooks chapters have key findings to contribute.
- The scoring from the expert elicitation exercise conducted during the Guangzhou meeting will not be used in the Global Environment Outlook report, but the lessons learned will.
- The approach to incorporating the findings of the Outlook's 'Game Changers Workshops' will need to assess whether these would be considered primary research in the assessment. [The Scientific Advisory Panel](#) has recommended against presenting primary research in the Global Environment Outlook.

Inception Workshop for Global Environment Facility-funded project on “Building national and regional capacity to implement Multilateral Environmental Agreements by strengthening planning and state of the environment reporting in the Pacific”, November, Apia

The project will enable 14 Pacific Island countries to base their planning and decision-making on credible environmental information. This will go a long way in addressing the critical issues contributing to human health and well-being in the region flagged in the sixth Global Environment Outlook Regional Assessment for Asia and the Pacific, such as the increasing vulnerability to the impacts of natural hazards and extreme events. Executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme the US \$10.7 million project also aims to boost progress on Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Pacific.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/informing-action-pacific-nations-unite-environment>

The 5th High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management

In November, UN Environment organized a high-level event with Google, the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the European Space Agency and the European Union Joint Research Center on using earth observation to monitor fresh water ecosystems. This was hosted at the UN Group of Geospatial Information Management. The event highlighted the ongoing collaboration between these organizations to make available to all countries 30 meter resolution geospatial data and indicators on lakes, rivers, estuaries and reservoirs. This work represents a major technological advancement in terms of providing water related data to countries. All information is available on the web at: <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2017-Mexico#sidevent>.