

Dear Reader,

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the second issue of the ACP MEAs 3 Digest that provides a collation of key information through this Digest on issues related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), environmental governance, sustainable development and South-South Cooperation to effectively reach out to our partners and stakeholders who are intimately working with us to implement the European Union funded project “Enforcing environmental treaties’ implementation in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries- ACP-MEAs III”.

The ACP MEAs 3 project, being implemented in the Africa, Pacific and Caribbean regions through African Union Commission (AUC), the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and regional Seas conventions such as the Cartagena Convention, the Nairobi Convention, the Abidjan Convention and the Noumea Convention focuses on enhancing compliance and enforcement of MEAs and strengthening ocean governance through a number of activities related to building capacities and raising awareness. Working in close collaboration with number of MEAs belonging to the biodiversity and chemicals cluster, the project aims to promote multilateral approaches to dealing with current and emerging environmental challenges.

The Digest will be launched on the first Monday of every month with information collected from various sources, including from project partners. If you wish to showcase any of your activities and/or share key information, please send the same by the 20th of the month to Mr. Ladu Lemi, communications focal point for the project at ladu.lemi@un.org

Happy reading!

Sustainable Development Highlights

Global Environmental Governance in the Year 2020



When the world convened at the UN Headquarters in New York for a Climate Summit in 2019 under the theme, "Climate Action Summit 2019: A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win" with an aim to boost ambition and accelerate actions to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the year 2020 was depicted to be a turning point that would change the face of the global environmental governance. However, nature proved that despite our commitment to sustainability, we are not prepared to live in harmony with it. In a report published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) on the State of Global Environmental Governance 2020, experts showed how multilateralism suddenly went to a halt and the COVID-19 pandemic became a natural exposure of our unsustainable use of natural resources, setting back most progress made across many of the SDGs and devastating all plans for international cooperation on biodiversity restoration, climate action, reduction in inequality among others. The report further forecasts 2021 as a busy year to catch up with postponed activities of 2020 and hopes for a post COVID-19 green recovery.

[Read more](#)

Integrated Solutions for Nature- The Science-Policy-Business Forum (UB-SPBF) 2021



In unprecedented circumstance caused the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN-SPBF 2021 on the Environment was virtually convened from 18th to 20th February for global leaders to discuss and identify feasible ways that can simultaneously address the three planetary crises identified in the UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution by mean of sustainable consumption and production. The UNEP MTS is informed by

relevant decisions and resolutions of UNEA, UNGA and the UNEP Governing Council, as well as strategies and plans of MEAs which sets out an analysis of the significant environmental challenges that the world will face in the coming years. Dignitaries in the forum discussed three major thematic areas of concern including Big Data and Frontier Technologies that empower the transition to a sustainable future; Build Better with integrated solutions for low-carbon, resource efficient, and inclusive societies; and Managing Risk through pollution prevention and management, where they underscored the importance of technology, partnership and multilateralism in fostering effective environmental governance and achieving related SDGs. [Read more.](#)

Biodiversity and Climate Change Highlights

From War to Peace: Living in Harmony with Nature.



The (mis) management of the natural world over the past decades is already has led to nature fighting back with growing force and fury on human lives, global economies and on all forms of life on Earth. This is a global emergency requiring concerted actions to help revert it to the state of mutualism. The UN secretary-general, António Guterres warns that the “senseless war humanity is waging- on nature- is suicidal” and is already visible in collapsing biodiversity, extinction of precious species, disappearing ecosystems and declining human livelihoods including the emergence of infectious zoonotic diseases like Covid-19. In a report titled “Making Peace with Nature: a scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies” released by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), it is said that the only option to save lives is for us to make *Peace with Nature*. This is the defining task of the coming decades to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future for all humankind. [Read more](#)

UN Environment Assembly Ends Amid Calls to Revitalize Green Pandemic Recovery.



The UN Environment Assembly (UNEAS5), held as a virtual session, wrapped up on 23 February with delegates adopting far-reaching resolutions aimed at hastening a green recovery from the socio-economic crisis wrought by COVID-19 pandemic. More than 12,000 delegates including environment ministers, donors, investors, scholars and green campaigners participated in the biennial summit that resolved to accelerate realization of a green, inclusive and prosperous future for societies reeling from pandemic related shocks. Besides discussing innovations that could accelerate a green pandemic recovery, the assembly also approved the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) new Medium-Term Strategy covering 2022-2025. [Read more](#)

UNEP Organizes Regional Preparatory Briefings for CBD SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 Informal Meetings



In line with the mandate of UNEP, under the ACP MEAs 3 project, regional briefing sessions for informal meetings of CBD SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 are being organized in Africa, Pacific and the Caribbean regions. During the SBSTTA 24 briefing session, high level participation from countries in the Caribbean region, such as the Deputy Premier of Bermuda, the Assistant Secretary General of CARICOM Secretariat and others, ensured the need to have technical and strategic commitments to shape the new post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Details and outcomes of the regional briefings will be provided in the April 2021 issue of the Digest.

Emerging Challenge of E-Commerce on Biodiversity



In the wake of globalization and digital connectivity between sellers and buyers, E-Commerce has received unprecedented support as the way to go in boosting global economic growth due to its enabled features in increasing business competitiveness across geographic boundaries. Yet, little is known to the outside world about the ethical and regulatory compliance of E-commerce with global efforts to advance environmental governance to conserve biodiversity. A new report by BBC explains how illegal land invaders feel empowered by E-commerce platforms and sold the grabbed Amazonian rainforest plots via Facebook marketplace ads. [Read more](#)

Oceans and Seas Highlights

Health Marine Ecosystem Through Seagrass Restoration



When dealing with degraded coastal areas, Seagrass restoration can help in reclaiming such impaired coastal areas to a state capable of providing the ecosystem services that it used to provide. In six basic restoration principles, the Nairobi Convention in collaboration with Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association have released guideline document for capacity building and promotion of Seagrass ecosystem restoration focusing on the Western Indian Ocean Region but with wider application in the management of any damaged coastal area. The document also includes sections on restoration management plan that includes a monitoring framework making it an essential resource for addressing pressing environmental needs of Oceans management. [Read more](#)

Regional Instruments and the Future of Global Governance of Marine Plastic Pollution



Marine plastic pollution is a widespread problem that affects almost all parts of the ocean. Although the exact amount of plastic litter in the ocean remains unknown to date, studies have indicated that plastics are widespread and are causing a severe impact on the marine environment. A report published by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) titled “Stronger Together: The role of regional instruments in strengthening global governance of marine plastic pollution” has analyzed the role of regional instruments in combating marine plastic litter and identified major challenges and a set of actionable steps on how a new global agreement on marine plastic litter could advance regional efforts to address marine plastic litter at the regional and national level. [Read more](#)

Incorporating Traditional Knowledge and Its Holders into BBNJ Instruments



Indigenous and local communities’ extensive knowledge of local environments and their sustainable practices in the used of biological diversity have gained global recognition in enhancing and promoting biodiversity conservation and healthy ecosystems. An article titled “Traditional knowledge and the BBNJ instrument” drawing its argument from the Pacific region calls for international recognition of traditional knowledge as part and parcel of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) processes. It emphasizes on three types of traditional knowledge relevance to the BBNJ instrument, such as knowledge on the connectivity of species and marine processes; knowledge of best practices in coastal waters; and knowledge of traditional jurisdictions on free navigation among coastal communities. It also provided suggestions on how the international community could incorporate traditional knowledge and indigenous people in all BBNJ’s processes including in the design, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of relevant conservation and sustainable use measures under the instrument. [Read more](#)

Chemicals and Wastes Highlights

Sound Management of Chemical and Waste Beyond 2020



The fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) scheduled to take place from 5-9 July 2021 in Bonn, Germany is expected to adopt a high-level declaration on the sound management of chemicals and wastes beyond 2020. This declaration if adopted will pave the way for the inclusion of at least 11 additional elements (chemicals) among the eight issues of concern identified under SAICM. On the road to ICCM5, experts have lauded through a report the need for legally binding mechanisms to identify and address chemical issues of concern in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. [Read more](#)

Managing Chemical and Wastes of Concern: Minamata Convention Actions on Mercury Management



In a report issued by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Secretariat provided an update on scientific and technical activities on mercury, effectiveness evaluation, national reporting, gender related legal and policy activities, capacity-building and technical activities relating to trade, emissions, and ASGM and financial mechanisms such as GEF and SIP to support developing countries in implementing their obligations under the Convention. [Read more.](#)

Not Just a Threat to the Oceans: Plastic Pollution is in the Air Too



For several years, plastic wastes are described as pollutants that invade the world's oceans and threaten the health of aquatic ecosystems posing a massive human health implication through the food chain as humans end up eating fish containing microplastics. Our institutional and policy perception of plastic pollution is now set to change over the coming years. A new report examining the sources of thick smog in Delhi and other Indian cities showed that burning plastics is responsible for half of Delhi's smog setting a new dawn of the threat plastics pose to our health. [Read more](#)

News from Partners and Associates

InforMEA – Access to Information on MEAs



InforMEA is the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements. It is a one-stop portal for information on Multilateral Environmental Agreements – or MEAs - searchable by key terms across treaty texts, COP decisions, national plans and reports, laws, court decisions and more. InforMEA's new e-learning platform now offers over 33 courses introducing International Environmental Law and Governance issues, MEAs, cross cutting topics like pollution, and most recently also specific SDGs. Each course has been reviewed by one or several MEAs or collaborating partners, including UNITAR.

- See the InforMEA flyer [here](#) for a concise overview of InforMEA,
- See introduction to InforMEA video [here](#).
- For more information on InforMEA, visit the about page [here](#).
- Register for an InforMEA account [here](#).

Upcoming Events Under the ACP MEAs Project



Pre-sessions to the Ninth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean- 1st, 8th, 9th and 11th March 2021 (Contact: ileana.lopez@un.org and christopher.corbin@un.org)

Virtual workshop for the development of a sub-regional framework to combat plastic pollution in Abidjan- 2nd March 2021 (Contact: abdoulaye.diagana@un.org)

Delivering a transformative Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework webinar- 3rd March 2021. [Register here](#)

SBI-3 briefing session for the Caribbean ACP Region- 3rd March 2021 (Contact: balakrishna.pisupati@un.org)

SBI-3 briefing session for the African and the Pacific ACP Regions- 4th March 2021 (Contact: balakrishna.pisupati@un.org)

Launching of the ACP MEAs 3 Project Gender Note– 8th March 2021 (Contact: ladu.lemi@un.org)

MEAs negotiations training – 8th February 2021, organized by Secretariat to Cartagena Convention (Contact: ileana.lopez@un.org)

The Fifth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean- 15 – 17 March (Contact: ileana.lopez@un.org and christopher.corbin@un.org)

The Ninth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean- 17 – 19 March 2021 (Contact: ileana.lopez@un.org and christopher.corbin@un.org)

Meeting of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Working Group for Abidjan Convention- 22nd March 2021 ((Contact: abdoulaye.diagana@un.org)

Nairobi Convention 2021 Western Indian Ocean Regional Science to Policy Dialogue- 23 – 25 March 2021. [Register here](#) or (Contact: theuri.mwangi@un.org)

Contacts

Email: balakrishna.pisupati@un.org or Ladu.lemi@un.org

Website: www.acpmeas.com;  [@MeasAcp](https://twitter.com/MeasAcp)  [@MeasAcp](https://www.facebook.com/MeasAcp)

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