

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ACP MEAs 3 PROGRAMME

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PROGRAMME



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SOME SNIPPETS

The ACP MEAs is an EU-UNEP partnership programme that began in March 2009 as an initiative of the European Commission to address challenging environmental issues through the implementation of the MEAs in the African, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP) regions. The programme is currently in its third phase of implementation, aiming to assist 79 ACP-countries to enforce and comply with MEAs related to biodiversity and chemicals and waste and to deal with issues of Ocean/Seas governance.

Key actions through the programme in the second quarter of 2022 include:

- Helping African countries phase-out mercury-added product
- Addressing the influx of waste pollution in the western Indian ocean region
- Strengthening Nairobi convention governance protocols
- Setting the paths for a new protocol for Abidjan convention on marine protected areas
- Supporting the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems in Bas-Sassandra and Gboklè regions
- Promoting accession to and ratification of the Abidjan convention
- CARICOM preparation for the UNCBD COP15
- Pacific preparatory meeting for the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conference of Parties (COP15) in Geneva, Switzerland
- Forum on traditional knowledge paves way in Pacific's push to achieve biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals
- The BRS triple COPS ended with Landmark resolutions
- Strengthening institutional capacities for in the ACP region MEAs implementation
- Small grants opportunity for national projects in the Abidjan Convention region.

Special Focus on the African Region

Helping African Countries Phase-Out Mercury-Added Product

According to the World Health Organization, urgent action needed to combat poisoning from artisanal gold mining in many Africa countries. Through partnership with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), in collaboration with the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG), the ACP MEAs 3 programme is supporting the implementation/enforcement of the Minamata Convention on Mercury with a focus on developing strategies for phasing out mercury-added products (Article 4) and reducing mercury use in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) (Article 7).



Sub County leaders during a mercury toxicology sensitization meeting in Amudat's District. Credit: UNACOH.

In the frame of the project, EEB/ZMWG published during the summer of 2021 a call for proposal for NGOs to carry out work in Africa and the Caribbean to reduce mercury in ASGM. More than 8 proposals were received from NGOs in 7 African countries, of which the Uganda National Association of Community and Occupational Health (UNACOH) was selected as a collaborating partner to:

- Empower artisanal and small-scale gold miners' leaders with knowledge about mercury toxicology, mercury free gold extraction technique, management and business skills that will ensure sustainability of the mercury free initiatives.
- Support the process, initiated in the previous projects, of making a by-law to fight mercury use.

In the Northern Uganda district of Amudat, UNACOH has conducted a toxicology sensitization workshop for 41 (i.e. 12 women

and 29 men) district's stakeholders and a mercury toxicology sensitization workshop and technology demonstration at Kabyonsia, Lokares Sub County for 71 (31 females+ 40 males) participants. These sensitizations had a positive impact on the stakeholders who have agreed to engage in reducing and trying to eliminate mercury use in ASGM.

Another collaboration was also established in April with the Women on Mining and Extractive (WoME) organization based in Sierra Leone, which focuses on women's involvement in the mining sector, including ASGM.

In Kenya, EEB/ZMWG is collaborating with the Center for Environmental Justice and Development (CEJAD) on the implementation and enforcement of Art. 4 of the Minamata Convention towards phasing out mercury added products. CEJAD has finalized a well-documented investigative report on the production and trade in illegal mercury-added skin lightening cosmetics in Kenya in 2022. The report identified the existence of an association of dermatologists in Kenya, which is important in establishing the prevalence of use and effects of skin lightening creams as well as cases of mercury poisoning. A questionnaire to explore the effects of mercury added skin lightening products and to facilitate the collection of data has been developed and good relationships have also been built with key government agencies mandated to control illegal mercury skin lightening creams such as Kenya Bureau of Standards and Kenya Revenue Authority. These relationships will set the base for supporting the government to phase out mercury added products.

In Nigeria, Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development (SRADev) is following up with the local government the development of a new law on Chemicals in order to support the introduction of specific commitments on phasing out mercury and MAPs in line with the Minamata Convention. For further information, please contact Rina



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Addressing the Influx of Waste Pollution in the Western Indian Ocean Region

Ten years ago, the Nairobi Convention commissioned studies on marine litter and its policy, legal, regulatory and institutional implications for the region. In 2018 the Convention consultatively developed the Western Indian Ocean action plan on marine litter and microplastics pollution and their harmful effects, whose implementation at the national level has been prioritized and supported by the ACP MEAs 3 Programme.



Women at beach in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Credit: Majkl Velnér

Among the Contracting Parties of the Convention, the ACP MEAs programme has assisted Comoros in initiating the development of a national marine litter management strategy and action plan. The Directorate-General for the Environment and Forests will mitigate influx of waste into the marine environment through implementation, at a specific site, of the national marine litter action plan. This is expected to improve local community awareness on impacts of wastes of all forms to the coastal and marine environment. Besides, the action plan will contribute to the proposed national waste management policy, and develop, strengthen, and harmonize other laws, regulations, standards, and management capacities needed to combat coastal and marine pollution in the country.

In Tanzania, the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme partners with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to catalyze marine litter actions in the country, including

development of the national action plan for marine litter and plastic pollution. The Programme will also support Seychelles in the development of a similar action plan following the completion of a national source inventory on the current state of knowledge on marine litter and plastic pollution in the country.

Planning initiatives are ongoing for the ACP MEAs 3 Programme to support Zanzibar in monitoring of the quality of its coastal and marine waters to determine its fit for use. The outcomes of the assessment and monitoring will inform blue economy sectors such as marine aquaculture, recreational uses around coastal tourism and industries for the mainstreaming of best practice models for water quality management drawn from on-the-ground interventions, as well as for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning by reducing coastal and marine pollution.

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Strengthening Nairobi Convention Governance Protocols




The reinforcement of Regional Seas Conventions governance frameworks and associated protocols is a major expected result of the ACP MEAs 3 programme. Hence, the programme has supported the convening of the tenth Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (COP10) where Contracting Parties adopted 13 decisions to protect and manage the Western Indian Ocean, of which 5 of the decisions were relevant to the current activities of the programme.

Within the Convention area, the implementation of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme is making significant strides. The Programme has supported the review and amendment of the 1985 Protocol concerning protected areas, wild flora and fauna in the Eastern African region and its four annexes.

The amendment is intended to strengthen ecosystem approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and to reinforce the legal and policy frameworks for the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity in the region. A justification for the review of the protocol has been completed, including a draft revised protocol. Efforts are being directed towards the updating of the annexes by developing a marine biodiversity status report for each of the countries that are Parties to the Nairobi Convention, after which negotiations on amending of the Protocol will follow.

In 2021, the ACP MEAs Programme enjoined an ambitious initiative of the Nairobi Convention to assess the status and conservation measures of (migratory) sharks and ray species in the region, which is being compiled into a report by the World Conservation Society to, among others, inform the updating of the annexes.

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Setting the paths for a new protocol for Abidjan Convention on Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas are important geographical spaces for the conservation of nature and its ecosystem services as well as socio-cultural values and economic benefits associated with it. In the Abidjan Convention region, the Secretariat is engaged in the process of developing an additional protocol on Marine Protected Areas (MPA) under the ACP MEAs 3 programme.

To highlight and share key results and keep stakeholders focused on the elaboration process of this additional protocol which will


be a tool for the protection and management of the Abidjan Convention marine and coastal environment, the Secretariat organized a Side Event, in the sideline of the PRCM Forum, which took place from March 29th to April 1st, 2022, in Saly (Senegal).



Delegates during a consultative event on additional Protocol for the Abidjan Convention. Credit: The Abidjan Convention

The purpose of that side event was to mobilize the members of the Task Force and explain the progress and the way forward on the MPAs roadmap. The task force was established on 25 March 2021 with the mandate to oversee the activities related to the development of the additional protocol on MPAs and also develop a roadmap for upcoming steps.

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Supporting the Conservation and Restoration of Coastal Ecosystems in Bas-Sassandra and Gboklè Regions

From 15 to 23 March 2022, the Abidjan Convention organized a field mission to Grand-Bereby and Fresco-Sassandra, three coastal towns in Côte d'Ivoire, regions the Ivorian government has identified as potential sites for the creation of MPAs (Grand-Bereby is declared first MPA of Côte d'Ivoire since December 2020).

The idea of such mission was to support conservation of coastal ecosystems in the Convention's area especially in these two regions through restoration and upscaling the capacity of local communities for the

conservation of key ecosystems. This objective is in line with the UNEP Programme of Work project 316.1, UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2018 -2021 and the Convention's programme of work for 2020 - 2021.



Local communities capacity building for ecosystem conservation. Credit: The Abidjan Convention

To that effect, the local communities benefited from capacity development sessions for the preservation of marine ecosystems. This entailed raising awareness on the impacts of pollution especially from single use plastics (particularly for fishermen on sustainable fishing practices), adoption of eco-friendly practices such as the use of bio-charcoal and energy-efficient stoves, promotion, and enhancement of eco-tourism among eco-guardians, tour guides and other stakeholders. All these carried activities aimed at alleviating poverty reduction in the region. As a way of supporting the communities, about a hundred improved stoves have been offered the visited villages.

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Promoting Accession to and Ratification of the Abidjan Convention

The current Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention, Dr. Abdoulaye Diagana and the Director of UNEP Ecosystems Division, Susan Gardner met with the Environment Ministers of Mauritania, Mrs Aissata Diallo and Mr. Lee White of Gabon at the margin of COP15 on Desertification to discuss the implementation of the Abidjan Convention in their respective

countries. The discussions were centred around the ratification of the additional protocols, national projects to be conducted by the Secretariat within the Abidjan Convention area and the payment of contributions to the Trust Fund.



Abidjan Convention Executive Secretary and UNEP Ecosystems Division Director meeting with Environment Minister of Mauritania.. Credit: Abidjan Convention

During the discussions, Dr. Diagana and Susan Gardner emphasized on the need for the Abidjan Convention Parties to get involved in the negotiations of the Global Treaty against plastic pollution and other relevant gathering on Environmental issues. The Ministers congratulated and encouraged such initiative which allowed them to have an update on the Abidjan Convention activities and expressed their commitment for payment of contributions. On the same line, the delegation composed of Dr. Diagana and Susan Gardner met with the Senegalese Minister of Environment 2022 at the preparatory meeting of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) held in Dakar early June 2022.

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News From Other Regions

CARICOM Preparation For the UNCBD COP15

The achievement of ACP MEAs 3 Programme expected result on Institutional Capacity Building, of the Caribbean Hub work programme, entails supporting countries'

preparation for meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and facilitate and fund additional regional technical experts to support Parties at the COPs. In preparation for the COP15, there is need to familiarize Caribbean Delegates with the COP15 Agenda and the issues to be discussed or negotiated and to identify national and regional priorities for the Caribbean.



Caribbean Delegation During Fourth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity in Nairobi. Credit: CARICOM

Through regional consultations, nine key priority areas where the GBF must deliver were identified for the CARICOM Member States to focus on during the final GBF meeting in June 2022. These nine areas together provide the needed means and incentives for “green development pathways” which would enable countries and communities to address poverty and economic growth through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

During the recently held Open-Ended Working Group Meeting in Nairobi Kenya, the Caribbean Biodiversity Focal Points were engaged in discussions with the CARICOM Secretariat on national priorities and concerns to be addressed in the GBF and leading up to COP. Dr Patrick Chesney, who is a regional expert has been contracted to support Parties through a regional participatory approach in preparation for and during the COP15.

Key expected support to Member States of the next 6 months will include engaging with the biodiversity, environment and economic development Ministers and Permanent Secretaries to establish national and regional negotiating positions, prepare a summary of current COP processes and relevant UNCBD

documents to enable Member States to identify and analyze issues most relevant to their national and regional interests, facilitation of exchanges on views between Member States on key COP15 issues, desired outcomes, and potential negotiating strategies and development of CARICOM Position Paper and CARICOM Delegates Participation Guide for COP15 to facilitate effective and well-coordinated participation of CARICOM delegations in different sessions throughout the COP15.

In appreciating the significance of the ACP MEAs 3 programme, Member States expressed gratitude to the CARICOM Secretariat for the support provided to their negotiators for the CBD COP15 and pre-COP meetings by building capacity and strengthening Member States understanding of key biodiversity issues that support relevant regional biodiversity related and multilateral environmental agreements. For further information, please contact Teshia

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Pacific Preparatory Meeting for the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Geneva, Switzerland.

In preparation for the joint Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions in June 2022, Pacific Island parties to the conventions convened a preparatory meeting on 17 – 18 May, under the auspices of SPREP in its capacity as the Pacific Regional Centre for the Joint Implementation of the Basel and Waigani Convention. The aim of the meeting focused on Parties sharing their views on the agenda of the BRS COP, identifying matters of concern, and the Pacific region can collectively amplify those views to Parties from around the world.

The Executive Secretary of the BRS Secretariat, Mr Rolf Poyet in his opening virtual remarks, highlighted the important issues such as amendment proposals focusing on e-wastes, the adoption of updated technical guidelines on persistent organic pollutants (POP), disposal

operations, transboundary movements and other related issues that will be covered in the agenda for BRS face-to-face Triple-COP, and the preparatory meeting will contribute significantly to the success of the COPs. The meeting also looked at the kind of support required by parties at the Triple-COPs and who is best suited to provide that support and assistance.



Waste Containers for export. Credit: SPREP

SPREP Director General at his remark's states "UN member states agreed to a resolution to begin negotiations to put in place a legally binding global instrument to address plastic pollution 2024". For the Pacific Region our experiences implementing waste MEAs such as the BRS conventions will provide many lessons for these important intergovernmental negotiations process.

The sustainable management of chemicals and waste is now seen as a fundamental cornerstone of the objectives in the SDGs set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where the BRS Conventions are highlighted as the key legally binding instruments.

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Forum on Traditional Knowledge Paves Way in Pacific's Push to Achieve Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals

With the unprecedented loss of the global biodiversity, the value of traditional knowledge and recognizing the role played by Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) is

important in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the new 2030 Global Biodiversity and SDGs in the Pacific.

From May to 1 June 2022, a dialogue on Traditional Knowledge for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals in the Pacific was held in Suva, Fiji. The forum focused on sharing experiences and challenges and explored opportunities to address biodiversity conservation goals in the Pacific in the context of the role of traditional knowledge.

Safeguarding the Pacific traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources was one the important topics discussed by participants during the hybrid event. The participants noted that, one of the main reasons for the loss and endangerment of the Pacific biodiversity is the loss of traditional knowledge.



Participants during a Training Workshop on Traditional Knowledge. Credit: SPREP

The Pacific region has extensive traditional and local ecological knowledge in marine, coral reef, and coastal areas management. The Pacific people have stewarded many customary-use areas for centuries; however, the region faces issues of misappropriation of knowledge, intellectual property rights, unfair distribution of benefits, biopiracy, and the lack of protection of traditional knowledge. This dialogue forum complemented SPREP's work executed through the "Ratification of the Nagoya Protocol in the Pacific Region. More information can be accessed [here](#).

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The BRS Triple COPS Ends With Landmark Resolutions


The 2021-2022 face-to-face segment of the triple meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS COPs) came to a close on 17 June 2022 in Geneva after lengthy proceedings that begun with the online segment in July 2021, followed by a High-level Segment in Stockholm, Sweden, on 1 June 2022 in association with the Stockholm+50 international meeting. The meeting was held under the theme “Global Agreements for a Healthy Planet: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste”.



Over 1500 delegates from around the world attended the meeting and major decisions were adopted by the Parties to move forward the fight against pollution. These included the adoption by the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (BC COP-15) of a landmark amendments to Annexes II, VIII and IX, which ensure that all transboundary movements of e-wastes are subject to the prior informed consent of the importing state and any state of transit. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (RC COP-10) listed two industrial chemicals: decabromodiphenyl ether, and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and the related compounds to be subjected to the Prior Informed Consent procedure, thereby granting Parties the right to decide on their future import. Similarly, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention (SC COP-10) listed perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), its salts, and PFHxS-related compounds in Annex A to the

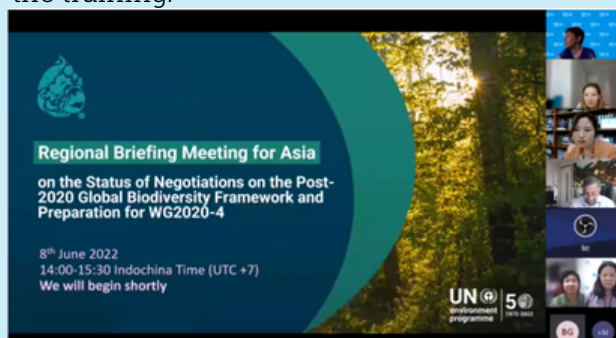
Convention, setting them for elimination. PFHxS, its salts and related substances have a high resistance to friction, heat, and chemical agents. They are widely used in firefighting foam, carpets, and non-stick cookware, and found to influence the human nervous system, brain development, and thyroid hormone. The conferences of the Parties also agreed on the venue of the next COPs meetings to be held in the Bahamas from 8-19 May 2023. For more information visit www.brsmeas.org.

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Strengthening Institutional Capacities for in the ACP Region MEAs Implementation

Established for the development of regional capacities for the implementation of MEAs, the ACP MEAs 3 programme in April 2022 delivered a webinar for the Caribbean region on the application of the Data Reporting Tool (DaRT), to enhance synergies across biodiversity-related conventions and increase the effectiveness of national reporting. More than 45 participants representing 12 Caribbean countries and 3 organizations benefited from the training.



In May and June, the programme also held regional preparatory briefing sessions to support national focal points and delegates in Asia, Caribbean and Africa regions to prepare for the CBD OWG 4 meeting. A briefing meeting was also held in the Caribbean region on issues related to Digital Sequence Information (DSI). Through these sessions, more than 300 participants in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean region acquired skills and information essential for negotiating the post 2020 global

biodiversity framework.

Bringing an integrated, cross-sectoral and synergetic approach in the implementation of MEAs is a core pursue for the ACP MEAs programme, hence, the programme participated in the 22nd global meeting of the regional Seas programme held in Mahe, Seychelles and provided support for synergies in the implementation of the Regional Sea programmes and related MEAs.

In realizing the significant role of youth in decision-making on biodiversity-related issues, the ACP MEAs 3 programme through the Caribbean hub organized a video competition in May 2022 for youth involved in environmental and biodiversity-related activities under the theme and topic: "Building a shared future for all life"; and national and regional youth priorities for the Global Biodiversity Framework. An inspiring youth Ms. Lyn-Marie Lynton from Barbados was selected as a winner.

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Small Grants Opportunity for National Projects in the Abidjan Convention Region

On June 7th, the Abidjan Convention launched a call for small grants proposals to support the implementation of projects of the Abidjan Convention countries. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat invites all the countries to build their project proposals on previous initiatives or to expand an ongoing initiative around these three major areas: Ocean Governance, Plastic Waste Management and MPA Creation which are part of the ACP MEAs III programme. The grant amounts will be defined according to identified needs in each project submitted by countries.

Submission of grants proposals applications should be sent before July 31, 2022 at 00:00 GMT to unep-abidjan-convention@un.org, copied to abdoulaye.diagana@un.org; yacoub.issola@un.org; vanessa.ahouadjiro@un.org

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The Programme ACP Countries

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