



Monthly Information Digest



Volume 3

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Dear Reader,

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the second issue of the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) MEAs 3 Monthly Digest for February 2023. As an informative publication, the Digest provides a collection of key information from various sources, including from programme partners on issues related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs),

environmental governance, ocean governance, sustainable development, and South-South Cooperation relevant for the implementation of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme.

Happy reading!

This Month's Highlight

- Historic UN agreement on protecting marine biodiversity in international waters.
- Women, Climate and Nature: Regenerative Seascapes project in coastal region of the West Indian Ocean to mitigate the impact of climate change
- Nature-based solutions in cities to become more resilient to climate change
- Roundtables event hosted by UK government on increasing private finance for the implementation of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- One Forest Summit in Gabon for the preservation and sustainable management of rainforests
- GEF report on biodiversity-positive carbon credits and nature certificates
- IISD Policy Brief for a strong framework for sound chemicals management
- Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka launch a USD 14 million joint UNEP-GEF project to eliminate mercury from skin lightening products
- Organization of Cook Islands Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures workshop
- Launch of mobile tool Kobo Toolbox for field collection of environment data in Samoa
- Abidjan Convention's activities to operationalize Marine Protected Areas in Benin
- Cartagena Convention's activities for MARPOL implementation in the Dominican Republic
- Approval of St. Lucia's Marine Litter Management Action Plan (ML-MAP), developed with support from ACP MEAs 3 and UNEP
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Sustainable Development Highlights

Historic UN agreement on protecting marine biodiversity in international waters

At the [Resumed Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction \(BBNJ IGC-5\)](#), on 4 March 2023, UN member states reached an agreement on the treaty for the protection of the high seas. The 'High Seas Treaty' would place 30% of the world's oceans into protected areas, put more money into marine conservation, and covers access to and use of marine genetic resources. Congratulating member states, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the treaty was crucial for addressing the triple planetary crisis, and achieving ocean-related goals and targets of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and [the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#). [Read more](#).



Women, Climate and Nature: Regenerative Seascapes project in coastal region of the West Indian Ocean to mitigate the impact of climate change

IUCN and Mission inclusion were selected by the Government of Canada’s Partnering for Climate Program to conduct a three-year USD 30 million project to reduce the physical and socio-economic vulnerability of East African (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, and the Comoros) coastal communities to the devastating effects of the climate crisis. IUCN work will be focusing on improving biodiversity conservation and the management of marine protected areas, while Mission inclusion will be responsible for strengthening economic empowerment of women in the blue economy. [Read more.](#)



Nature-based solutions in cities to become more resilient to climate change

In a [short video](#) posted on 20 February 2023, the World Bank shows how nature-based solutions such as wetlands and mangrove are helping three cities – Bogotá, Colombia; Beira, Mozambique; and Colombo, Sri Lanka – to become more resilient to climate change. The combination of natural and built nature-based solutions help address flood risks and mitigate disaster risk in a cost-effective manner while rehabilitating

ecosystems. Nature-based solutions have been integrated into more than 100 World Bank's project over 60 countries and 4 continents. [Read more.](#)



Biodiversity Conservation highlights

Roundtables event hosted by UK government on increasing private finance for the implementation of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

On 17 February, the UK hosted a roundtables event 'Nature Action: Private Sector Mobilisation' at Lancaster House, London, gathering governments, philanthropists, and business leaders. The topics of these 4 roundtables looked at: 1) Nature Finance Packages – new and scaled up approaches to attract private finance at country level, 2) Payment for Ecosystems Services – to scale up examples of private sector mobilization for public goods such as clean water and reducing flood risks, 3) Use of genetic information from plants and animals – for example in product development in areas ranging from cosmetics to vaccines, and 4) Sustainable Food Systems, to scale up investment in nature-positive agriculture programs. Kunming-Montreal GBF set out a target to mobilize USD 200 billion per year globally by 2030, which requires increased financing from the private sector. [Read more.](#)



One Forest Summit in Gabon for the preservation and sustainable management of rainforests

The One Forest Summit co-organized by Gabon and France was held in Libreville, Gabon, on 1–2 March 2023, with the objective to protect rainforest. The outcomes contained in the 'Libreville Plan' include the development of 'Positive Conservation Partnerships (PCP)', with an initial budget of EUR 100 million, a mechanism to remunerate exemplary countries through "biodiversity certificates", the One Forest Vision' scientific project to measure the net carbon sequestration balance and map the most vital carbon and biodiversity reserves in the Amazon, Africa, and Asia within the next five years, and the economic strategy '10by30' to create 10 million jobs by 2030 in activities related to the sustainable use of tropical forests, and a series of first concrete commitments from companies. The plan builds on GEF report on biodiversity-positive carbon credits and nature certificates (see below). [Read more.](#)



GEF report on biodiversity-positive carbon credits and nature certificates

On 27 February 2023, GEF published the “Innovative Finance for Nature and People” report that presents recommendations, prior to the One-Forest Summit, co-hosted by Gabon and France on 1–2 March 2023. The focus is on the development of two innovative financial mechanisms, the biodiversity-positive carbon credits, and nature certificates for forest landscapes, building on and complementing traditional carbon credits. The goal is to unlock new financial resources from the private sector, for the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of biodiversity in a socially inclusive manner and to contribute towards the mobilization of USD 200 billion financial flows for biodiversity by 2030. [Read more.](#)



Chemicals and Wastes Highlights

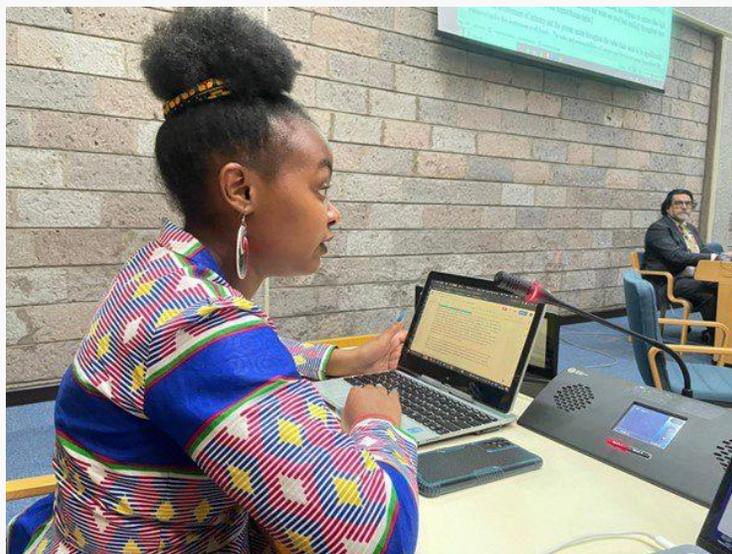
IISD Policy Brief for a strong framework for sound chemicals management

As the [4th meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 \(IP4\)](#), was taking place in Nairobi, Kenya on 27 February–3 March 2023, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) published a policy brief on 15 February that provides summary and perspective on the most recent developments on chemicals and waste. The brief gives an update of 2020 UNEP report “[An Assessment on Issues of Concern: Chemicals and Waste Issues Posing Risks to Human Health and the Environment](#)”. The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM), the governing body for [the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management \(SAICM\)](#), will consider options for a post-2020 framework for sound management of chemicals and waste when it convenes for its fifth meeting (ICCM-5) in September 2023. [Read more.](#)



Youth Call for Intergenerational Protection from Toxic Chemicals and Waste at SAICM IP4.2 Negotiations

From 27 February to 3 March at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, more than 25 members of the chemicals youth constituency directly participated in negotiations during the Resumed Fourth Meeting of the [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management \(SAICM\)](#) Intersessional Process. The Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform (CWYP) contributed to the development of the [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management \(SAICM\)](#) “Beyond 2020” instrument, notably through a [Conference Room Paper \(CRP\)](#) presented in plenary. Elements of the youth proposal – designated section and targeted actions on “Children, Youth and Intergenerational Protection” – were successfully incorporated throughout the draft negotiation text, to be decided upon during the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) in Bonn, Germany in September 2023. While youth participation has been low since the creation of SAICM in 2006, the creation of the CWYP in 2021 has significantly increased youth engagement. [Know more about CWYP.](#)



Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka launch a USD 14 million joint UNEP-GEF project to eliminate mercury from skin lightening products

The governments of Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka launched a USD 14 million joint project to eliminate the use of mercury in skin lightening products. This three-year GEF-funded project, implemented by UNEP and executed by WHO aims at bringing countries together to align their policies on the cosmetic sector with best practice, creating an enabling environment to phase out mercury and attempting to shift broader cultural norms on skin complexion. Skin lightening products contain harmful chemicals including mercury, a toxic substance which poses risks to human health and contaminates the environment. [Read more.](#)



News from Partners and Associates

Organization of Cook Islands Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures workshop

With support from the EU-OACPS BIOPAMA programme, and its partners – IUCN Oceania, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the UN Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) – the Cook Island National Environment Service organized a workshop on 24-25 January 2023 to assist national practitioners and policy makers to gain an insight into the [Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures \(OECM\) concept](#). The two-day workshop brought together stakeholders to discuss the possible benefits and drawback of recognizing and reporting these areas and learn about the tools and assistance available. OECMs are not Protected Areas but are geographically defined areas that are governed and managed in ways that sustain positive and sustained long-term conservation. The term first appeared in 2010 within the Aichi Biodiversity Targets global conservation goals established by the CBD as part of a strategic plan to conserve biodiversity and is now under the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(Target 3\)](#). [Read more.](#)



Launch of mobile tool KoboToolbox for field collection of environment data in Samoa

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) hosted a two-day training in Vailima, Samoa, in February, for the launch of free and open source [KoboToolbox](#) tools. The training aimed to equip participants with the skills to develop, implement, and manage field surveys and data collection through KoBoToolbox. Over thirty participants from various government ministries attended the training, which was supported by the UN Joint Programme (UNJP) for Ecosystem Services in Samoa under SPREP and the IMPRESS Project under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). Mr. Jope Davetanivalu, SPREPE Director of Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme acknowledged the importance of digital tools in streamlining data collection and analysis processes. [Read more.](#)



Abidjan Convention's activities to operationalize Marine Protected Areas in Benin

The [Abidjan Convention](#), one of ACP MEAs 3 key partners, organized a field mission in Benin from 23-27 January 2023 to support the operationalization of two Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Donaten and Togbin Daho-Bouche du Roy, established in January 2022. The overall objective is to halt the degradation of the mangrove, cut down for wood used for local salt production. The mission's purpose was to identify the needs for developing a management plan for a selected Marine Protected Area (MPA), discuss challenges and practical solutions. Following meetings with key coastal and marine management stakeholders in Benin – the Environmental and Climate General Directorate (DGEC), National Wildlife and Reserves Management Centre (CENAGREF) and Integrated Project Management Unit (UIGP) of the WACA ResiP Project – the Abidjan Convention met with associations and NGOs for women salt production, turtle protection, fishermen, and marine turtle eco-guards during field visits. The Abidjan Convention had actively participated in the establishment of the two MPAs, through the Mamy Wata Project. [Read more](#).

Cartagena Convention's activities for MARPOL implementation in the Dominican Republic

The [Cartagena Convention Secretariat](#), through the ACP MEAs 3 project, is providing support to the Government of the Dominican Republic as a Contracting Party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships ([MARPOL](#)) for effective implementation of Annexes I, II, III, IV and V of the Convention. Meeting MARPOL's requirements will be a significant achievement as it will enhance the country's sustainable growth by decreasing ship-related pollution. MARPOL is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. [Read more on what the Cartagena Convention does](#).

Development of Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement by and for African Youth

ACP MEAs 3 supports more than 40 dedicated youth to adapt the Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement, developed by the second cohort of the ACP MEAs 3 [Youth Empowerment and Training Initiative](#) in Europe, to the African region. The idea emerged during discussions at the [launch event](#) of the original Toolkit at UNEP's office in Brussels in October 2022. A number of YETI Alumni from Africa are now leading the adaptation process of the Toolkit aiming to provide guidance on how youth across Africa can engage in and contribute to pro-environmental change on an individual, local, national, and international level as well as through social media

Approval of St. Lucia's Marine Litter Management Action Plan (ML-MAP), developed with support from ACP MEAs 3 and UNEP

The government of Saint Lucia formally approved a Marine Litter Management Action Plan (ML-MAP), by Cabinet Conclusion No.21 of January 16, 2023, to address the issue of marine litter and advance sustainable coastal management. The ML-MAP includes a strategy for coordinating coastal clean-up initiatives, a national database to monitor clean-up efforts. It will be accompanied by documentaries and public service announcements to bring attention to the problem of trash in the ocean. Saint Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority (SLSWMA) developed the ML-MAP in coordination with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, with financial and technical support from the ACP MEAs 3 and UNEP Science Division. St. Lucia's coastal ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the effects of marine litter and implementing these activities will go a long way toward mitigating those effects and fostering sustainable management practices. [Watch the campaign video](#).

Save the Date

MAR 1- MAR 3: [One Forest Summit, Libreville, Gabon](#)

MAR 3: [World Wildlife Day 2023 \(and 50th Anniversary of first signing of CITES\)](#), **online**

MAR 7: [Webinar](#) to provide information on the process of developing a new programme of work and institutional arrangements on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities (CBD), **online**

MAR 7: [Our People Our Climate – Workshop on Climate Visualization for Impact](#), **online**

MAR 14 - MAR 30: [Regional Preparatory Meetings for the 2023 face-to-face segment of the BRS COP](#), **several regional events**

MAR 13 - MAR 15: [3rd Global Soil Conference](#) (UNCCD), **Dublin, Ireland**

MAR 15: [Plastic Pollution & Cities: Building Momentum Towards a Global Plastics Treaty](#), **online**

MAR 20 - MAR 31: [Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology \(Cartagena Protocol\)](#), **online**

MAR 22 - MAR 24: [UN Water Conference](#), **New York, USA**

MAR 30: [UN International Day of Zero Waste](#), **Worldwide**

For more events, please check [InforMEA's Calendar of Events](#).



The ACP MEAs is a joint UNEP- EU-FAO-OACPS partnership programme. It aims to build the capacity of 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to fulfill their obligations to multilateral

environmental agreements. Phase III (ACP MEAs 3) of this programme is being implemented in Africa by the African Union Commission (AUC), Abidjan Convention and Nairobi Convention, in the Caribbean by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cartagena Convention, in the Pacific by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is the civil society partner.

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This digest is made for you and by you. Share your activities, information and stories of your organization/department by the 20th of the month with Emilie Vauchel (emilie.vauchel@un.org) and help build a more transparent and engaged ACP MEAs 3 Programme!

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