

Foreword

Dear Friends,

It gives me a great pleasure to present the first issue of UNEP ACP MEAs 3 programme newsletter for 2021. Newsletters, by nature, are used as tools to present a synopsis of actions under specific projects and programmes. This makes a newsletter not too attractive for people other than those involved in the activities. Challenges of our decreasing attention span to focus on reading long newsletters is a concern for someone producing them.

When we were looking for innovation in this newsletter, we were confronted with two issues – being quarterly in nature and working with a large number of partners, how can we reduce the time partners need to spend contributing to the newsletter every quarter and what can be innovative in a newsletter.

We tried to answer the challenges in two ways in this edition. One, the newsletters from now on will have a regional focus, in general, thereby making the time and space for partners from the Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions to contribute effectively and two, including one article that looks at strategic issues and one forward looking topic of relevance for the programme.

With this in mind, the focus articles for this issue covers topics of relevance to the Caribbean region.

During the period January – March 2021, the ACP MEAs 3 programme started to re-invent itself by not just delivering a set of activities in the three regions but by making the programme relevant for larger issues confronting the regions on environmental governance. We re-launched our twitter handle with some significant reach, started providing all partners and others a set of strategic and upcoming information on issues of relevance through a monthly Digest, shared an operational plan for gender mainstreaming in all activities being planned, supported stakeholders through a series of briefing sessions on key multilateral, global issues, engaged with all partners in soliciting effective and impactful actions that go beyond token reports and enhancing cross-regional collaborations. Of course, these are mere starting points.

The newsletter is slated to evolve regularly, both in structure and content and we solicit your responses on how to make it helpful for 'others'. Let me just say, read this newsletter not looking for 'what is in it for me' but 'how this can inform others'.

Happy reading and reflecting!

Balakrishna Pisupati

United Nations Environment Programme

Where Are We?

The multi-year, multi-region, multi-partnership Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP-MEAs) programme is currently in its third phase of implementation, coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The ACP MEAs is an EC-UNEP partnership programme which began in March 2009 as an initiative of the European Commission to address challenging environmental issues through the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. The programme is currently in its third phase of implementation, aiming to assist the ACP-countries to enforce and comply with MEAs related to biodiversity (CITES, CMS and CBD) and chemicals and waste (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions) and deal with issues of Ocean/Seas governance (through Regional seas conventions, i.e. Abidjan, Nairobi, Cartagena and Noumea Conventions). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) implements the third objective of the programme on agriculture and biodiversity.

Though the implementation of the third phase began in 2020, activities in support of implementation were significantly slowed down by the COVID19 pandemic and related issues of lockdowns and remote working. In spite of the delays, implementation has started in all the regions with some key deliverables achieved, as highlighted in this Newsletter.

With continued option for remote working and virtual connections, we are aiming to re-design the programme delivery in 2021 with more discussions, events and sessions that combine in-person activities, where possible, and remote support.

Focus on the Caribbean Region

Biodiversity Lifeboats for the Caribbean: Connecting Wildlife and Cultures

The ecosystem of the Caribbean has evolved over millions of years of geological and biological processes that have shaped the islands and marine

environments of the region. These processes have created diverse and complex habitats that have fueled the Caribbean's spectacular biodiversity and human culture. The protected areas established to sustain this biodiversity and the vibrant economies it supports, can be considered the lifeboats for the region's ecosystem, and for the societies that depend on it.



Marine Protected Areas are established to protect endangered species, their habitats and biodiversity, and to sustain populations of economically important biological resources. In addition to this vibrant ecosystem, the human relationship to the ocean also defines the Caribbean. These protected areas not only protect the marine resources of the region, but also the relationship of the Caribbean people to those resources that have shaped their way of life for generations. Establishing a network of MPA plays a crucial role in linking together societies throughout the Caribbean. Hence, UNEP-Caribbean Environmental Programme (CEP) wishes to work with the people of the Caribbean to ensure that this network will not only sustain the health of the ecosystem, but also sustain the health of their relationship to the Caribbean Sea.

"Strengthening Connections and Collaboration to Conserve the Caribbean Ecosystem"

The importance of protected areas in focusing conservation and ecosystem protection efforts in special places in the Caribbean is highlighted by the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol. The SPA Protocol is the biodiversity component under the Cartagena Convention, an agreement among nations for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean.



The SPAW listed protected areas are special places that incorporate diverse biological and habitat components of the large Caribbean ecosystem. The diverse settings, biological resources and conservation approaches at each SPAW provide an interconnected framework on which to build stronger protections for the Caribbean's environment and its resources.

Recognizing the importance of marine protected areas to the livelihoods of the people, UNEP's Cartagena Convention Secretariat, through the ACP MEAs 3 project and its SPAW Sub-Programme is prioritizing plans that facilitate cooperation between the SPAW-listed protected areas and the creation of a functional network of marine protected areas (MPA) in the Caribbean that will strengthen the interconnections of their habitats, species and conservation outcomes.

Synergies and partnership remain central in achieving success in marine conservation. This entails the needs to incorporate previous and existing programmes that support the sustainability of the Caribbean ecosystem and the socio-economics of its use. As it considers what connects the region's special places into a cooperative network, UNEP-CEP is engaging with marine protected area professionals, scientists, conservation programmes and government agencies throughout the region to define approaches and actions that meet the region's needs.

Please contact Ms. Ileana Lopez, Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) for more information.

Shaping a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework - *"Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean in the Caribbean"*

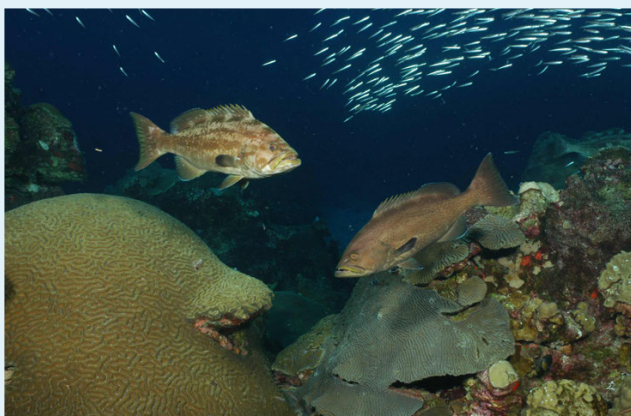
The Caribbean Region's life and livelihoods are intrinsically linked to coastal and marine environment. As we give further consideration to the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, it will require unprecedented innovations emanating from all sectors of society. This would be a necessary move to enable the region to cope with, respond to, and recover from the virus including from the deployment of sustainable ocean-based economies. Shaping a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, provided a timely opportunity for the Region to consider innovation in relation to ocean resources, in parallel with the level of innovation and integration applied to the COVID-19 front. The Region is called upon to harness the same levels of response to improve the health and resilience of the coastal and maritime ecosystems. This would encompass, inter alia, the development of policies, programmes and practices to reduce ocean pollution and to make food and energy production more sustainable for low-lying coastal and island States.

Accordingly, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, in collaboration with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, in recognition of World's Oceans Day on June 8, 2020, rallied the region's experts, Biodiversity Negotiators, Regional Youth and other multi-sectoral agencies.



This facilitated exchange and discussions among participants, promoting an urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 biodiversity framework that contributes to the re-shaping of the Caribbean region's vision for biodiversity. The encounter provided the Caribbean negotiators, policy advisors and decision makers an opportunity to be well equipped with technical knowledge provided by expert opinions on thematic areas, as a means of strengthening the region's position during the negotiation of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

In examining the theme, participants agreed for the need to resume sustainable, medium-to long-term benefits from coastal and marine ecosystem services when countries emerge from the collective lockdowns. This need would be sustained despite the temptation to engage in activities which would yield quick economic returns and leave the more vulnerable to the impacts of environmental and economic disasters.



The Webinar provided an important engagement for the region in placing the issue of management and sustainable use of ocean resources in the context of recovery from the COVID crisis. It allowed for a productive discussion on how the region would wish to frame its input on ocean ecosystems in the ongoing articulation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Please contact Ms. Teshia JnBaptiste, CARICOM Secretariat for more information.

Regional Briefing Sessions in preparation for Informal SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 Meetings of the CBD

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the delay to convene the formal meetings of SSBTTA-24 and SBI-3. In order to keep the momentum, CBD secretariat organized for virtual informal sessions of these meetings. In preparation for the meetings, UNEP through the ACP MEAs 3 project organized a series of regional briefing sessions in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific regions during February and March 2021 to help Parties to the CBD and other stakeholders understand the agenda items for the meetings to effectively participate in the Informal SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 meetings. These involved the preparation of a series of agenda briefs covering key topics for SBSTTA-24 and SBI 3 that were shared with the participants prior to the meeting.

About 140 participants from 41 countries participated in these sessions. The regional sessions for Caribbean was organized in collaboration with CARICOM Secretariat while the ones for the Pacific was organized with SPREP. The Africa Group of Negotiators, Chairs of SBSTTA 24, SBI 3, Secretaries of SBSTTA 24, SBI 3 and one of the Co-Chair to the post 2020 global biodiversity framework process participated in the briefing sessions.

Key discussions outcomes of the briefing sessions included among others.

- The need for regional preparatory events to help countries come together to discuss specific issues and identify common positions, especially at a time when face-to-face meetings are not possible;
- There is a need for regional group focal points to elaborate and present common issues during the informal session which directly underscored the significance of the briefing meetings facilitated by the ACP MEAs project;
- Specific agenda items such as the need to focus on issues of island biodiversity, coastal and marine biodiversity, reporting and monitoring, financing implementation of the

post 2020 global biodiversity framework, capacity building, technology transfer and cooperation, consolidating experiences of implementation of actions related to Aichi biodiversity targets, review of NBSAPs and enhancing synergies were identified as priority areas;

- The need for better coordination and integration of support from ACP MEAs 3 project in the regional preparations for SBSTTA 24, SBI 3 and OWG 3 meetings and CBD COP 15 in the ACP regions was suggested;
- Suggestions to begin discussions at national, regional, and higher political levels on issues related to the finalization and the implementation of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework as well as establishing links with global processes, organizations and permanent missions in New York were also made.

Full recording of the sessions can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHRSheSVSTO2vxGRehKY2A>

Please contact Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati, United Nations Environment Programme for more information.

From Decisions to Action on the Ground: ACP MEAs programme working for Africa with a Safe Chemicals and Waste Future

Chemicals constitute an integral part of modern society with an estimated 100,000 different substances in use today that are driving global economies. Besides the benefits derived from chemicals, chemicals have also the potential to adversely impact human health and the environment if they are not properly managed throughout their lifecycle.

Working with the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the ACP MEAs programme organized the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bamako COP3) under the theme “From decisions to action: working for Africa with a safe chemicals and waste future” in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo from 12 to 14 February 2020.

The COP brought together more than 50 delegates and participants including 12 ministers, one non-party observer, three ambassadors, various experts representing state parties and non-state parties, United Nations entities, AUC, ECOWAS, civil society representation, the private sector and media.

The three-day meeting began with a two-day expert segment on 12 and 13 February where the participants discussed appropriate legal, administrative and other measures to prohibit the import into Africa and control of the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes within Africa, including a new list of substances which have been banned, cancelled or refused registration by government regulatory action, or voluntarily withdrawn from registration in the country of manufacture for human health or environmental reason under paragraph 1(d) of Article 2 of the Bamako Convention. Delegates during Bamako COP3 in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.



Delegates during Bamako COP3 in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. Feb 2020

The expert segment was then followed by a ministerial segment on 14 February that culminated into the adoption of nine (9) decisions of which, six (6) are related to Convention; strengthening of the implementation of the convention's protocols and the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes by providing guidelines for the accession to the Convention by nonparties as well as guidelines for ratification and incorporation into national laws of mutually beneficial waste trade instruments. These decisions include:

- Decision CB.3/1: Proposed list of hazardous substances to be considered hazardous waste under article 2, paragraph 1 (d) of the Bamako Convention;

- Decision CB.3/3: Strengthening implementation and resource mobilization for the Bamako Convention;
- Decision CB.3/5: Status of ratification, accession to and implementation of the Bamako Convention;
- Decision CB.3/7: Ratification and incorporation into national law of mutually beneficial waste trade instruments;
- Decision CB.3/8: Action to prevent plastic waste pollution and its trade in and surrounding the continent of Africa;
- Decision CB.3/9: Prevention of electronic hazardous waste and the import and dumping of end-of-life waste electrical and electronic equipment in Africa.

Please contact Mr. Muhammed Omotola, Bamako Convention for more information.

Phasing Out Mercury-added Products: Turning off the Mercury Tap

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB), in collaboration with the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG), is supporting the ACP MEAs 3 Programme, on contributing to 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 (Article 7).

The EEB/ZMWG coordination team is already set up and includes the EEB Policy Manager and ZMWG International co-coordinator, a newly hired EEB Mercury Policy Officer and the director of the Mercury Policy Project, co-founder and co-coordinator of the ZMWG.

The initial focus of work is currently on the Caribbean region. The EEB/ZMWG team is in regular contact with CARICOM and working towards coordinating the mercury related work in the region. The current target of our work is primarily on phasing out mercury-added products and we are also investigating needs related to waste management, storage/disposal, and relevant capacity and training. The EEB/ZMWG is also planning on providing input,

materials and guidance as well as supporting the creation of training resources and modules.

Vis a vis our planned activities, initial contacts have taken place with possible partners-countries in the region. The main project objective is to assist governments phase out products, as well as conducting a study to determine the availability accessibility, efficacy, and economic feasibility of Convention compliant products, building off from existing studies, surveying traders and other relevant information.

Please contact Ms. Elena Lymberidi, European Environment Bureau for more information.

Enhancing the Role and Impact of Gender in the ACP MEAs III Project

The role and relevance of gender in realizing the objectives of the ACP MEAs 3 project is an important consideration while implementing the project activities. Women and men in many parts of the world have different opportunities in contributing to and benefit from sustainable environmental management. While women play an important role in sustaining and households and managing natural resources, their contributions are often overlooked and undervalued. Yet environmental hazards such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and impacts of pollution affect women more than men, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities arising from inequalities in access to and control over resources.

"The ACP MEAs 3 project has a priority to serve as a conduit to develop coherent policy approaches to gender-specific environmental issues and aims to reduce gender inequalities in policies, laws and institutions in the field of environment"

Realizing the need for promoting a common understanding of addressing gender specific issues and roles for an impactful delivery of the ACP MEAs 3 project, a 'Gender Operational Note' for the project was developed and launched on 8th March 2021 to commemorate the International Women's Day to provide guidance to project partners and their collaborators on using specific gender considerations within the objectives and provisions of the project.

The operational note was prepared to help strengthen the implementation and impact of the ACP MEAs 3 project by mainstreaming and operationalizing the gender dimensions of compliance and enforcement to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and strengthening environmental governance to promote equitable access to resources, inclusive governance, increased resilience towards sustainable and equitable natural resource-based growth, and equitable decision making at all levels.

As a guiding document, the Note encourages each partner to decide and develop an appropriate framework on how their actions under the project contributes to gender and propose institutional mechanisms to measure the impacts during the project implementation.

Please contact Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati and Mr. Ladu Lemi, United Nations Environment Programme for more information.

Pacific Hub ACP MEA Phase 3 Project Team on Board

The Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), as the Pacific Hub for the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) Programme, is pleased to be leading Phase 3 of the ACP MEAs Programme for the Pacific Islands member countries. SPREP is also coordinating actions related to implementation of the Noumea Convention under the Programme. The current phase of the programme provides the platform to promote environmental sustainability in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) as well as support and strengthen environmental governance within multi-regional institutions, member States and stakeholders' capacities in the mainstreaming and implementation of MEAs and dealing with ocean governance.

The implementation of activities under the ACP MEAs Phase III for the Pacific Hub comprise of two (2) components. The first focuses on the effective implementation, monitoring, enforcement of, and compliance with MEAs related to biodiversity and

chemicals and waste; and the second is the effective implementation of the regional seas conventions in order to tackle pollution and integrated coastal zone management.

The Project Coordinating Team consists of the Project Coordinator and the Support Officer, based in the Environmental Monitoring and Governance (EMG) Programme and report directly to the Director of EMG. A meeting of the SPREP ACPMEAs Phase 3 Project Coordination Group has been scheduled for Tuesday, 13 April 2021, to look into the progress of delivery of the activities under the two components and its plans in moving forward.

SPREP is excited to coordinate the implementation of activities and enhance mainstreaming under the MEAs and the Noumea Convention under the period of uncertainty we are faced with. Additionally, to support our Pacific Islands member countries to acquire the required capacity to meet their obligations under the MEAs and to strengthen the Pacific's component of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme.



The project team @SPREP
(Seated L-R: Jope Davetanivalu, Acting Director of Environmental Monitoring and Governance (EMG), Anastacia Amoa-Stowers, MEAs Coordinator. Standing L-R: Faasipa Tinai, EMG Programme Assistant, Flavia Vaai, MEAs Support Officer)

Please contact Ms. Anastacia Amoa-Stowers, SPREP Secretariat for more information.

Abidjan Convention launched its Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) Phase III Programme

The Abidjan Convention for the oceans and marine environment in the Western, Central and Southern Africa launched on Monday 23th March 2021, the phase III of the "Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries Phase III (ACP MEAs)" programme. The activity took place at 'Capitol Hotel', in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and was held in collaboration with the European Union's environment commission as well as other partners.

As a regional hub for Ocean governance in the Western, Central and Southern Africa, the Abidjan Convention through the ACP MEAs 3 project is promoting environmental sustainability in the African ACP countries by strengthening environmental governance and the implementation of MEAs. This will be achieved by improving capacities to enforce and apply MEAs related to biodiversity, to chemicals and wastes and to ocean governance.



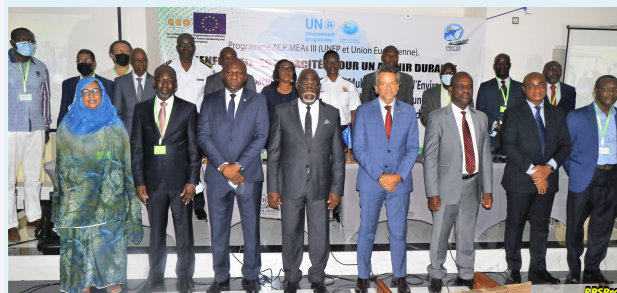
Delegates during the launch of the ACP MEAs 3 Project by Abidjan Convention in Côte d'Ivoire, March 2021

The official ceremony gathered some fifty (50) participants from Côte d'Ivoire and abroad and was marked by the presence of his Excellency Mr. Philippe Légré, Minister of Maritimes Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire ; His Excellency Mr. Jobst Von Kirchmann, Ambassador of European Union; Mr. Kouassi Parfait, Director of cabinet of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development and Mr. Abou Bamba, Abidjan Convention Executive Secretary.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Abou Bamba, Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention explained the programme's main focus on (i) improving ocean governance; (ii) Curbing biodiversity loss; (iii) Combating marine pollution; and raising

stakeholders' awareness and increasing the visibility and profile of the Abidjan Convention. Marine pollution due to plastic waste is a real scourge which can lead to ecological disaster.

It is estimated at global level that between 5 to 13 million tons of plastic enter the marine environment each year. Hence, there could be more plastics than fish in the oceans by 2050, the participants opined.



Delegates during the launch of the ACP MEAs 3 Project by Abidjan Convention in Côte d'Ivoire, March 2021

The European Union Ambassador in Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Jobst Von Kirchmann expressed his enthusiasm for the ACP MEAs 3 project which falls under his transformative agenda to encourage integrated policies support environment protection for Côte d'Ivoire and other neighboring countries to move towards blue economy. He also stated that, "the European Union will intensify its engagement with partners across the world to support economies and societies in transition... Côte d'Ivoire, host country of this workshop and venue for the Abidjan Convention, is a very good example of the importance of these priorities".

On his part, the Ivorian Minister of Maritime Affairs, Mr. Philippe Legre, informed the participants that through Abidjan Convention's technical assistance, Côte d'Ivoire has now disposes its first Marine Protected Area (MPA) and is also about to create another MPA in Sassandra a coastal town of Côte d'Ivoire. To gather national political support for the implementation of the ACP MEAs project, Mr. Philippe informed that his ministry will work in harmony with other sister ministries and all relevant departments within the framework of government solidarity to smoothen the implementation of the project in order to highlight and enhance the economic potential of Ivorians coasts.

Please contact Ms. Venessa Ahouadjiro, Abidjan Convention Secretariat for more information

Effective Communication of the ACP MEAs 3 to wider Audiences

Communication is a key component of the ACP MEAs project to raise awareness, increase political buy in, and change of behaviour of the public towards sustainable environmental management guided by its Communication and Visibility Plan.

Information dissemination channels for the project include the ACP MEAs 3 Digest launched in February 2021 as a monthly news Digest that provides a collation of key information related to MEAs, environmental governance, sustainable development and South-South Cooperation.

The ACP MEAs twitter handle @MeasAcp was also launched in January 2021 and to date, it is the key communication tool for the project. Since its launch on 6th January, it has received 39,000 impressions over a period of 84 days.

Other communication channels the project include the ACP MEAs YouTube channel and website (www.acpmeas.com) which has been scheduled for branding works so as to provide more data, information, share success stories and testimonials as achievements for the ACP MEAs programme at national, regional, and global levels.

Please contact Mr. Ladu Lemi, United Nations Environment Programme for more information.

Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda -
Belize - Cabo Verde - **Comoros**
- Bahamas - Barbados - Benin - Botswana
- **Burkina Faso** - Burundi - Cameroon - Central African Republic - Chad - Congo - Democratic Republic of the Congo - Cook Islands - Cote d'Ivoire - **Cuba** - Djibouti
- Dominica - **Dominican Republic** - Eritrea - Ethiopia - Fiji
- Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Grenada - Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Equatorial Guinea - **Guyana** - Haiti - Jamaica - Kenya - **Kiribati**
- Lesotho - Liberia - Madagascar - Malawi - Mali - Marshall Islands
- Mauritania - Mauritius - Micronesia - Mozambique - Namibia - Nauru - **Niger** - Nigeria - Niue - Palau - **Papua New Guinea**
- Rwanda - Saint Kitts and Nevis - Saint Lucia - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - **Solomon Islands** - Samoa - Sao Tome and Principe - Senegal - Seychelles - **Sierra Leone** - Somalia - South Africa - Sudan - Suriname - Swaziland
- United Republic of Tanzania - Timor-Leste - Togo - Tonga - **Trinidad and Tobago**
- Tuvalu - Uganda - Vanuatu - Zambia - Zimbabwe

Design and layout: Ladu Lemi, IUNV-UNEP

The ACP MEAs 3 Project Team

The ACP MEAs 3 project team:

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List of Up Coming Events

1. Abidjan Meeting of Focal Points 1st April 2021
2. Special Webinar on synthetic biology 28th April 2021
3. Third Clean Pacific Roundtable (TBC)
4. International Day for Biological Diversity, 22nd May 2021
5. Regional preparatory meetings for the COP BRS (BC COP-15, RC COP-10, SC COP-10), TBC
6. Launch of ACP MEAs Policy Note on "A New Green Deal" 15th June 2021
7. Joint Caribbean and Pacific meeting in preparing for the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Dates – tbc)

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The ACP MEAs is a joint EU-UNEP-FAO-OACPS partnership project. This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or official opinion of the European Commission, UNEP or contributory organizations.