

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ACP MEAS 3 PROGRAMME

FUNDED BY THE
EUROPEAN UNION
&
MANAGED BY THE UNITED
NATIONS ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAMME



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SOME SNIPPETS

The ACP MEAs is an EC-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 last quarter include:

- Mainstreaming the Programme across UNEP programmes including the 2022-2025 MTS;
- Supporting national and regional preparations for CBD's OWG-3.1 meeting on GBF;
- Aligning the Programme with the outcomes of key regional Ministerial fora such as AMCEN, FEMLAC and the European Green Deal;
- Drafting strategies to support effective implementation of global frameworks such as SAMOA Pathway, Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda;
- Rolling out of youth mentorship programme;
- Briefing session for the Africa Network of Environmental Journalists on key issues related to the implementation of chemicals and wastes MEAs and plans for the 2021 and 2022 BRS COPs.
- Organization of an inter-regional meeting for youth to seek input to the draft global biodiversity framework (GBF) to be adoption at the 2022 COP15 meeting.

Global Environmental Governance Perspective

Positioning the ACP MEAs 3 Programme



**Capacity Building related to Multilateral
Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in
African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)
countries**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is proud to be working with the European Union, the Organization of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific States (OACPS) Secretariat and a number of partners in implementing the above Programme since 2009 in support of strengthening environmental governance in various ways and forms.

This uncommon programme that supports 79 Member States of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions to effectively implement a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) is currently evolving into a strategic programme that is supporting actions related to not only compliance to MEAs and their implementation but as a key programme supporting South-South and South-North-South cooperation as well.

The following are key actions during the past several months that are intended to position the ACP MEAs 3 Programme as a strategic link between UNEP, Member States of the ACP regions, MEA secretariats, civil society organizations, academic and the business sector.

- Enhancing cooperation between the regional hubs of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme, viz. the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat (Caribbean region), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) (Pacific region), the African Union Commission (AUC) (Africa region) as well as the Secretariats of the biodiversity MEAs and chemicals, waste and pollution MEAs through exchange of knowledge, information and collaboration;
- Strengthening cooperation between the Regional Seas Conventions covered under the Programme;
- Development of strategies on issues such as strengthening gender equity and equality, youth empowerment, participation of indigenous people and local communities and business sector engagement to enhance the reach and impact of the Programme;
- Collaborations with stakeholder groups such as the Parliamentarians, scientists and researchers, media professionals and journalists to increase their awareness on key environmental governance issues relevant to the Programme;
- Development of linkages between the Programme and implementation of actions related to outcomes of key regional Ministerial fora, such as AMCEN, FEMLAC and others as well as relevant priorities such as the European Green Deal and Circular Economy (as relevant to the priorities of the regions);
- Drafting strategies to support effective implementation of global frameworks related to the mandate of the Programme such as those related to SAMOA Pathway, Buenos Aires Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation, the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Enhancing the skills of negotiators and national focal points of MEAs to effectively participate in a number of multilateral processes;
- Development of a strategic plan to support strengthening the Programme partners to effectively use new knowledge and technologies, including on use of digital technologies; and
- Mainstreaming the ACP MEAs 3

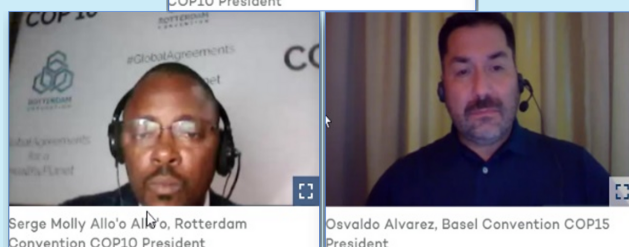
Programme across a number of relevant programmes of UNEP, including linking with the implementation of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) for the period 2022-2025.

The overall aim of above interventions is to ensure the ACP MEAs 3 programme reaches beyond focusing on a set of actions on the ground in response to issues of MEAs and environmental governance but to position the programme setting the agenda.

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Resilience in the Face of Global Pandemic: Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions and the Triple COPs



Presidents for BRS 2021 Triple COPs. Photo Credit: IISD-Earth Negotiations Bulletin

The most recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown that global issues require far-reaching measures from multilateralism to adapt and eventually overcome challenges. The Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (BRS) has confirmed through the past one-and-a-half-years that there is a strong commitment to adapt to new challenges. Parties, stakeholders and the Secretariat have made considerable efforts to maintain momentum despite the extraordinary circumstances posed by the pandemic and have done so in full

compliance with the rules governing the conventions and their bodies.

In July 2021 for instance, the first-ever online segment of meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the BRS conventions was successfully convened and Parties took essential decisions aimed at continuing the work of the conventions. This includes the adoption of an interim budget for 2022; the first-ever elections of the members of the Compliance Committee of the Rotterdam Convention; the election of the members to the effectiveness evaluation committee of the Stockholm Convention and the decision to provide guidance to the financial mechanism of the Stockholm Convention, the Global Environment Facility, given ongoing negotiations for its eighth replenishment.

From 20 to 24 September 2021, the [seventeenth meeting of the Chemical Review Committee](#) (CRC17) of the Rotterdam Convention was also held entirely online. CRC17 recommended trade control measures for two hazardous pesticides: Terbufos and Iprodione.

The standing subsidiary bodies of the Basel Convention and a range of expert and small intersessional working groups have also advanced their work through online meetings in 2020 and 2021. Looking forward, the supplementary sessions of the [fourth meeting of the expert working group](#) (EWG) on the review of Annexes to the Basel Convention will take place online from 11 to 15 October 2021 at a time when the EWG will continue its work on the review of Annexes I (categories of waste to be controlled) and III (list of hazardous characteristics) for consideration by the next Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention.

Furthermore, the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention had its sixteenth meeting online from 11 to 16 January 2021. The seventeenth meeting that will take place in January 2022

will, among others, continue the process for recommending the listing of chemicals in Annexes A, B and/or C of the Stockholm Convention.

Despite that, BRS Secretariat has witnessed challenges especially when the conferences of the Parties have to adopt decisions which may have far reaching policy or legal implications. Virtual settings are not yet equipped to allow a similar level and variety of communication channels as face-to-face interactions. This not only impacts substantive discussions, but also the art of negotiating and such failings can impact good governance if not adequately addressed. Some of the failings are beyond BRS reach, but for those that are within its reach the Secretariat remains committed to learning and improving its work in times of crisis.

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Ministerial Resolution on Biodiversity by Member States of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific

The ACP MEAs 3 programme is pleased to note the adoption of a ministerial resolution focusing on issues of biodiversity, including support to the ongoing negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to decide on the post 2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) during the fifteenth Conference of Parties to the CBD in 2022 during July 2021.

The significant feature of this resolution is that this is the first time the Council of Ministers of the Organization of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific States (OACPS) adopted a resolution on biodiversity covering the 79 countries in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions.

The ACP MEAs 3 programme secretariat at UNEP worked closely with the OACPS Secretariat in preparing for the adoption of the

resolution including through a briefing session on key biodiversity issues for the OACPS Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in May 2021.

The key elements of the resolution include:

- Redoubling efforts for effective conservation and management of coastal and marine biodiversity of the Member States, including contributing to SDG 14;
- Call for substantive financial allocations for biodiversity action and their subsequent use by strengthening national institutions;
- Call for prioritization of actions in support of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including development of a capacity development roadmap for SIDS and support for achieving the post 2020 GBF;
- Support to establishment of regional hubs in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions to focus on issues of capacity building, knowledge management, technology transfer and the related;
- Request for the OACPS Secretariat to develop a plan in support of the Member States to effectively implement the post 2020 GBF, with focus on mainstreaming biodiversity into climate change, enhancing the role of youth and women, indigenous people and local communities in implement such plan;
- Calls for linking actions with global frameworks and action plans such as those of SAMOA Pathway, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the related; and
- Suggests the use of the resolution and existing cooperation between OACPS and the European Union to be further strengthened.

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Youth Voices on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework



ACP MEAs 3 Programme Youth Voices webinar August 2021

On 20th August 2021, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP MEAs) programme, organized an inter-regional meeting for youth focusing on seeking inputs to the draft global biodiversity framework (GBF) that is being considered for adoption at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties meeting in 2022 (CBD COP 15).

The event was jointly organized with GRULAC Junior, IUCN CEC, Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN), Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) among others. This entailed the participation of over 150 youth from various environmental networks in countries across Africa, Europe, Caribbean, Latin America regions, China as well as other regions. Prior to the meeting, the youth were advised to read the draft post 2020 biodiversity framework, report to familiarize themselves with the key items of the framework. The key speakers for the event include representative of the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity, European Union delegate and Finnish national youth delegate. UNEP Head of Biodiversity Programme made a presentation on the draft GBF and an overview on the work done by GYBN on the development of the GBF.

The sessions focused on the draft GBF, its implementation plan and priority areas for youth participation. During the discussions, the youth representatives provided comments and

suggestions to be incorporated into the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The key messages from the discussion include:

- The need for youth engagement not for merely providing comments on the draft GBF but also future negotiations and subsequent implementation;
- The importance to focus on issues such as transformative education, human rights and conservation, gender responsive implementation, effective communication, capacity building and behavioral change as core areas for successful design and implementation of the GBF;
- The need for transparency in negotiations, decision making, predictability in national actions and a follow up mechanism on commitments made;
- Refining the focus on issues linked to ecology-employment-empowerment;
- Revisiting the current targets in terms of their potential for realization, given the kind of finances needed to achieve the targets;
- Inclusive approaches targeting youth for enhancing their understanding, participation and implementation of the GBF; and
- The need for putting youth-led implementation at the core of implementation and capacity building plans.



Partners

In order to take youth pressing issues discussed during the event to the higher levels, a comprehensive youth voices discussions report is being developed and is expected to be shared relevant units of the CBD Secretariat for inclusion into the GBF process.

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Building the way towards the elimination of Mercury Added Products



Guide and Checklist for Phasing Out Mercury-added Products Under the Minamata Convention on Mercury



A guide and checklist for phasing out mercury added products developed by EEB

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

EEB/ZMWG is assisting ACP countries with the mercury reduction. In the Caribbean, the organization has established contact with BCRC Caribbean for information and guidance on the region's situations. It further provided the CARICOM Secretariat with feedback on the importance of planning for the environmentally sound disposal of collected mercury-added product discards while commenting on the Training Action Plan drafted by CARICOM's consultant in May. At the national level, several bilateral discussions have been held with national focal points and government representatives of different Caribbean countries to explore possible collaborations leading to

phasing out mercury added products as required by Article 4 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis have expressed interest for the EEB/ZMWG's support.

While discussions are ongoing with Antigua and Barbuda towards a collaboration, memorandum of understandings were signed between St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and the EEB and work was organized in the two countries, with an inception meeting with the National Mercury Working Group of Trinidad and Tobago that was held on the 23 September. Preparations are also ongoing for the recruitment of a consultant to undertake a study on the market capacity to transition to Convention compliant or mercury free products, in the three islands. A call of proposal for NGOs in the Caribbean was also published in May. However, given the lack of time and capacity from NGOs in the Caribbean region to respond, the call has been extended toward the end of September.

In Africa, the EEB/ZMWG is building upon existing work, to contribute to the adoption and the enforcement of laws and regulations, in line with the Article 4 of the Minamata Convention. To this end, a collaboration agreement has been signed with the Center for Environmental Justice and Development (CEJAD) in Kenya focusing on the enforcement work on ferreting out illegal mercury-added skin lightening products. A call for proposal from NGOs in Africa was published in May in view of carrying out work to reduce mercury in ASGM and the proposal evaluation process to select most relevant projects is ongoing. Some discussions are also ongoing to clarify the scope of work in Nigeria.

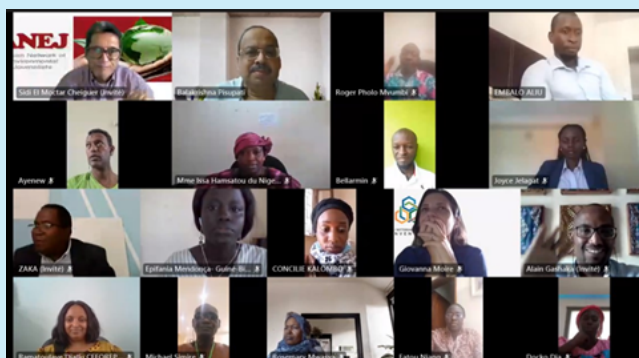
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Focus on African Region

Equipping Environmental Journalists with the Knowledge and Skills to Cover Critical Environmental Governance Issues in Africa



Participants during the UNEP-ANEJ Virtual Briefing Session on 6th July 2021

Humanity is facing one of the greatest challenges of our time, due to environmental crises, largely caused by human activities. The Triple Planetary Crisis, of climate, nature, and pollution is exacting heavy losses on individuals, communities, and economies which is threatening all forms of life on our planet. We urgently require simplified knowledge that can help make sense of the environmental challenges to halt and reverse the damage we have done to our natural world.

Media organizations and journalists play a pivotal role in this regard by shaping society's attitudes towards the environment through advocacy, awareness, and spreading the most effective solutions for the human dimension of environmental change and the inspirations for a sustainable future.

On 6th July 2021, the ACP MEAs Programme, in collaboration with the Africa Network of Environmental Journalists (ANEJ) organized a virtual capacity building and awareness-raising briefing session for environmental journalists in Africa on issues of environmental governance, focusing on chemicals and waste management and related MEAs (BRS) for the safe and better management of the environment, while promoting knowledge sharing.

The briefing brought together ninety-three participants from 48 African countries, along with the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Congo Basin from Democratic Republic of Congo, Her Excellency Ms. Arlette Soudan-Nonault and other senior government officials from Mauritania. During the session, participants were briefed on key issues related to chemicals and wastes, the implementation of MEAs related to chemicals and waste (the Basel, Rotterdam and Minamata conventions), and plans for the 2021 and 2022 BRS COP.

In her opening remarks, Minister, Ms. Arlette Soudan-Nonault, stressed on the link between human health and the environment, the damages to the continent's environment caused by the mismanagement of hazardous chemicals and wastes, loss of biodiversity, and climate change threats. She also acknowledged the unprecedented destruction of the ecological systems whose existence conditions life on earth and called for international solidarity and cooperation for the management of chemicals and hazardous waste. Minister Soudan urged the participants to fulfill their civic duties as journalists by raising public awareness on the sound management of chemicals and waste to address urgent planetary challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and gross inequalities affecting human rights and social justice.

Addressing the session, Mrs. Menesia Muinjo, ANEJ Vice-President reaffirmed ANEJ's commitment in tackling some of the challenges plaguing our planet posing a real threat to biodiversity and the world's population. "Being aware of the chemicals and waste state of affairs, we, the journalists from the continent, are affirming our contribution towards this fight. We do this through our roles – of informing, educating, and enlightening citizens and being whistle-blowers", she said.

Capacity building including awareness briefing sessions on key environmental issues is critical to keep journalists abreast of emerging environmental issues, especially when it comes

to the follow-up of the rounds of COPs negotiations. For instance, in February 2020, the ACP MEAs 3 Programme sponsored three ANEJ members to participate in the Convention on Biodiversity Second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in Rome-Italy. Reports and interviews from that Convention were transmitted to several in African countries.

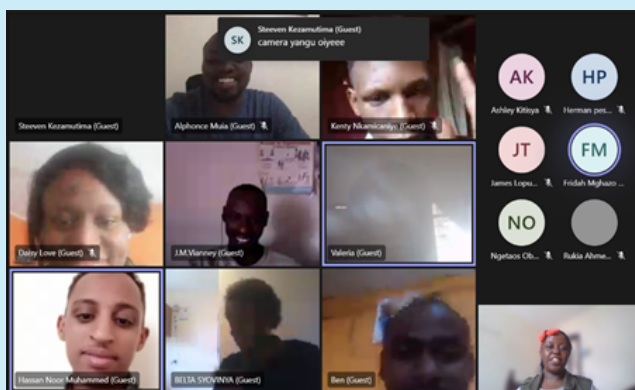
The ACP MEAs 3 Programme will continue to engage with ANEJ and other such networks in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific to further strengthen capacities of media and journalists to empower them to be change-makers who will facilitate the dissemination of key environmental messages to the common people at the forefront of the current environmental crisis.

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Youth Mentorship under the ACP MEAs Youth Empowerment and Training Initiative

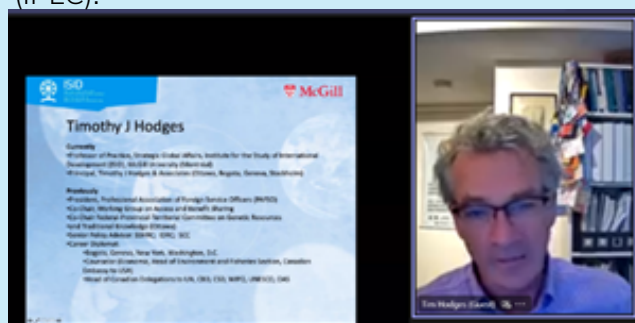


Youth participants during mentorship session, August 2021

Young people are central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as indicated in the United Nations' Youth Strategy 2030. Investing in youth through creation of opportunities for intergenerational collaboration and accelerating human development is critical. In response, the ACP MEAs 3 Programme launched a Youth Empowerment and Training Initiative (YETI), to engage with youth on key

issues such as mentoring, capacity building and providing them with an opportunity to be the influencers of change. The initiative aims to empower and train youth on issues of environmental conservation and development and to capacitate them the skills to provide inputs to the post 2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF).

The first batch of the Youth Empowerment Training Initiative has been rolled out in the Africa region. Prior to commencement of YETI, youth from existing environmental networks, embarked on online InforMEA courses on Biodiversity Convention, Environmental Governance as well as Environment and Human Rights. After the completion of the InforMEA courses, the youth engaged in YETI Mentorship programme where they are paired with renowned experts as mentors on Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building and Stakeholders Engagement on media and indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLC).



Timothy J. Hodges, Youth Biodiversity Mentor

In August, the first batch of 34 youth mentees from 7 countries including Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania started the mentorship programme. Other batches will be rolled out in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

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Focus on the Caribbean Region

Governments in the Wider Caribbean renewed their commitment to protecting the Caribbean Sea

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat recently convened its biennial Conferences of Parties during which the Work Plan and Budget of the Secretariat and priorities for 2021-2022 period were discussed and approved by Contracting Parties.

The week-long meetings, which were held virtually for the first time due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, commenced with the 5th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (5th LBS COP) on 26th July 2021, followed by the 11th COP to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) on 27th July 2021.



The 11th SPAW COP Cartagena Convention on 27th July 2021

The 19th Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention was held from 28th to 30th July 2021, with the participation of over 100 delegates from Contracting Parties, observer countries, regional and international partners and agencies. These

meetings were chaired by the Government of Barbados, with several Ministers of Government from Contracting Parties delivering remarks during the opening ceremony of each meeting.

Discussions during the COPs focused on several global issues and the relevant actions being taken to address them at the regional level. At the 5th LBS COP, delegates discussed the impacts of nutrient pollution on the marine and coastal environment which culminated in the adoption of the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan. This Strategy presents a framework for reducing the impacts from excess nutrient loads on priority marine ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean, by defining regional standards and criteria for nutrient discharges into the marine environment. (Link to the Strategy:

<http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41INF.10Rev.1-en.pdf>. During the 11th SPAW COP, Contracting Parties adopted a Decision to actively participate and support the Secretariat in the implementation of activities under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

The 2021-2022 Work Plan and Budget of the Caribbean Environment Programme was approved during the 19th IGM/16th COP, with Contracting Parties noting the “urgent call for marine and coastal issues to be duly included and incorporated into the new post-2020 global framework for biodiversity, which is currently being negotiated”. Global collaboration was also an important issue for Contracting Parties where the Cartagena Convention Secretariat was requested to enhance synergies with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans, and the international global agenda as appropriate, by collaborating on topics of interest to the Wider Caribbean.

A full summary of the opening ceremony for each meeting is accessible through the following links:

- 5th LBS COP:
<https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/fifth-meeting-contracting-parties-protocol-concerning-pollution-land-based-sources>
- 11th SPAW COP:
<https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/eleventh-meeting-contracting-parties-cop-protocol-concerning-specially-protected>
- 19th IGM/16th COP:
<https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/summary-19th-igm-opening-ceremony>

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Focus on the Pacific Region

The Sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention

A meeting of the Sixteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment in the South Pacific, known as the Noumea Convention, was officially convened on 2nd of September 2021, with Parties and Observers joining virtually.



Senior SPREP Official during the 16th COP Noumea Convention

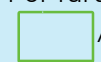
The Noumea Convention which entered into force in 1990, is a comprehensive umbrella agreement for the protection, management, and development of the marine and coastal environment of the Pacific region. It is the legal framework to ensure that environmental management and sustainable development of natural resources are implemented throughout the Pacific. There are twelve Parties to the Noumea Convention: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and United States of America with SPREP as the Secretariat for the Convention.

Since the last COP meeting in 2019, the Secretariat managed to carry out some of the key activities to support the Parties' capacity to implement their obligations under the Noumea Convention, despite the challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in border closures across the Pacific. Some of the key activities that were carried out during the lockdowns since the COP meeting in 2019:

- The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasizing the support to address marine litter and plastic pollution through the implementation of the Pacific Regional Marine Litter Action Plan 2018 – 2025.
- The programme on capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries is in its third phase which commenced fully this year. The most unique feature of this Programme is that it now covers the capacity building and support to Parties to implement their obligations under the Noumea Convention.
- The Secretariat established an oil spill response agreement with the Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) for all Pacific Island Countries and Territories, including Parties to the Noumea Convention, with funding support by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and technical sponsorship from Maritime New Zealand.

Moreover, during the 2019 COP meeting, challenges were identified under the current legal framework of the Noumea Convention. To address these, the COP meeting called for the review of the Noumea Convention. Through the virtual COP meeting this year, it was an opportunity to take a closer look at how the post-review Noumea Convention can be transitioned to respond to the imminent environmental challenges we currently face. The 16th COP also gave the opportunity for the ACP/MEA 3 programme Coordination team to coordinate and facilitate the Secretariat's work for the Noumea Convention on behalf of SPREP as an organization.

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Pacific Environment Ministers and High-Level Representatives Declare Actions on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution

On 10th of September 2021, Pacific Environment Ministers and High-Level Representatives gathered virtually to participate in a “Talanoa” (dialogue) to discuss some of the pertinent key priority issues bearing direct impact on responsive and pragmatic actions for a resilient Blue Pacific.



Artwork on display at the CMS COP12. Credit-SPREP

The focus of the Talanoa was conducted through three focus panels with Ocean being the overarching theme: Ocean and Climate Change; Ocean and Pollution; and Ocean and Deep-Sea Mining. The Honorable Ministers and High-Level Representatives reaffirmed that the Pacific Ocean is the lifeblood of society in the Pacific, and that climate change, marine litter and plastic pollution are the greatest threats that are causing unprecedented environmental, social, cultural, economic, human health and food security impacts, affecting the Blue Pacific Vision. They encouraged all Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to ensure that the 26th Conference of the Parties which will be held in October this year recognize and advance the work on Oceans in the UNFCCC by recognizing its centrality to the Blue Pacific Continent.

Given the transboundary nature of marine litter, the Ministers and High-Level Representatives urged all United Nations Member States at UNEA 5 to support the establishment of an intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to negotiate a new binding global agreement on marine plastic pollution. Further to the call for a new agreement, the meeting also stressed on the importance of incorporating Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems, practices and innovations that have evolved through generations into nature-based solutions as an integral part of the plastic pollution crisis management.

The Ministers and High-Level Representatives also urged the Pacific rim to implement relevant measures to prevent and effectively manage marine pollution and marine litter in accordance with international law. The issue on Deep-Sea Mining was discussed in 2019 but noted there has been a significant shift towards seabed mining for economic reasons. Although, they recognized deep-sea minerals offer potential economic benefits, the ecology of the deep-sea environment and deep-sea mining's adverse effects are poorly understood and recognized the importance of cooperation between

members and Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), to provide scientific expert advice on seabed mining, deep sea ecology and oceanography.

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The Eleventh Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention

The Waigani Convention is concerned with banning importation into Forum Island countries of hazardous and radioactive wastes, and to control the transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes within the South Pacific Region.



Delegates at the 11th COP Waigani Convention-SPREP

The Convention was adopted in Waigani, Papua New Guinea in September 1995 and entered into force in 2001. There are thirteen Parties to the Convention: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

On 3rd of September 2021, the Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention was officially convened with Parties and Observers joining virtually. The meeting highlighted the ongoing support provided by the Secretariat to its Parties during these extraordinarily challenging times of the global pandemic and urged all Parties to remain vigilant

on the impacts of chemicals and hazardous wastes on human lives as well as on the environment. The Secretariat continues to work with Parties and participating countries through the ongoing Pacific Waste Management Programme (PacWastePlus) funded by the European Union. Further, the Secretariat received funding application for the GEF7 funding cycle to secure a US \$20 million Island Pacific Child project that will be helping members with their challenges on chemicals and hazardous waste.

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The Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) meeting

In preparation for the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) meeting on the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Pacific regional preparatory meeting was carried out from 17-18 August 2021 through a virtual platform. More than 25 participants from Pacific focal points of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and resource people from SPREP Programmes, and a small set of regional partner organizations and NGOs involved in CBD negotiations participated in the meeting.

Countries that attended at least one part of the preparatory meeting were Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau, Solomon Islands and Samoa. The resource people and presenters included Chair of the OEWG, WWF, SPC-Climate Change and Biodiversity, Climate Analytics, and SPREP Programmes.

During the workshop, six of the 21 Targets of the GBF were selected by the participants for discussion as follows:

- Target 3 (protected areas including 30 by 30)

- Target 5 (sustainable harvest of wildlife, including fisheries)
- Target 6 (invasive alien species)
- Target 7 (pollution, including plastics)
- Target 8 (climate change, including 10 GtCO₂e per year contributed to mitigation)
- Target 10 (sustainable agriculture and aquaculture and forestry)

The ACP MEAs 3 programme being executed by SPREP with UNEP supported the organization of the workshop through its regional component on strengthening capacities for relevant COPs meetings.

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Convening the 30th SPREP Meetings of Officials



Delegates during the 30th SPREP Meetings of Officials

“Accelerating Actions for a Resilient Blue Pacific” is the theme that the 30th Meeting of Officials of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme convened from 7-9 September 2021. The meeting was hosted by SPREP via virtual platform that brought together 21 Pacific Islands and 5 Metropolitan Member countries to discuss strategic programmes and governance issues pertaining to the organization, as well as to approve the 2022-2023 work programme and budget.

In accordance with SPREP Meeting procedures, Tokelau was elected as the new Chair and Kiribati as the Vice Chair. In this meeting, leaders of the SPREP member countries reaffirmed that as “climate change is the single greatest threat facing the Blue Pacific, this meant a recommitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement and called for a bold decisive and transformative action to address the challenges of climate change under the Kainaki II Declaration”.

A comprehensive overview of the work of the Secretariat during 2020 was presented by the Director General, which outlined many challenges that disrupted its normal work. Thus, the impact on budget with regard to delivery of project activities and programmes, as well as members, partners, and communities. On the other hand, the pandemic provided the opportunity for the organization to recognize the importance of enhancing communications and the use of technology for virtual delivery and consider innovative ways to engage with member countries. SPREP’s four programme areas, Climate Change and Resilience, Environmental and Monitoring Governance, Islands and Ocean Ecosystem, and Waste Management and Pollution Control carried out webinars as part of the “Transitioning to a Post-Pandemic Pacific” webinar series.

Key reports that were presented and discussed included:

- Securing climate financing to build resilience to climate change in the Pacific region.
- Enhancing management of disaster waste resilience
- Development of a “Mercury Free Pacific Campaign”.
- Strengthening the Waste Management of Hazardous Waste in the region.
- Sustainable Financing Mechanisms for Waste Management.

Three key documents developed by the Secretariat were endorsed by SPREP member countries, which include:

1. Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021-2025;
2. Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan;
3. State of the Environment and Conservation Report.

In his closing remarks for the meeting, Mr. Kosi Latu whose role will end on 3rd of April 2022 addressed the SPREP meeting for the last time as the Director General of the Secretariat. Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra will officially commence from 4th April 2022 as the new Director General of SPREP.

For further information, please contact Ms.



Anastacia Amoa-Stowers at
anastacias@sprep.org

Launching INFORM E-Learning Platform in the Pacific

E-Learning is one of the latest innovations that facilitate online delivery of knowledge to Member States in various parts of the Pacific region and beyond to have reliable access to national datasets for environmental information, as well as process and guide for information use standards. The INFORM Project of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) officially launched the Pacific INFORM e-learning platform. This tool is designed for the management of environmental data and the application of indicator reporting tools and adds to the growing catalogue of SPREP e-learning resources. The official launch of this e-learning platform was carried out through a webinar where the INFORM team introduced the modules or courses developed to support enhanced environmental data access and use for decision making and reporting by SPREP members.

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SPREP Officials during the launching of Inform e-learning platform-SPREP

The e-learning platform has 2 available units: 1) Environment Data Management; and 2) Environment Reporting (Indicator Reporting Tool). More modules will be developed and rolled out to complement the 2 existing modules.

The INFORM Project is a 4-year project (2017-2022) funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by UN Environment. It is executed by SPREP in the 14 Pacific Island countries of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

More information on the webinar series “Our Pacific Environment in a COVID-19 World” on <https://www.sprep.org/webinars>.

For further information, please contact Ms.



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Forthcoming Events

- FAO 49th Session of The Committee on World Food Security – 11th- 15th October 2021 (Contact Tempelman, KimAnh at KimAnh.Tempelman@fao.org).
- Ministerial consultation/forum to increase political will for the adoption of existing legislation on biosafety and other MEAs - October 2021 (Contact Teshia Jn Baptiste at teshia.jnbaptiste@caricom.org).
- Regional Pre-COP workshop and post-COP technical support to Caribbean ACP Countries – October 2021 (Contact Teshia Jn Baptiste at teshia.jnbaptiste@caricom.org).
- Abidjan Convention Bureau Meeting – October 2021 (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at abdoulaye.diagana@un.org).
- Abidjan Convention Focal Points meeting to take ownership of the ACP MEAs III program and define criteria for the selection of implementing countries-November 2021 (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at abdoulaye.diagana@un.org).
- ACP MEAs 3, CBD Secretariat Dialogue series of Synthetic Biology - 10 November 2021; 10 December 2021 and 6 January 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org).
- Webinar on "Outcomes of ACP MEAs 3 YETI Youth Mentorship Programme in support of post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework" November 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org).
- Dialogue series on "Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Science Policy Practice" - November, December 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org).
- Call for applications for the implementation of the ACP MEAs III program in the Abidjan Convention area- December 2021 (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at abdoulaye.diagana@un.org).

The ACP MEAs 3 Programme Team

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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

The Programme ACP Countries

Design and layout: Ladu Lemi, IUNV-UNEP

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 the contributing organizations.