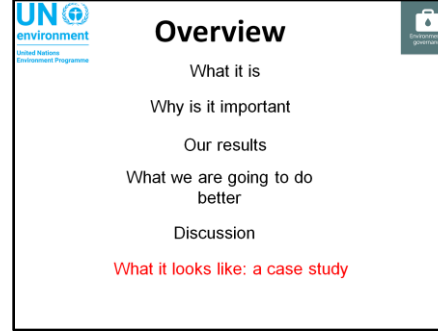




We need to focus on better environmental governance for a
healthier planet and people



We focus on three main areas:

A. Promoting policy coherence and synergy of action. In this area, we foster a coordinated global response to environmental challenges. We will show in later slides what this means in practice.

B. Strengthening institutional capacities and legislation. To operationalize this global approach, countries need to take action in the policy and legal spheres and they need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and capacities to create and enforce their own rules and translate international commitments into reality. This is why we support institutional strengthening and improved regulatory frameworks.

C. Placing the environment at the core of development. Because environment is not necessarily the central concern of the development agenda, it is important to put in place mechanisms to ensure that this is the case. These include collaborative mechanisms and the mainstreaming of environmental priorities in development plans and policies and closer association of poverty and environmental objectives.



Environmental Governance, although not formally defined, can be described in simple terms as comprising the rules, practices, policies and institutions that shape how humans interact with the environment. Improving environmental governance means working on all these elements to achieve a smarter management of the environment, for the benefit of this and future generations.

These are very important elements because:

- The Policies set the direction, and so they need to be science-based and well informed, coherent, adequate to the issue at stake.
- Laws embed further this direction in the more compelling legal framework of a country. Adequate legislation can enable action by providing the incentive structures. Laws are enforceable and so they provide a strong backbone for change.
- The institutions and the practices that these follow are key to ensure that policy and laws work for the people. This is fundamental because ultimately it is the people and their activities, their business, their attitudes that make environmental change happen.

UN Environment works with countries to foster, encourage and enable a cohesive and coordinated global response to environmental threats and opportunities. How do we do that? Our approach is to promote such a cohesive response through the right mix of policy and legislation, and informed and empowered institutions. We ground these efforts in the rule of law, which is key for sustained and inclusive change.



Our long term vision, approved as part of our 2018-21 Medium Term Strategy, is aligned with Agenda 2030 and sets the direction for our efforts from now on. Further, UNEA continues to identify global priorities, such as illegal trade in wildlife, marine litter and air pollution, which further define our objectives. The Sustainable Development Goals and environmental conventions are also key in identifying the thematic priorities of our work (this shown by the vertical bars on the right). Further, internal policies on social safeguards, gender, and results based management shape how we go about delivering on these priorities.

This slide shows the current and future approved strategies and programmes of work which in turn lead to our long term goal that environmental issues are handled in an inclusive, sustainable and coherent manner, based on integrated policy and effective norms and institutions at all levels of governance (top green bar in this graph)

The current programme of work (blue bar in the graph) comprise three expected accomplishments, focusing on promoting policy coherence and leveraging synergies, especially at the international level; strengthening laws and institutions; and mainstreaming environment into development planning and decision-making. These reflect the outline of our approach presented in the previous slide.

UNEA 2 resolutions that are closely relevant to the Environmental Governance programme are:

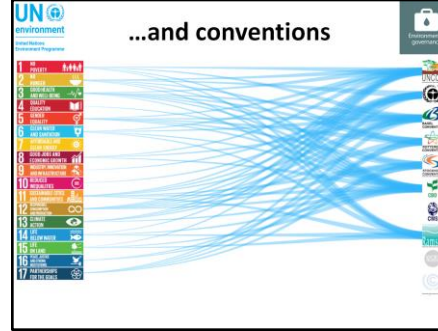
- 2/2 Role and functions of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities
- 2/4 Role, functions and modalities for UN Environment implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
- 2/5 Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 2/16 Mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being
- 2/17 Enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity- related conventions
- 2/19 Midterm review of the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environment Law (Montevideo Programme IV)
- 2/25 Application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

Further, we contribute to the implementation of resolutions 2/11 on Marine plastics and 2/14 on Illegal trade in wildlife.

The grey box outlined the project portfolio that we have in place to deliver on the programme of work. The projects are managed by diverse Divisions and regional offices across UN Environment. Currently we have 19 active projects, complemented by a smaller number of Global Environment Facility projects on biosafety, access and benefit sharing and illegal trade in wildlife.



Our environmental governance work contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its integrity, supporting its universal, indivisible and inclusive nature. However, some goals are particularly close to the objectives of this subprogramme, as shown in the diagram above which links individual goals to our project portfolio.



This slide shows how major global conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals are linked.

We take this into account when we design and implement our projects: we ensure that the priorities of the conventions and those expresses in the Sustainable Development Goals shape the focus of our work and we work in close collaboration with the convention secretariats.

In terms of concrete work that we do together, examples include:

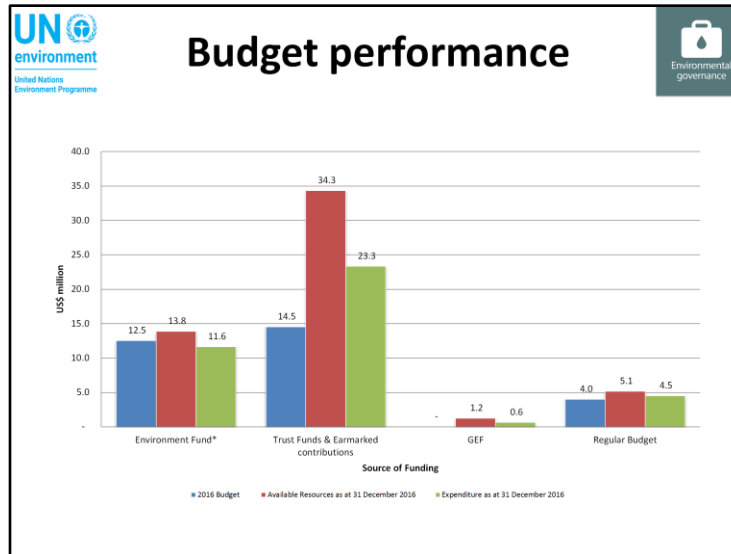
- the work we do with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on wildlife legislation;
- our capacity building support in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries for the implementation of conventions in the biodiversity and the chemicals and wastes clusters
- The support to countries to implementing multiple biodiversity-related conventions with integrated efforts;
- The Informea portal providing information on over 50 conventions (global and regional).

- our capacity building support in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries for the implementation of conventions in the biodiversity and the chemicals and wastes clusters

- The support to countries to implementing multiple biodiversity-related conventions with integrated efforts;

- The Informea portal providing information on over 50 conventions (global and regional).

These linkages also demonstrate how governance foundations support the achievement of long term results in all environment areas; in fact all UN Environment thematic programmes aim to embed change in policy and legal instruments or in different ways of handling and deciding on environmental matters.



Budget performance shows general alignment of planned budget, income and expenditures for the Environment Fund and the Regular Budget. On other hand, for trust funds and earmarked contributions there is a significantly higher amount generated as income than the planned budget, and lower level of expenditures as compared to this higher amount. This is largely due to the fact that the red bar includes multi year funding that became available in 2016.

While UN Environment has been able to deliver on most indicators, its ambition level especially in terms of promoting more in depth change and in terms of reaching a wider audience through its services requires a higher investment.



In a complex international context where a multitude of actors work on issues that affect the environment, UN Environment promotes coherence and synergy in the multilateral efforts to address environmental issues, for a more consistent and efficient approach. In particular, in this area we work with partners to ensure that international efforts to meet environmental obligations are efficient and effective, and that environmental policies are well aligned.

A. Coherence and synergy. In this area, we foster a coordinated global response to environmental challenges. What does this mean in practice?

- We help the United Nations to work together, or in a more coordinated way, to achieve common environmental goals: for example, the Environment Management Group works to align agencies work on specific topic, such as e-waste, and on more broadly delivering on the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals.
- We help the United Nations walk the talk, and so we support agencies to green their operations. We have 66 entities that participate in an emission reduction inventory. About half of them already have either an emission reduction or an environmental management system in place.
- We also help members states with the practical means to deliver on their multiple environmental commitments in a more streamlined and efficient way: understanding the overlaps and complexities of the Sustainable Development Goals and of other global environmental goals, helps countries prepare for more efficient implementation. Informea for instance, an information and knowledge initiative on environmental conventions, allows a national expert to identify common objectives and common tasks required across various conventions by using a simple search that relies on a common vocabulary cutting across over 50 conventions (www.informea.org).
- We help countries translate this enhanced understanding into concrete action, to more effectively and efficiently meet their commitments. For instance, we help countries make use of the correlations across different environmental agreements, as often efforts to promote environmental results under a given convention (say on biodiversity) can help achieve objectives in related conventions and also in other areas (e.g. adaptation). This is the case when we support countries in reviewing their biodiversity strategies, which are mandated by one convention alone, but can serve multiple conventions if used in a smart way.
- While not solely an environmental governance objective, we would like to see Environment Assembly make a difference within and beyond the United Nations, and we look for ways to ensure that its messages are integrated in other fora (e.g. the High Level Political Forum) and that the important linkages between governance levels and between governing bodies of various institutions (e.g. between convention governing bodies and Environment Assembly) are well established and utilized.



In 2016, better coherence in the handling of environmental issues has been observed, in line with the five indicators in the programme of work.

In 2016, we saw an increase in the number of (i) joint initiatives to handle environmental issues in a coordinated manner across the UN system and by multilateral environmental agreements, (ii) collaborative arrangements between UN Environment and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, environment increasingly embedded in (iii) actions to implement the 2030 Agenda and UN and country level, (iv) greening the operations of the entire UN system; and other (v) UN bodies taking up policy issues or approaches emerging from UN Environment policy advice.

Specific progress includes:

(i) UN system-wide framework on environmental strategies: Environmental sustainability peer reviews; Working group on resource-efficient growth: A Thematic Working Group on resource-efficient growth was established under the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism. Similar initiatives are taking place in other regions. More details are provided in the programme performance report.

(ii) Strategic collaboration on Wetlands and climate law and national synergies on biodiversity.

(iii) A Common approach to the Sustainable Development Goals was reflected in the UN Development Group's guidance document on Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Reference Guide to UN Country Teams. Three countries, Azerbaijan, Mongolia and Myanmar took action to address the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated way that strongly embeds environment.

(iv) Three UN entities have adopted new environmental strategies and two have had their environmental management system certified based on international standards.

(v) Two UN bodies reflected UN Environment policy advice and approaches, with a Human Rights Council Resolution (31/L.10 on Human Rights and Environment) encourages states to "adopt an effective normative framework for the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment" and a UN General Assembly Resolution (71/19) on Cooperation between the United Nations and INTERPOL calling for strengthened cooperation in combating transnational crime, including crimes that affect the environment, such as illicit trafficking in wildlife.

Beyond the UN system, the concept of environmental rule of law was embedded in the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development, adopted by the 35 members of the Organization of American States and a resolution by the European Parliament on the European Union Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking refers to UN environment's work on crimes with impact on the environment.



Several UNEA 2 resolutions relate directly to our first area of work on the first expected accomplishment.

2/5 - Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Member states envision a role for UN Environment in coordinating the implementation and supporting the follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of the 2030 agenda. This includes the key role for UNEA in conveying its messages to the High Level Political Forum and fostering a more coordinated, coherent and integrated delivery within the UN system, including at country level. Many developments are ongoing in this direction in the context of interagency mechanisms including the Environment Management Group, with the system wide framework of strategies now in its implementation phase, guidance documents for the UN system on Sustainable Development Goals that integrate the environment fully, and a host of regional and national efforts leading to integration of the various dimensions of the agenda. The Resolution also calls for the enhancement of institutional and human capacities and of policy and legal frameworks. Progress on this is reported in the previous slide.

CHALLENGE /OPPORTUNITY: UN Environment is setting the stage for broader support for the coherent implementation of SDGs and for linking that to the implementation of other global environmental goals. While we have had good results in a few countries, we would like to replicate these results in other countries.

2/17 – Enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.

Besides enhanced collaboration with and among the secretariats of the relevant conventions, work is ongoing and has already matured results in supporting countries in achieving national synergies through integrating the goals of all biodiversity conventions into one unique implementation plan mandated by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Further details are provided in a dedicated report on implementation of UNEA resolutions.



Translating global commitments into action requires knowledge and understanding, clear guidance, legislative efforts, and implementation capacities. We support efforts across the board, from the development of legislation to its implementation. This includes studies to identify trends and gaps, technical assistance for the review and development of national legislation, training programmes, guidelines, and collaboration platforms to strengthen enforcement.

International or other guidance instruments are an important driver for national action, and so we continue promoting the progressive development of environmental law, looking for instance at the legal aspects of emerging environmental issues (e.g. legal aspects of lead in paint or marine litter) and producing guidance documents to support legislative efforts on these issues (e.g. on climate law). We then support countries meet specific commitments, for instance, in 2016 we have worked with selected countries to review their national wildlife legislation with a view to helping them comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Through training programme and South-south collaboration initiatives we help countries share experiences and learn from each other, such as in the case of the Antigua and Barbuda plastic ban, which we will present as a specific case study.

Through our support countries have undertaken institutional and legal measures and they have undertaken initiative to strengthen enforcement and compliance. The specific national level results are shown in the map in slide 17 and they are detailed in the progress performance report text.

In this area, while we are fully on track in achieving the indicators, there is a need to scale up ambition for more in depth and integrated support and to help a wider number of countries in all regions. While the use of partnerships will be key to upscale results and widen our scope, internal capacity constraints – with a small pool of legal experts and limited financial resources - make it challenging to meet all demands and to invest in longer term interventions in a given country. In the next biennium we aim to achieve more ambitious results by taking an all encompassing approach to technical legal assistance, where we look at the range of elements that make environmental governance strong in a given country.

Grounding environmental action on the Rule of Law

Strong environmental rule of law is the bedrock of
environmental governance and a cornerstone of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development



*Universality, inclusion and integration core
values of 2030 Agenda*

Grounding environmental efforts on the rule of law is crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Achieving Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is integral part of achieving all environment-related targets. An established rule of law is the only manner in which the inclusive and nature of the Agenda can come to life and in which environment change can be sustainable in the long term.

This translates in practical terms in the distinction of roles among the executive, legislative and judiciary branches, in accountable and transparent institutions, and in a rights-based approach. We work with key national institutions to make this happen.



To make the law work for the people, there is a chain of stakeholders that needs to be involved. From the executive branch to legislators and to those who guard the law and guarantee environment rights and duties, to those who enforce the law. Civil society, if empowered, can meaningfully contribute to positive environmental change.

We work with agents of change along this chain, through technical legal assistance, knowledge products, trainings and sensitization. We also support enforcement networks and train those at the forefront of guaranteeing legality, such as customs officials.

In doing so, we partner with a multitude of global, regional and national institutions, including for instance judges associations and judicial training institutes: our role is to facilitate and foster partnerships and to mainstream the environment in existing processes, for example in the curricula of national judicial training institutes.



Progress in implementing Resolution 2/14 is well on track with efforts to review wildlife legislation ongoing, a global campaign (wild for life) launched and a United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products about to be launched. Several efforts are ongoing in line with the resolution implementation plan.

Two resolutions, 2/19 and 2/25, focus on the progressive development of environmental law. In implementation of resolution 2/19, UNEP has initiated a government-led process to steer the implementation and further development of the Montevideo Programme for the development and periodic review of environmental law, a global ten-year strategy developed to this end. In line with Resolution 2/25, negotiations of an instrument for the implementation of the Rio Principle 10 on access to information, justice and public participation in Latin America and the Caribbean Region are continuing, with a session taking place in Brazil in March 2017.

Addressing emerging environmental issues identified by UNEA resolutions requires having the right legislation in place, and the first place to start is to identify legal trends and gaps. UN Environment produced a report on “marine litter legislation: a toolkit for policy makers” which contributes to the implementation of UNEA resolution 2/11 on marine plastic litter and microplastics. We also developed a study on the “legal limits on lead in paint” which is the basis for further work to address the gaps, including through a guidance document being prepared on legislating on lead in paint.

Regarding the air pollution priority, which is currently addressed in multiple programmes, progress has been observed in monitoring and assessment at transboundary and national level. This includes increased participation in regional partnerships in Asia and the Pacific and air quality assessments to inform health and environment policies in three countries. Further, air pollution has been a central theme of a variety of environmental governance efforts: regional ministerial fora in Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe have for instance identified accelerated action on air pollution as a priority in their 2016 outcomes.

2/5 UNEA resolution on Agenda 2030 also requires efforts in the legal and institutional strengthening sphere, and progress is outlined in previous slides.

Encouraging trends *We need to build on*

Environmental courts and tribunals: grown from a handful in 1970 – 350 documented in 2009 - to over 1,200 today (44 countries, including sub-national level)

Legal limits on lead in paint - 70 out of 196 countries have legally binding limits on lead in paint

Banning plastics - more than 100 national and subnational governments around the world have taken measures to ban/discourage plastic bags .

We need to build on these and other positive trends to achieve results of global significance

A world-wide “explosion” of specialized courts and tribunals for adjudicating environmental lawsuits is dramatically changing the playing field for environmental justice around the world. The fast global spread of these ECTs is one of the most dramatic changes in environmental law and institutions in the 21st century as it has the potential to positively impact the very manner in which environmental disputes are resolved and in providing access to environmental (Rio Principle 10). Continuous sensitization efforts and mainstreaming of environment in judicial training curricula is key to capitalize on this positive development.

Banning plastics - more than 100 national and subnational governments around the world have taken measures to ban/discourage plastic bags. This is an encouraging start: if more countries take action, this can have a huge impact on the global problem of marine pollution, as plastic bags are pervasive across the world’s oceans.

Legal limits on lead in paint – in 2016, 70 of 196 countries worldwide (36%) have established legally binding limits on lead in paint. Among these, a range of approaches to regulating the lead content and use of lead paint is used. While most lead paint controls regulate the manufacture, export, import, and sale of lead paint, the laws in several countries are not comprehensive and still allow lead paint to be manufactured, exported, imported or sold. More work is needed. UN Environment is developing in collaboration with partners on a Guide for Regulating Lead Paint.

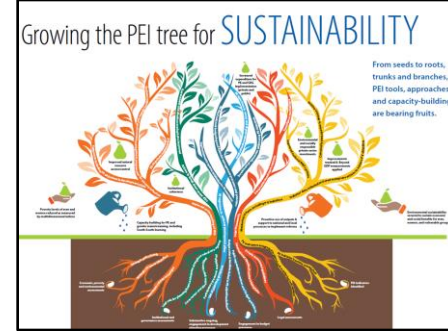


C. Placing environment at the core of development decision-making. Because environment is not necessarily the central concern of the development agenda, it is important to put in place mechanisms to ensure that this is the case. Starting from the planning of UN interventions in a given countries, which go hand in hand with country priority setting, and moving from the development of sectoral policies and budgeting exercises, it is important to make the case for the environment.

UN Environment supports this integration through efforts in various spheres, including by supporting UN development assistance frameworks around the world, national planning and budgeting processes in more than twenty countries who are working to progressively align poverty reduction and environmental objectives, by supporting countries in their efforts to implement sustainable development in a more integrated way and by fostering alignment of political positions on environmental issues. To promote the mainstreaming of environment into development, we work with the institutions that have a core planning mandate and that can influence budgetary choices.

We provide support to United Nations Country Teams by providing training, data support, and participating in strategic planning phases of the development of national United Nations assistance frameworks. 16 more UNDAFs were completed in 2016. More than 80 countries were supported in this area.

Through the UNDP-UNEP joint poverty environment initiative we work with 24 countries to bring environment and poverty objectives closer, as part of national planning processes, in national and subnational policies and in the context of national resource allocation. Four countries have progressed in the measurement framework that assesses the use application of financial planning instruments for pro poor growth and environmental sustainability in the public sector. We also support coherent policy making at regional level, through embedding environmental priorities in political fora. Four environmental ministerial forums adopted outcomes embedding environmental priorities including in the area of air pollution.





UNEA Resolution 2/2 is directly related to this expected accomplishment. Progress in convening forums of Ministers that produce strong outcomes is reported in the programme performance report and in the previous slide, and is fully on track with the programme of work indicator.

The significance of the Regional Ministerial Forums cannot be underestimated. In most regions they have become the highest political level environmental gatherings, allowing the regions to build consensus on policies and regional responses to common environmental challenges and to prepare strategically for participation by regional groups in UNEA and other global fora, including Rio+20, SDGs development, multilateral conventions).

The 25 UNEA resolution on Agenda 2030 is also relevant for this area of our work as the integration of environment into national and regional policy processes and in planning and budget allocation is at the core of delivering on the 2030 agenda in a balanced manner.

Details of status of implementation of UNEA 2 resolutions are provided in a dedicated report.



The maps shows the countries where specific measures were undertaken with UN Environment support. These include measures in four areas, highlighted in the legenda on the left. The same information is summarized in the programme performance report document.



The nature of the subprogramme requires that we partner with diverse stakeholders and organizations. The slide shows the main partners we worked with during 2016. This does not include those partners who only implemented specific outputs. It is also not an exhaustive list. We have also partnered with member states in the development of specific outputs.



What can we do better?

What we think we can do better

- Making UNEA's messages heard
- Better governance levels integration
- Better linking environment-related governing bodies
- Stronger investment in institutional strengthening
- Up-scaling and replicating success stories
- Better communication on governance issues

Strong

(The word "Strong" is part of a larger graphic where it is surrounded by other words like Justice, Sustainable, Partnership, Equality, Life, etc., arranged in a circular pattern.)

There are several areas for improvement to ensure that the many efforts we undertake in the Environmental Governance programme reach the desired level of impact globally.

What other areas of improvement do you see? How could you help us improve on these and on the areas we have mentioned?

Thank you!

For more information, feedback and follow-up, contact:

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