

European Commission and United Nations Environment Programme working together for the Environment



Charlotte Sullivan, 1st UNEP Global Prize



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working together for the Environment**

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Foreword by Mr Stavros Dimas, Member of the European Commission for Environment

The world is already facing enormous environmental challenges – and things could well get worse. There is a consensus that climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are putting the very future of our planet at risk. And these threats will make it ever harder to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. So it is vital that we maximise our efforts by working together. I am therefore very happy to be contributing to a publication that shows how the European Commission is working with the United Nations Environment Programme towards the common aim of environmental protection and sustainable development.

This brochure gives some examples of our joint activities. We cooperate in many different ways in many different parts of the world. For example, the European Commission has been a willing participant in negotiations hosted by UNEP that have led to international agreements. Our support for the negotiation process which led to the UNEP Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management is an example of what focused cooperation and targeted European support can achieve at global level. We can point to regional successes too, ranging from our collaboration to help the Andean Community to protection of the Caspian Sea.

In fact, both UNEP and the Commission recognised some time ago that, because of the extent of our cooperation, we need to give it formal recognition with a structured framework for day-to-day implementation work. So in

September 2004 the Commission and UNEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This codifies aims and ways of working, with regular meetings of senior management on both sides to review activities, provide focus and give guidance for the future. I am of course happy to give my full political support to the MoU and look forward to continuing to work with UNEP as we turn its decisions into reality.

And what of the future? Both organisations agree – and in this we are not alone – that environmental policy has made remarkable progress since the UNEP was set up. Environment has moved to centre stage in most policy debates. Whether we are discussing development, aid, trade or security, environment is critical. Now, as never before, the awareness is there and public opinion supports action in favour of sustainable rather than short-term development. This is a great opportunity and it must be seized! That is why the European Union, with the Commission in the lead, advocates giving UNEP the tools to do its job and meet these modern challenges. UNEP must be upgraded. It must be made into a dynamic UN Environment Organisation (UNEO) with stable, adequate and predictable resources, so that it can address contemporary challenges and emerging issues. It will find in the European Commission a consistently enthusiastic and cooperative partner.



Foreword by Mr. Achim Steiner UNEP Executive Director

In the last twelve months we have witnessed some remarkable developments in the field of global environmental policy. The challenges have intensified but so has the search for solutions. The science of climate change is now indisputable. This was further underlined in the latest reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released in February 2007.

In April 2007, the UN Secretary General made the link between climate change and human security. He illustrated his remarks with six possible scenarios showing the threat that would be caused to world security by increasing climate change, as countries suffer an increasing shortage of scarce resources, and limited or threatened access to energy. He also pointed out that when resources become scarce the earth's ecosystems become strained, along with the coping mechanisms of groups and individuals. This can lead to a breakdown of established codes of conduct, and even to outright conflict.

Because of this, environment and the related global institutional architecture are now for the first time receiving the highest level of political attention. Environmental considerations are now part of the political agenda at international, regional and national level. UN environmental activities are receiving closer attention from Member States, including through the recommendations put forward last year by the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. We have a unique chance to reform the institutions and structures that deliver global and regional environmental policy. We must not let this chance slip away, especially as public awareness is rising and citizens are becoming increasingly concerned about what is at stake.

Environment policy must move from the periphery to the core of decision-making, so that precaution and prevention become key elements of any decision that



could cause detrimental environmental change. At the same time, we have to be creative in finding the right solutions, working not just within public institutions but also with the private sector and civil society.

In this globalised context, the relationship between the European Commission (EC) and UNEP has grown steadily in recent years, at both policy and programme level. The EC is a trusted partner, and has continuously shown environmental leadership both at home and at international level, in areas ranging from climate change to management of chemicals, from biodiversity to management of waste. EC-UNEP cooperation is showing visible results in many parts of the world, and EC support for UNEP's actions on environment and poverty, or on sustainable consumption and production, are some of the many examples that really help improve livelihoods and safeguard environmental resources.

The European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme have played a key role in enabling the latest developments on climate change. By setting the world's most ambitious targets for reducing CO₂ emissions and limiting the impacts of climate change, the European Commission has shown itself to be a global leader in fighting climate change.

These improvements have to be seen in the context of the broadening EU-UN relationship. With its "deliver as one" project, the UN has initiated major reform and is thus able to cooperate with actors like the European Union in a far more efficient and coherent way.

We have understood that the challenges ahead are so immense that the only way to achieve internationally agreed goals is by working together in mutual self-interest. In this way we can deliver a stable, just and healthy planet for the present and future generations.



1. The context of EC-UNEP relations

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Established in 1972, UNEP is the voice of the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator, promoting environmental protection and sustainable development at the global level. To accomplish this, UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including international organizations such as the European Commission, other United Nations entities, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

UNEP's work encompasses the assessment of environmental conditions and trends, the development of environmental instruments and the strengthening of institutions for better management of the environment. UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.



European Commission

The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union (EU). It proposes policy and legislative measures which are adopted by the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Its Directorate-General for the Environment is responsible for European policy-making on the environment. It monitors environment policy-making within EU Member States and projects policy globally through its international bilateral and multilateral contacts.

The European Commission participates actively in developing and implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other environmental negotiations and processes within the United Nations framework. Here the European Union's constructive position, as represented by the Commission, has on several occasions proved crucial to ensuring progress.

As an example: the EU was widely praised for bringing about the successful conclusion of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and was a driving force in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. Moreover, the Commission was a leading player at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and remains actively engaged in current UN reform debates, promoting the strengthening of international environmental governance.

European Commission and UNEP cooperation on the Environment

Conscious of the gains to be made by cooperating actively, UNEP and the European Commission significantly upgraded their relations in 2004 by signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**. This MoU aims inter alia to reinforce organizational synergies, to contribute to the achievement of the environmentally relevant UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to support the implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) commitments. In practical terms, cooperation is realised through policy exchanges on issues of common interest, joint work on analysis and assessments and the exploitation of each other's comparative advantages.

An informal joint work programme helps focus cooperation with the aim of achieving practical outcomes. Issues such as chemicals management, sustainable consumption and production, protection of the marine environment, biodiversity, MEA implementation, environment and security and project support are regular subjects of policy dialogue.

The European Commission is also active with UNEP's governing bodies, in particular in UNEP's Governing Council. Here, the Commission traditionally offers a significant regional perspective and long experience in cooperative endeavours, feeding this experience into the global debate.



2. Working Together Globally

UNEP and the European Commission are active partners in establishing, implementing and evaluating international environmental policies. Both parties are by nature committed to the principle of multilateralism. Thus, both favour action based on consensus and implemented by a coherent international community. Central to their vision of the world are competent national and international institutions and relations based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms.

The European Union and its Member States are contracting parties to and keen supporters of a large number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. MEAs are vehicles for negotiating and ensuring implementation of international agreements on key environmental challenges. The Commission has thus taken a prominent role in such agreements, including the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and a number of regional agreements.

We shall now look at some examples of how Commission and UNEP cooperation is driving the global agenda supporting environmental sustainability at global level.

2.1 International Environmental Governance

The EU has a vital interest in contributing to the ongoing UN reform process. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of UN bodies, policies and processes is an EU priority. In June 2005 the Commission issued a Communication on **“The 2005 UN Summit – Addressing the global challenges and making a success of the reformed UN” (COM (2005) 259)**. Here the Commission reviewed issues which are key for improved multilateral cooperation. These include: delivering increased aid; mobilising trade as an engine for development; addressing the social dimension of globalisation; improving human rights, democracy and the rule of law and protecting the natural resource base for development.

A central element of current UN reform relates to international environmental governance (IEG). Environmental governance cannot be confined to the local or national level. The global biosphere operates as a single system, where the environmental impacts of

each nation ultimately affect the whole. That makes a coordinated response from the community of nations a necessity if we are to reverse today's global environmental decline.

The current formal system of IEG is focused on the United Nations and indeed, following the Nairobi Declaration, adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in 1997, UNEP's role is to be the leading environmental authority in setting the global environmental agenda. Thus UNEP has contributed to international environmental law, developing legal regimes such as the Montreal Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity etc.

Furthermore, UNEP has demonstrated that it can mobilise scientific and legal talent to expand understanding of environmental issues. For example, many scientists around the world, coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization and UNEP, have contributed to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. The latter's analyses of climate processes and its projections of future trends have played a major role in developing consensus and thus facilitating agreement at international negotiations.

Nevertheless, there is growing consensus that while our ability to analyse global environmental issues has improved, our ability to decide global policy and subsequently take concerted global action has not kept pace. For this reason, at its June 2005 European Council, the EU advocated improving International Environmental



Governance, including through the gradual upgrading of UNEP into a Nairobi-based United Nations Environment Organisation (UNEO). Such an organisation would better be able to address the environmental dimension of sustainable development in an integrated and consistent manner.

2.2 Sustainable consumption and production

The world is currently consuming resources at an unsustainable rate. Estimates suggest that at current rates of consumption we would need much more than one earth if we were to be sustainable. The European Commission and UNEP are trying to address this enormous challenge on a number of levels.

International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management

In a collaborative effort, UNEP and the European Commission in November 2007 set up an International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management. The overall objective of the Resource Panel is to provide independent scientific assessment on the environmental impacts of the use of resources (both renewable and non-renewable) over the full life cycle. The Panel contributes to sharing knowledge on decoupling resource use and environmental impact from economic growth. It takes into account economic development, resource productivity and security of supply issues.

The Panel's main tasks will be to bring together and analyse state-of-the-art scientific knowledge from all the regions of the world on the sustainable use of natural resources, and translate these findings into practical advice and recommendations to governments and international organisations. It will assess the current status of the knowledge base on the use of natural resources and related environmental and sustainability impacts over the full life-cycle and provide advice for gathering more information. Work will include identifying knowledge gaps and building consensus on definitions, indicators, and methodologies with a view to measuring and monitoring the progress achieved in decoupling at international level.

Roundtables on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

Clearly, however, sustainable development will not be

brought about by policy initiatives alone. In addition to political and economic decisions taken by governments, sustainability must be taken up by society at large; it must become a guiding principle in the many choices politicians, administrators and citizens make every day. To achieve this will require a profound change in thinking and different patterns of consumption and production.

To encourage this change in thinking, the Commission and UNEP have organised SCP roundtables with key international partners and countries with emerging economies. The focus has been on emerging economies with a growing impact on the global environment and patterns of resource use.

Roundtables held to date in China (May 2006), India (September 2006) and Brazil (April 2007) have provided opportunities for exchanges of opinion and expertise between stakeholders in those countries and with the EU. All these events resulted in recommendations for further national activities. There will be a further round table with South Africa and there are plans for activities to follow up roundtables already held. Clearly this is a long-term endeavour, but one which is already paying dividends both locally and regionally.

Eco-labelling for developing countries

Another contribution to global sustainability in consumption and production is UNEP-EU cooperation on eco-labelling in developing countries. Thus, for example, a four-year project promotes eco-labelling in China, India, Mexico, Kenya and South Africa through capacity building and support for stakeholders (business, including industrial designers and the retail sector, government and NGOs).

Results should include increases in the number of eco-labelled products. Local partners and product categories (including textiles, footwear and appliances) have already been identified in all relevant countries. By involving the **Global Eco-labelling Network** some progress towards better mutual recognition between the various eco-labelling schemes will also be sought. The European Commission's Programme on Environment in Developing Countries provides €1.5 million to support this network.



2.3 Global Management of Chemicals

Chemicals and their targeted application have revolutionised our lives. Agriculture, health and science – all depend on chemical inputs. Clearly, however, chemicals present potential dangers and some of their side effects can be felt thousands of miles away and years after their initial application. For this reason, we

need systems to determine and regulate their use and guarantee their long-term compatibility with human health and environmental sustainability. Within the EU, the response to this challenge has been REACH - the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals. REACH is fully compatible with global initiatives on chemicals as sponsored by the UN.

REACH, Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 concerning **R**egistration, **E**valuation and **A**uthorisation and Restriction of **C**hemicals

REACH entered into force on 1 June 2007. It aims to protect human health and the environment through better and earlier identification of the properties of chemical substances.

REACH involves:

Registration: Producers and importers of chemicals must register them with the European Chemicals Agency, submitting information on their properties and uses, and safe ways of handling them. It is expected that around 30 000 substances will be involved.

Evaluation: Public authorities will study registration dossiers and substances of concern. They can request more information if necessary.

Authorisation: Use-specific authorisation will be required for chemicals causing cancer, mutations and reproductive problems or for those accumulating in the human body or in the environment. Authorisation will be granted when risks are demonstrably and adequately controlled or when social and economic benefits outweigh the risk and suitable alternative substances do not exist.

Restrictions: The Commission may restrict the use of certain dangerous substances at EU level.



In fact, there is a long history of collaboration between UNEP and the EC on chemicals. Both organisations have played key roles in developing the current international framework of binding conventions (e.g. the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent - PIC - and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants) and voluntary schemes such as the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

Capacity-building schemes and global chemicals institutions have also benefited from the support of both bodies. In all cases, both UNEP and the Commission have shared the vision of the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, which set the goal for 2020 of producing and using chemicals in ways that do not lead to significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.



Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

The need for a broader international regime on chemicals management was recognised with the 2006 decision of the UNEP Governing Council in Dubai to approve SAICM - a policy long advocated by the European Commission.

SAICM comprises a Dubai Declaration expressing commitment by ministers, heads of delegation, representatives of civil society and the private sector. An **Overarching Policy Strategy** sets out the scope, the needs, the objectives, the underlying principles and the financial and institutional arrangements, while a **Global Plan of Action** sets out proposed work areas and activities. A **Quick Start Programme** and its voluntary, time-limited **Trust Fund** were also agreed to support initial enabling capacity building and SAICM implementation in particular in developing countries. The Commission has been an important contributor to the funding of SAICM and the Quick Start Programme

Mercury

Of the chemicals currently in use, mercury has played an important but now declining role. Here too, however, the correlation between EU policy and wider international developments as led by UNEP has been significant.

In 2005 the European Community adopted a **Mercury Strategy**. The strategy's twenty actions will support reductions in the use and emissions of mercury in the EU and globally. Then in October 2006 the European Commission proposed legislation that would ban all EU mercury exports from 2011. The proposed Regulation would significantly reduce global supply, and thus emissions of the heavy metal into the environment, and

require mercury no longer used in the chlor-alkali industry or generated in other industrial operations to be put in safe storage once the export prohibition takes effect.

UNEP too has been active at global level. In 2003 a UNEP **Mercury Programme** was established, based on the recognition that mercury's adverse global impacts warrant international action. The 24th session of UNEP's Governing Council in 2007 agreed on the need to strengthen international action on mercury and set up a process investigating the need for a global, legally binding instrument. To this end, a 2007 – 2008 Ad Hoc Working Group will report to the 25th session of the UNEP Governing Council. The Working Group too benefits from Commission financial support.

Rotterdam Convention

UNEP and the European Commission also collaborate to facilitate the ratification of the **1998 Rotterdam Convention** on prior informed consent by third countries and to support its implementation at global level. The Convention creates a system for informing countries that import hazardous materials about the hazards they pose. It also provides for prior informed consent (PIC) by the importing country before the trade can be completed.

EU Regulation (EC) No 304/2003 concerning the export and import of dangerous chemicals implements the Rotterdam Convention within the Union. The Regulation fully transposes the provisions of the Convention, but also goes beyond the Convention in a number of important respects.

The EC and UNEP are currently collaborating on actions designed to facilitate the ratification and implementation of the Rotterdam Convention around the world.



2.4 Protecting the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Although the term “bio-diversity” (more simply: the variety of life forms on earth) regrettably remains poorly understood by non-specialists, it is in fact a measure of the health of our planet and the basis for our existence. Dealing with biodiversity loss is thus a matter of supreme concern. For this reason, the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, whose secretariat is run by UNEP, has adopted the 2002 Johannesburg WSSD objective of significantly reducing biodiversity loss by 2010.

The EU, for its part, has gone even further, setting the goal of **halting** the decline in bio-diversity in the EU by 2010. The Commission is strongly committed to reinforcing the CBD as the key international instrument for achieving the 2010 target and to making sure that it is effectively implemented. The EC Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the 2006 Biodiversity Communication outline how the CBD is implemented by the EU.

One of the ten objectives of EU biodiversity policy, as outlined in the 2006 Communication, is **to strengthen global governance for biodiversity**, in particular by strengthening the Convention on Biological Diversity. This has been achieved by implementing the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, identifying biodiversity-rich and vulnerable marine areas beyond national jurisdictions, supporting negotiations on an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing and supporting the representation of indigenous and local communities at CBD meetings.

Furthermore, UNEP and the Commission have co-operated on a broad range of biodiversity-related international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species.

A number of projects have also been supported, including a Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) addressing the threat to the survival of gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans (See Section 3.1). Also, a Wings Over Wetlands project, the largest ever international wetland and water bird conservation initiative in the African-Eurasian region, helps countries to conserve the critical wetland areas these birds require to complete their annual migrations across Africa and Eurasia

2.5 Water and sanitation

Around the world over 2.4 billion people have no proper sanitation and one billion have no drinkable water. Some two million children die every year (6,000 a day) from preventable infections spread by dirty water or improper sanitation. Millennium Development Goal 7 includes reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development underlined the need for international cooperation on water and sanitation and in recent years the UNEP and the EU approaches have been mutually supportive. The EU supports partner countries in ensuring sustainable and equitable management of water resources and access to water and sanitation. The policy emphasises the need to integrate sustainable water management into national and regional development strategies.

The **EU Water Initiative (EUWI)** was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 with the aim of contributing to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the WSSD targets for drinking water and sanitation. The €500 million **ACP-EU Water Facility**, established in 2004 is a response to the need to generate additional funding.

The 24th Governing Council agreed on an updated six-year **UNEP Water Policy and Strategy** for 2007-2012, whose overall goal is to contribute substantively to environmental sustainability in the management of water resources through integrated ecosystems approaches. The strategy identifies the key components of UNEP's freshwater work and a framework of integrated water resources management.

In this context, the EC and UNEP together work on a number of common projects around the world. Priorities are derived from the EUWI and from the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation, signed by Heads of State for EU and Africa at the WSSD.

Finally, through the **Partnership for the development of law and institutions in Africa (PADELIA)** and in collaboration with the European Commission, UNEP also assists the development of water related laws and regulations at national level in many countries.





EC-UNEP project: **Support AMCOW in Implementing the Triennial Work Programme (2006-2008)**

UNEP is the executing agency for EC support to AMCOW (African Ministers Council on Water) and its work programme.

The **main objective** of the AMCOW Work Programme is to help African States, sub-regional organizations and river and lake basin organizations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets on water and sanitation.

Specific objectives under the AMCOW Programme of Work include:

- (a) stimulating action by states, river and lake basin organizations and sub-regional organizations to meet agreed targets and objectives;
- (b) monitoring progress in meeting the objective in Africa, and report to the relevant global monitoring mechanisms such as the United Nations Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP);
- (c) developing and presenting coordinated priorities to regional, multilateral and bilateral donors, including the United Nations system, to ensure that the delivery of support is consistent with African priorities;
- (d) suggesting actions to address identified issues.

3. Working together at the regional level

The European Commission and UNEP also cooperate in establishing sustainable environmental policies at the regional level. The biennial work programme of UNEP, adopted by the Governing Council, contains actions implemented at the regional and sub-regional levels.

3.1 Working Together in the Developing World

Sustainable development relies on a balanced pursuit of environmental, economic and social policies. Environment should thus be fully integrated into national development strategies. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals provide the policy background to EC-UNEP cooperation in developing countries.

Moreover, UNEP's role in the ongoing UN reform process

("One UN") has allowed it to upgrade its contribution to policy work in the developing world. The implementation of the **Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building (BSP)** adopted in 2005 by the 23rd Governing Council is a major UNEP advance.

The Bali Plan seeks to strengthen the capacity of governments in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to address their needs, priorities and obligations in the field of the environment. The Plan cuts across all of UNEP's activities. Moreover, by calling on the expertise of other UN bodies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), it brings together environment and development activities in areas as diverse as waste treatment, data gathering, environmental law and wildlife. The Commission recognizes the importance and potential of such synergies. It has thus devoted – and will continue to devote – significant resources and support to this initiative.



Many environmental problems need to be addressed across borders if they are to be resolved successfully. The protection of natural resources is crucial. The protection of tropical forests, wildlife, water resources etc. can often only be achieved through international action. A good example of EC-UNEP cooperation in this context is work undertaken in collaboration with local governments, civil society, international institutions etc. for the protection of great apes in Africa.

Other projects between the UNEP and the Commission in the regional cooperation area include:

- "Strengthening and Capacity Development for the Long-term Management and Conservation of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas encompassing

coral reef resources in South Asia" with UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre – project website: http://www.sacep.org/pdf/wspreport2_icran_pro.pdf

- A UNEP-UNDP project to scale up their joint Poverty and Environment Initiative, which aims to **Mainstream Environment in National Development Processes to Achieve the MDGs** (<http://www.unpei.org/>).



Example: Great Apes Survival Project

The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) was launched in March 2001. The EC is supporting the project through financial assistance.

The **GRASP Partnership** has as an immediate aim to lift the threat of imminent extinction facing most populations of great apes. Its mission is to conserve in their natural habitats, wherever they exist, wild populations of every kind of great ape and to make sure that apes and people interact in a mutually positive and sustainable way.

GRASP plays a unique role in complementing existing great ape conservation efforts. The instruments

it uses include: intergovernmental dialogue and policy making, conservation planning initiatives, technical and scientific support for governments of countries with great ape ranges, flagship field projects and raising funds and awareness in donor countries.

In September 2002, GRASP was registered as a World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Type II Partnership, a multi-sectoral international initiative. The GRASP Partnership brings together governmental and intergovernmental actors, UN institutional and non-governmental expertise, scientific and academic foundations, local communities and private sector interests.



3.2 Working together in the Mediterranean

UNEP has for many years been promoting cooperation between countries around particular seas through its **UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities**

(GPA). In this context a particularly useful cooperation has taken place through the involvement of the Union and its relevant Member States in the UNEP-led **Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)**, under the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea.

Special Focus: EC-UNEP cooperation in the Mediterranean

The **Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean** and its Protocols is the major legal framework for protection of the Mediterranean environment.

The Convention was adopted in 1976 and amended in 1995 to take into account the results of the UN Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The amended Convention came into force on 9 July 2004.

Twenty-one Mediterranean countries and the EC are Contracting Parties to the Convention.

The **Mediterranean Action Plan** is a comprehensive programme aimed at protecting the environment and fostering sustainable development in the Mediterranean Basin. It is based on the Barcelona Convention.

The **Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention (and MAP)** is based in Athens, and it operates under the auspices of UNEP. The MAP system also

includes a number of specialized regional activity centres and programmes, and a consultative body known as the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD). On the basis of recommendations from the MCSD, in 2005, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted the **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)**.

In 2005, the European Commission and the MAP secretariat signed a **Joint Work Programme**, outlining areas for enhanced cooperation, partly designed to ensure integration of environmental concerns into sustainable development policies as applied in the region.

The European Commission and Mediterranean partner countries have been cooperating in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean **Horizon 2020** initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by 2020. A series of concrete actions (road-map) were adopted by Euro-Mediterranean Environment Ministers in Cairo in 2006 and the initiative aims to increase coordination between the relevant Mediterranean partners and organisations.

More information at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/med/horizon_2020_en.htm



3.3 Post-conflict environmental actions

UNEP has worked with the European Commission and other international and national actors to address the need for post-conflict environmental remediation in conflict areas such as the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia. UNEP's work has included the evaluation

of environmental damage and designing legal and administrative measures needed to redress degraded environments.

These assessments provide a factual basis on which the European Commission and other operational bodies may decide on a hierarchy and priorities for action.



Example: Post Conflict work in Afghanistan

At the request of the Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan, UNEP together with the European Commission and the Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment announced in 2003 a €4.27 million programme to promote good environmental governance and to support the rehabilitation of the country's environment.

The project, funded largely by €3.75 million from the EC, addresses the key environmental intervention priorities inscribed in the National Development Budget of the Government of Afghanistan. These actions aim to address

many of the institutional recommendations contained in UNEP's 2003 report "Afghanistan Post-conflict Environmental Assessment".

The Programme, aimed at strengthening environmental management structures in Afghanistan, covers the areas:

- environmental institutions and coordination
- environmental law and policy
- environmental impact assessment
- environmental information and education
- community-based natural resources management
- regional cooperation



3.4 Working Together in Europe

The **UNEP Office to the European Union in Brussels** is the link between Community institutions and the central office of UNEP in Nairobi and its regional offices around the world. Its chief interlocutor is DG Environment of the European Commission, but it maintains extensive cooperation with the Directorates-General for External Relations, Development and EuropeAid. The UNEP Regional Office in Geneva and the Paris Office of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics also provide additional entry points for cooperation with UNEP.

The **Commission Delegation in Nairobi** also provides an important link between Commission services and UNEP.

As described above, UNEP and the Commission work together at many levels on matters of environmental policy development and implementation. The involvement of the Commission in actions agreed at UNEP's Governing Council, its support for the execution of decisions made by many MEAs, and the realisation of common programmes are just some of the ways in which UNEP and the Commission interact. UNEP in turn has the opportunity to give its input to many aspects of environmental and other EU decision-making in Brussels.

In short, UNEP's work with the European Commission is multi-faceted. It is both codified and formal (as evidenced by the joint Memorandum of Understanding). However, its greatest value may lie in all the different regular and more or less formal contacts which mutually influence both organisations.



4. A Look to the Future

This publication is an attempt to present an updated but by no means comprehensive picture of UNEP - European Commission cooperation on environment around the world. This strong relationship will doubtless continue to grow both through informal but regular contacts and through the renewal and updating of the Memorandum of Understanding.

In the future, as in the past, the Commission and UNEP will aim to promote better and more efficient world environmental governance, to support sustainable development for all through the execution of relevant UN decisions and to ensure that environmental challenges are met with decisive action all around the world.



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