

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

**STRENGTHENING GLOBAL
GOVERNANCE IN AN
INTERCONNECTED WORLD**



ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

In its work on environmental governance, the overarching element that needs to be strengthened to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international frameworks, including the recently adopted Paris Agreement, UNEP focuses on three areas:

- **Coherence and synergy** – Improving the manner in which the UN system and multilateral environmental agreements achieve policy coherence.
- **Law and institutions** – Enhancing the capacities of countries to establish and enforce legal and institutional frameworks to address environmental priorities.
- **Mainstreaming the environment into development processes** – Assisting countries to integrate environment into sectoral and development processes and plans, including those on poverty reduction.

Coherence and synergy

In a complex world, in which many bodies and personalities work and interact on issues that affect the environment, UNEP promotes coherence and synergy in the multilateral system to ensure the international community embraces a sustainable future in a united and streamlined way. Coherence increased in the way the UN system and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) handled environmental issues over the last two years, resulting in several initiatives, some of which are highlighted below.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see page 50 for more on UNEP's role)

The environment is a key component of the Agenda and in specific Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators. Governments agreed to an integrated approach, which will require environmental issues to be addressed as part of a wider agenda for change that includes social and economic aspects.

Environmental sustainability and climate neutrality in the UN system

Heads of UN agencies adopted a common approach on environmental management systems to reduce emissions and environmental impacts. Twenty-one UN organizations are pursuing climate neutrality, up from six in 2013, of which 18 organizations have emission reduction strategies and five Environmental Management Systems. Furthermore, the UN system, through the Environment Management Group (EMG), is developing system-wide strategies on the environment to enhance coherence. The aim is to have a framework for aligning agencies' respective strategies on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Residents of Mazatlan, Mexico release Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings as part of a programme to recover the endangered species, highlighting the harmony between people and planet that sustainable development strives for. © Stringer Mexico / Reuters

21
UN
ORGANIZATIONS
ARE PURSUING
CLIMATE
NEUTRALITY

UP FROM 6
IN 2013

Human rights and the environment

A resolution was adopted at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council, strengthening the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment and encouraging further coordination with UNEP. The UNDG Working Group on Human Rights issued a guide on supporting human rights at the country level, which includes links between human rights and the environment. At the Paris Climate Meeting, UNEP released a report detailing the many negative effects of climate change on human rights, and calling on nations to recognize this in their climate responses.

Additionally, collaborative arrangements with the secretariats of MEAs resulted in advances in terms of joining forces on common issues, including:

- The consideration of a set of options to enhance synergies on programmatic, institutional and administrative areas of work across six biodiversity-related MEAs.
- The agreement between MEA secretariats and UNEP partner organizations of a common multi-stakeholder thesaurus for the field of environmental law and conventions. This resulted in enhanced integration of knowledge available to users through INFORMEA, an information portal for MEAs, across over 50 global and regional multilateral environmental agreements.
- A Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 plan adopted at the 17th regional seas conventions and action plans meeting.

For more information on the work of UNEP-hosted global MEAs, see page 52.

“CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE RESULT OF CHOICES MADE BY HUMAN BEINGS AND HAS DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON A WIDE RANGE OF INTERNATIONALLY GUARANTEED HUMAN RIGHTS – THE RIGHTS TO FOOD, WATER, SANITATION, ADEQUATE HOUSING, AND HEALTH – FOR MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.”

ZEID RA'AD AL HUSSEIN, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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Law and institutions

Through UNEP's support, 11 countries undertook new legal and institutional measures to improve implementation of internationally agreed environmental goals over the last two years. Two countries also undertook initiatives to monitor and achieve compliance and enforcement of international environmental obligations.

Partnerships with regional and global organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and Globe International (a global legislators' organization), have helped to scale up UNEP's work on law, leading to the uptake of the concept of environmental rule of law in regional contexts and to more systemic approaches to the engagement of parliamentarians.

UNEP also aims to increase the number of initiatives and partnerships of major groups and stakeholders in support of the development and implementation of national and international environmental law. UNEP's target was achieved with the conclusion of partnership agreements with the Stakeholder Forum and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. UNEP's partnership with the Stakeholder Forum aims to embed the perspectives of major groups and stakeholders in the work of UNEP, including access to information, justice and public participation in environmental matters. UNEP's partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation aims to enhance the capacities of judges and legal stakeholders in the field of environmental rule of law, particularly in Africa.

15

COUNTRIES

FINALIZED, IN THE PAST YEAR, UN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORKS (UNDAFs) THAT INCORPORATED THE PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

At the international level, UNEP convened processes to promote effective transboundary freshwater governance, the concept of environmental rule of law and Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Principle 10) to enhance capacities of government stakeholders. A regional forum was held in Panama for Latin America and the Caribbean to share practices. Noteworthy is progress in the negotiation of a regional agreement on Principle 10, which benefited from UNEP's support. On environmental rule of law, partnerships were developed, regional colloquia held and a global report initiated.

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability

Fifteen countries finalized, in the past year, UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) that incorporated the principles of environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the Poverty-Environment Initiative, which UNEP runs in collaboration with the UN Development Programme, resulted in the integration of environment objectives into a total of 21 policies, plans and processes focusing on poverty reduction over the past two years.

Eight sub-regional and regional fora incorporated the principles of environmental sustainability in 2014-2015. These intergovernmental sessions, which covered several regions and sub-regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Small Island Developing States), provided a strategic link between global and regional priorities. The fora promoted the uptake of global environmental priorities at the regional and national levels. They also came up with messages that feed into global processes, such as the upcoming second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2).



Oyun Sanjaasuren, who presided over the first UNEA and will stand down in 2016.
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Implementing United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions

Air Quality (UN Environment Assembly resolution 1/7)

The World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on Health and the Environment: Addressing the health impact of air pollution. Air quality data was made accessible via UNEP Live, and regional plans were adopted. An air policy quality catalogue was made available as a step toward a global air quality report for UNEA 2. See In Focus feature in the Environment Under Review chapter (page 49) for more information on air quality.

Illegal Trade in Wildlife (UN Environment Assembly resolution 1/3)

30 projects totaling \$2 million were funded from African Elephant Fund. Analyses of environmental impacts of the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products were initiated. See In Focus feature on page 31 for more on UNEP's work on the illegal wildlife trade.

For more information on UNEP's work on environmental governance, visit unep.org or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.



SOUTH AFRICAN ANTI-POACHING UNIT INSPIRES GLOBAL ACTION

Members of the Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit, who won UNEP's 2015 Champions of the Earth Award. © UNEP

Collet Ngobeni and Felicia Mogakane are most at home in the wide open spaces of Balule Private Game Reserve in South Africa. There, they form part of the Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit, a majority-women ranger group facing up to criminal gangs poaching rhinos for profit.

But last September the two women found themselves in New York City to receive the UNEP Champions of the Earth award on behalf of the Black Mambas – providing inspiration and action in the fight against the illegal trade in wildlife.

“Aims like the Sustainable Development Goals may seem beyond the scope of an ordinary person,” said NoCry Mzimba, another member of the Black Mambas. “But we are all ordinary people. UNEP gave us the Champions of the Earth award for what we’ve accomplished as ordinary people.”

The Black Mambas walk up to 20km a day, seeking out poachers, their camps and snares. When not on patrol, they discourage community members from joining the poachers’ ranks. Such work is vital in South Africa, where 1,215 rhinos were killed in 2014. The rapid rise in rhino poaching, from under 20 in 2007, has been driven by organized syndicates capitalizing on demand. This is representative of the situation facing many species across the continent,

where more than 100,000 elephants were killed in a three-year period alone. More Black Mambas are clearly needed.

“Community-led initiatives are crucial to combating the illegal wildlife trade,” said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner. “The Black Mambas are an inspiration not only locally, but across the world to all those working to eliminate the scourge of the illegal wildlife trade.”

The Black Mambas are part of a growing global movement. Last year, 32 countries pledged tougher action during the Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in Kasane, Botswana. This followed a resolution adopted by 157 countries gathered for the first-ever UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2014. Then, in July 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for wildlife crime to be treated as a serious crime, both nationally and across borders. The international community has undertaken other steps to address the crisis on the demand side. For example, nine internet enterprises in China have committed to not offering publicity or trading services for illegal wildlife products on their networks.

UNEP is now concentrating on the implementation of the UNEA-1 Resolution on Illegal Trade in Wildlife through coordinating a One UN and Partners Global Campaign to raise awareness on the social, security, economic and environmental

implications of the illegal trade, helping countries to strengthen legal frameworks and by increasing the evidence–base to enable countries to hone their policies.

UNEP has also been asked by the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee to facilitate the coordinated UN response to the illegal trade. It also facilitates access to the Global Environment Facility and other resources, including the African Elephant Fund.

Further momentum will be generated this year as the UN’s flagship day for public environmental outreach, World Environment Day, hosted by Angola, will focus on the ITW theme and support for Sustainable Development Goal 15.

NoCry knows that everybody must play their part to put an end to the slaughter.

“I do not know who you are, but I am sure that you can help,” she said. “We all have the power to get informed, make smart choices and influence others.”

For more information on the Champions of the Earth award, including the other 2015 laureates, see page 56 or visit web.unep.org/champions