



Left to right: AMCEN President, Minister of Environment, Egypt, UNEP Executive Director, Ambassador /PR of the Arab Republic of Egypt to UNEP

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- Basel COP 12, Rotterdam COP 7 and Stockholm COP 7
- 3GF AFR Meeting
- AMCEN Bureau Meeting
- World Environment Day
- World Oceans Day

African Ministers adopted Cairo Declaration and a number of decisions on key African environmental issues during AMCEN



Egyptian President receives UNEP Executive Director and African Ministers in Cairo during the 15th Ordinary session of AMCEN

The 15th regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held from 2 to 6 March 2015 in Cairo, Egypt under the theme *"Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication"*.

The main objective of the Conference was to provide a platform for African ministers of the environment to deliberate on some of the key steps needed to achieve a more sustainable use of natural capital, looking at policies and strategies to support Africa's economic transformation and growth. In addition, the session analyzed outcomes of the 20th session of UNFCCC COP20 held in Lima in December 2014 and reviewed the issues at stake for Africa in preparation of UNFCCC COP21 to be held in Paris later in 2015 where a new climate agreement is expected to be reached. The meeting also considered issues related to the post-2015 process and illegal trade in wildlife.

The conference brought together 54 African Ministers of Environment who agreed to optimize the use of natural resources for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Dr. Khaled Fahmy, Minister for Environment of Egypt and the AMCEN President said there is need to step up regional and national efforts and to consider natural capital valuation in decision-making in order to harness the full potential of Africa's rich endowments and to employ the competitive advantage offered as an engine for inclusive economic growth.

The Ministers also expressed their resolve to integrate inclusive green economy into development planning by mobilizing funds, creating jobs and specially targeting small and medium-sized enterprises. Mr. Achim Steiner, the UNEP Executive Director, said that for green economy to effectively take off across Africa countries need to scale-up investments and adopt the right mix of policy, incentives, enforcement, education capacity development and informational tools.

Stressing Africa's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, in particular the adverse effects on ecosystems, food production, and social and economic development, the Ministers agreed to support an agreement in 2015 that provides parity between mitigation and adaptation, noting the increased burden for adaptation in African countries. They indicated the agreement needs to ensure that the mitigation ambition keeps global temperatures well below 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels, by the end of the century. The only insurance against climate change impacts is an ambitious global mitigation action in the long-run, combined with large-scale, rapidly increasing and predictable funding for adaptation. Investment in building resilience must continue to be a top funding priority, including as an integral part of national development planning.

The Ministers also adopted an outline of the common strategy to combat illegal trade in wildlife that was used to develop the Brazzaville Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna.

Among the decisions adopted include were sustainably harnessing Africa's natural capital in the context of Agenda 2063; African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora; African Union Guidelines for the coordinated implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing; Strengthening African leadership in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process; African strategy on climate change; Climate change and Africa's preparations for the 2015 agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

AMCEN ordinary sessions are held every two years while special sessions are held every other year. The 6th Special Session of will be held in 2016 in Algiers.

African Ministers Endorse the African Environmental Education and Training Action Plan (AEETAP) 2015–2024

During the 15th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEM), UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU) presented a draft action plan which aims to enhance community environmental education and training within the continent for endorsement by the African Ministers. This action plan can be implemented through formal education trainings; life-long learning; and capacity building programmes and projects. These are envisaged to fundamentally enhance the environmental, societal and economic state of Africa for the benefit of Africa's people, and closely aligned to the 5 AMCEN Flagship Programmes which are African Green Economy Partnership; Land degradation, Desertification, Biodiversity and Ecosystems based Adaptation; Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production; Africa Sustainable Energy Development Programme; and Africa Integrated Environmental Assessment for Sustainable Development.

Endorsed as a living document (a document that is continually edited and updated), the Africa Environmental Education and Training Action Plan will contribute to the achievement of the African regional flagship programmes, the Action Plan of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Africa Union Agenda 2063 and the Post 2015 SGD – Goal 4 (Education). It is also in line with the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) that seeks “to generate and scale-up action in all levels and areas of education and learning in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development”.

The plan was developed through a participatory consultative process with the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) partnership, the Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Programme, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Environmental Education Programme among others.

As a follow-up, an inception meeting is planned in collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders to develop pilot projects and mobilize resources for implementation, with focus on the 5 AMCEN Flagship Programmes and enhanced South-South collaboration.

The Africa Environmental Education and Training Action Plan was initiated by the UNEP AMCEN Secretariat in partnership with the UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU) following the 2012 Arusha Declaration 18, which agrees to the strengthening of environmental education and training and developing an action plan for Africa, covering formal and non-formal education, capacity-building and information networking components, among others, including a focus on technology-enhanced learning.

New Atlas Shows Africa's Mountains underpin the continent's development

A new atlas compiled by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) visually presents the huge development challenges facing Africa's mountain ecosystems. The *Africa Mountains Atlas* uses hundreds of ‘before and after’ images, detailed new maps and other satellite data from 53 countries to show the problems facing Africa's mountain areas, such as landslides in the Mount Elgon and Rwenzori, volcanic eruptions, receding glaciers, as well as innovative and successful initiatives of harnessing the ecosystem services provided by the mountains.

The Atlas which was launched during the 15th Regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) in Cairo, Egypt include the dramatic reduction in mountain glaciers on Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Rwenzori and the precarious location of the town of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, in the shadows of Nyiragongo Mountain, which is one of the most active volcanoes in the world.

In addition to these mountain ecosystem challenges, the Atlas maps-out new solutions and success stories from across the continent. It contains the detailed mapping of how strategic interventions and innovations are improving food security and livelihoods of mountain communities in different parts of Africa. Images also reveal how irrigation projects, using water from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco is helping to improve food security. It also highlights how traditional knowledge is being used to adapt to the impacts of climate change on Mount Kenya in Kenya, Simien Mountains in Ethiopia, and Usambara Mountains in Tanzania, among others.

The Atlas, aimed to provide information to support AMCEN's strategic agenda on mountains and shows how climate change induced water stress in the mountain areas will compound the challenges of water scarcity in Africa with negative implications for development.

Prepared in cooperation with the African Union, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Government of Norway, Austrian Development Cooperation, United States Geological Survey, University of Bern and Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS), the 291-page atlas consolidates the information about the role of mountain ecosystems in Africa's economies and development, health, food security, and transboundary cooperation in one comprehensive and accessible volume. Africa's mountain forests (tropical and subtropical) account for approximately 6 per cent of all its forests but provide a significant proportion of its above-ground biomass carbon and total biomass carbon.



Green Economy' a Vehicle to Achieve Sustainable Development in Africa

An AMCEN pre-session meeting titled - Regional workshop on inclusive green economies for poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa: From Inspiration to Action was held in February 2015.

This meeting aimed to share the valuable lessons learned both from countries' endeavours to move towards an inclusive green economy and from entrepreneurs to establish and scale up their social and environmental enterprises. It sketched out next steps for actions with a goal to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa.

Participants called upon UN agencies, regional organizations, stakeholders and civil society to promote social and environmental entrepreneurship and to provide financial and technical support by fostering cooperation and knowledge sharing on good practices in building inclusive green economies, aligning such efforts under the Africa Green Economy Programme (AGEP) and associated delivery platforms such as the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and the Ten Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Production and Consumption (10YFP).

The participants resolved to integrate green economy into development planning, mobilizing additional private and domestic resources, creating jobs particularly targeting SMEs and informal sector, and promoting entrepreneurship and skills development.

The meeting attracted about 60 participants drawn from 15 different countries in Africa as well as different regional bodies including NEPAD, EAC, ECOWAS; and international agencies including WWF, AfDB, UNDP, GIZ, the Government of the Netherlands and the EC among others.

In conclusion participants acknowledged that green economy is a vehicle to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) found across all 17 SDGs and that increasing investments will help in achieving the economic, social and environmental goals outlined by the global community.

On the margins of the workshop, the Egypt Green Economy Scoping Study was launched by H.E. Dr. Khaled Fahmy, Minister of Environment, Egypt and Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director and Regional Representative, UNEP ROA. This study finds that a shift to a green economy pathway could lead Egypt to achieve annual savings of over US\$1.3 billion in the agriculture sector, and US\$1.1 billion in the water sector, as well as a 13 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions, and a 40 per cent reduction in water consumption.

PAGE - a Catalyst for South Africa's transition to a Green Economy

South Africa has continued to show great commitment to its transition towards a green economy-- since the National Conference on Green Economy in 2010 and the signing of the Green Economy Accord in 2011, Determined to move from an energy intensive economy to a low carbon, resilient economy, South Africa has put in place policies, measures, action plans and initiatives. The country has also established a Green Fund to support the implementation of green initiatives. Despite impressive achievements, the country still continues to face challenges with the translation of policies at a local level and a country and sector-wide implementation of the initiatives.

South Africa requested to join the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and was accepted to become one of the pilot countries. The PAGE initiative is a direct response to the RIO+20 Declaration, which recognized the role of green economy in creating pathways to eradicate poverty and enhance sustainable development. The partnership is a collaboration of five UN agencies: UNEP, UNDP, ILO, UNIDO and UNITAR. The five founding partners of PAGE all work to address different aspects of the green economy. Together, they cover the key cornerstones of the green economy and can provide a comprehensive suite of services and tools that will help countries strategically develop their own green economy pathways. PAGE partners will assist countries in building their green economy strategies and capacities that will enable countries to transform their national economic structures to meet the growing demands and challenges of the future. PAGE provides access to research, knowledge and tools, organizes policy dialogues with and between governments, and provides capacity building and support for policy design and implementation

In March date PAGE partners undertook a scoping mission to South Africa. The objective of the mission was to meet stakeholders and hear their thoughts on where PAGE can assist. Furthermore, the partnership also aimed to explore synergies with existing initiatives like Switch Africa Green. The scoping mission proved to be successful, meeting government, development aid agencies and other stakeholders and returning with many ideas, potential partners and ways forward for continued achievements in Green Economy transition in South Africa. In the next coming months, the 5 collaborating agencies will continue to liaise with partners to develop an action plan for South Africa. The sub-regional office in Pretoria will continue to be closely involved with supporting government and the global PAGE team to ensure a smooth and efficient transition to a green economy for a sustainable future.

Africa Celebrates Africa Environment Day/Life of Wangari Maathai and World Wildlife Day



15 tonnes of elephant tusks burnt by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta during the commemoration of the World Wildlife Day celebrated with Africa Environment Day/Wangari Maathai Day

The President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta graced the celebrations with the torching of 15 tonnes of contraband ivory at the Nairobi National Park as a fight against illegal wildlife trade and its products. The theme for WWD day was "Wildlife Crime is serious, let's get serious about wildlife crime". The ceremony jointly organized by UNEP, African Union Commission (AUC), The government of Kenya and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), brought together more than 1,000 guests among them, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, African Union Commissioner for Rural Agriculture and Economy-, a number of Kenyan Cabinet Secretaries, the United Nations and Members of the international and diplomatic community.

In his remarks, the Kenyan President said: "Kenya had committed to putting their ivory beyond commercial use, a commitment that several African nations made in the London conference of February 2014. It is particularly significant that Kenya has regained position of leadership in the fight to save elephants and we are all elated that this has happened. To ice the cake all Kenya needs to do now is join the African-led Elephant Protection Initiative that was created in February 2014".

He added that the message must remain clear as many of the tusks belong to elephants that were wantonly slaughtered by criminals. We want future generations of Kenyans, Africans and indeed entire world to experience the majesty and beauty of these magnificent animals in the natural world. Poachers and their enablers will not have the last word in Kenya."

UNEP's representative, Ms Mette Wilkie, said UNEP welcomes the progress made in Kenya to address wildlife crime, while recognizing that more needs to be done. The enactment of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act just over a year ago was a clear signal of the Government's determination to hold those responsible for trafficking to account and to deter those who wish to use Kenya as a transit country. The establishment of the forensic and genetic laboratory at the Headquarters of the Kenya Wildlife Service was also a significant step towards detection and enforcement, and the first of its kind in East Africa.

Mette added that at the UN Environment Assembly (also known as UNEA), Member States adopted a resolution calling for reinforced actions and enhanced international coordination to counter the illegal trade in wildlife. The resolution strongly encourages governments to implement their commitments to fight the illegal trade, among other things, targeted actions to eradicate supply, transit and demand for illegal wildlife products. It promotes zero-tolerance policies and the development of sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities adversely affected by the illegal trade. The resolution also called on the United Nations General Assembly in New York to consider the issue at its current session. In doing so, UNEA demonstrated its role as the foremost platform for the environment in the UN system, and in mobilizing further political commitment for a more decisive, coordinated and coherent international effort to address wildlife crime.

WWD was celebrated alongside Africa Environment Day (AED) which is celebrated every year across the Region on March 3rd. Kenya was the regional host for the 2015 celebrations under the theme 'Empower Women for Sustainable Natural Resources Management' which was proposed in view of the theme for the January 2015 AU Summit which was: Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda, 2063. AED is celebrated jointly with Wangari Maathai Day.

In celebration of the theme, the life and work of Wangari Maathai, Africa's first female Nobel laureate, a champion of grassroots environmental activism and founder of the Green Belt Movement, special emphasis was placed on the importance of empowering women in sustainable natural resource management.

African Ministers Call for Strong Paris Agreement, Climate Finance Flows at the 7th African Carbon Forum

With countries set to approve a new and robust climate change agreement under the UN in Paris in December 2015, Ministers from governments across Africa have renewed their call for a strong and universal climate change agreement with increased flows of funds, including through market and finance opportunities, sufficient to fulfill Africa's development aspirations.

This was stressed at The African Carbon Forum 2015 hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco in April. The ministers reiterated the region's readiness and requirement for accelerated private and public financing of low-carbon development. Africa, with its vulnerable populations and vast potential, has perhaps the most to lose from climate change and the most to gain from an effective climate change agreement.

The African Carbon Forum 2015 focused on programmes to unleash private sector finance, such as through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and scale up other forms of climate finance to strengthen the sustainable development of African countries.

A consistent theme during the Forum was the need to preserve and improve the CDM beyond 2020 as a tool for providing continued climate finance and technology to developing countries, especially in Africa. This would capitalize on the capacity and infrastructure already built up by countries and stakeholders.

Key messages that emerged at the African Carbon Forum were: linking climate finance to results is essential to stimulate greater funding for both mitigation and adaptation to climate change; and developing countries, including Africa, need tools like the CDM if they are to successfully shift to a low-carbon emitting development path. Paris provides the continent with a unique opportunity to anchor carbon markets in the long-term climate agenda in line with scaling up climate action and sustainable development based on their national priorities.

The 7th Africa Carbon Forum reinforced the need to have adequate, predictable, sustainable climate finance resources to address Africa's challenges in transitioning to low carbon development, smart agriculture, and sustainable urban development key topics at this year's ACF.

According to the International Energy Agency Africa Energy Outlook 2014, 625 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, about two-thirds of the population, are without secure access to electricity. Some 730 million people in the region still rely on cooking mostly with wood, harming health and destroying vital forest cover.

The Forum organized under the umbrella of the Nairobi Framework by the UNFCCC, United Nations Environment Programme along with the World Bank, African Development Bank and the International Emissions Trading Association brought together over 600 participants from 53 countries, including 23 ministers and/or senior officials, policymakers, project developers and investors, and built on the success of last year's forum which was held in Windhoek, Namibia.

Angola and UNEP Strengthen Cooperation through development of Country Cooperation Framework

UNEP and Angola have agreed to take their cooperation to newer heights by development of a Country Cooperation Framework (CCF). The CCF outlines the critical areas for Angola development, among them: Ecosystem and Biodiversity, Environmental Governance and Regional Cooperation, Climate Change, Environmental Quality, Chemicals and Waste management, Sustainable Consumption and Production, and Disaster Risk Reduction and City Planning. These were arrived at during extensive consultations held with senior government officials with various stakeholders.

This was the result of various consultations between Angola and UNEP. The Angolan Minister for Environment, Mrs. Maria de Fatima Jardim, has on several occasions met with the Director ROA and other UNEP officials and expressed her country's desire to strengthen cooperation with UNEP.

The new partnership will focus on enhancing Angola's ability for environmental monitoring and evaluation and other areas of capacity-building. In this regard, the South-South cooperation will be important in the successful implementation of this partnership as it will increase learning from challenges and how these have been addressed or avoided. Environmental sustainability will strategically position Angola in the achievement of Post 2015 development goals with particular focus on sustainable agriculture, green economy and sustainable consumption and production.

Annual Conference to Exchange Good Practices on Compliance in Namibia

Regulators and industry met on 8 to 9 April in Windhoek to exchange good practices on compliance and collaboration.

The conference was attended by environmental managers, environmental advisors, health and environment officers, environmental impact directors, project managers, mine managers, operations managers, municipal managers, town planners, development managers, and legal compliance officers.

The topics discussed in the conference ranged from strengthening penalties for non-compliant institutions under the Environmental Act of Namibia (2007); finding the right balance between environmental performance and financial prosperity, renewable energy policy and laws, recycling wastes by private sector in small towns, maintaining awareness of environmental compliance via mainstream media; challenges relating to capacity of officials to monitor compliance; contemporary legal issues between intellectual property and genetic resources.

UNEP contributed with a keynote presentation on the topic: Regional and Global Practices on Compliance and Enforcement.

Key outcomes and recommendations of the conference included:

- more understanding is needed among the regulated community on environmental laws and standards to enable them meet environmental requirements.
- creation of guidelines being crucial in assisting industry comply.
- good practices on environmental compliance and enforcement from other countries need to be adapted to suit the Namibian situation
- a call on government to strengthen its enforcement and compliance plans.
- the importance of carrying out cost analysis before making new environmental laws.

UNDP-UNEP POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

The Government of Malawi Institutionalizes a Sustainability Chapter in Annual Budget Guidelines

For the third consecutive year the Government of Malawi has included a chapter on environmental sustainability in its annual budget guidelines. Building on the introduction of a similar chapter in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 budget guidelines, enhanced emphasis this year is being placed on the links between poverty, environment and climate change and ensuring the adherence to the guidelines.

For a country like Malawi that in 2011 was estimated to lose 5.3% of its GDP due to unsustainable use of natural resources, increasing budget allocations for sustainable use of natural resource and more systematically making use of Environmental Impact Assessments is an important step. Increased budget allocations for environmental sustainability are laying the foundation to reverse soil erosion that is estimated to reduce agriculture productivity by 6%, and if this yield is recovered, 1.88 million people could be lifted out of poverty (source: Economic Valuation of Sustainable Natural Resource Use in Malawi, 2011).

The inclusion of a chapter on sustainability in the national budget guidelines shows that the Government of Malawi is institutionalizing poverty-environment mainstreaming and is committed to a more sustainable development path. The UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative has supported the Government of Malawi to mainstream inclusive environmental and natural resource management objectives in policies and budget processes since 2009.



Fish from lake Malawi is an important contributor to livelihoods in Malawi and contribute to the main intake of protein for a majority of the population. Photo ©PEI.

The Mauritanian Ministry of Finance Initiates a Discussion on Adopting a Programme Budget Approach to Strengthen Development Results

The Mauritanian Ministry of Finance, with support from the PEI Mauritania programme, held a workshop in Nouakchott on 11 February to present and discuss the draft report on piloting a programme budget approach in Mauritania. The opening ceremony was presided by the Minister of Finance and also attended by the Minister for Health, the Minister for Water and Sanitation, and the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, and the acting UN Resident Representative.

The discussions spotlighted the importance of adopting an approach that focuses on results in planning and budgeting. The budgeting system in Mauritania remains activity based, without true accountability of funds managers.

The new recommended approach will strengthen the link between the strategies, plans, and sector budgets, and to enable their effective implementation. It will also improve the quality of inter-sectoral coordination, with the goal of implementing joint programs, involving several departments, such as actions in the field of poverty reduction and the environment.

A consensus was reached by participants that the Ministry of Finance should pursue the adoption of a programme-budget approach in future budget cycles with comprehensive support and direction to the sector staff involved in budget preparation, and anticipate that it will require at least five years to put in place.



Opening ceremony of the programme-budget workshop. Photo © PEI

The adoption of the programme-budget approach is partly inspired by a south-south exchange between Mauritania and Burkina Faso, where PEI Mauritania supported five senior government staff to travel to Burkina Faso to learn from their experience in applying a programme budget approach in 2014.

Participants represented a wide range of stakeholders from government ministries and institutions, elected parliamentary representatives, civil society and development partners.

Abidjan Convention to Support Liberia in Mapping Marine and Coastal Areas

Liberia has called on the Abidjan Convention for technical support to map the nation's marine and coastal areas that are likely to be environmentally sensitive to pollution and other phenomena.

A marine and coastal sensitivity map provides authorities guidelines for oil spill response. The map is required to produce a National Oil Spill Contingency and Response Plan, a priority for the Abidjan Convention given the surge in oil exploration and exploitation in the Gulf of Guinea and beyond.

The Liberian environmental agency has also requested the Convention to assist in determining measures required to restore the Mesurado River that cuts through the capital, Monrovia, host to about one-fourth of the country's 4.4 million people. Industries and solid waste from Monrovia have polluted the Mesurado and now poses a danger to city residents, as well as coastal and marine life. Fishing is major activity of the peoples of Liberia and a major source of protein. However, unregulated and unreported artisanal fisheries have also added to the country's pollution woes.

The Convention has already set up an Emergency Coordination Centre for Marine Pollution in Nigeria. Similar mapping support has been offered to Sierra Leone, which borders Liberia to the west. Both countries are signatories to the Abidjan Convention, a legal framework to safeguard marine and coastal ecosystems of the 22 countries from Mauritania to the western seaboard of South Africa.

Abidjan Convention to Support West Africa States to Stop Seaweed Menace

Ghana appealed to UNEP for technical support to halt the brown seaweed threat in West Africa.

H.E Mahama Ayariga, Minister for Environment of Ghana, said that seaweed is a sub-regional phenomenon that it is causing serious environmental problems in Ghana and disrupting fishing as well as tourism. Ghana is one of Africa's major fishing nations. The country has an annual landing of hundreds of thousands of fish, potentially earning it tens of millions in sales.

Photo credit © Jacques Abe



The seaweed menace stems from the Sargasso Sea, which has the World's greatest concentration of Sargassum. The sea is hemmed in to the north by the North Atlantic Current, to the west by the Gulf Stream, and to the east by the Canary Current. Together they form the North Atlantic Gyre, one of five worldwide. Marine plants and refuse from these currents deposit into this Gyre. The resulting seaweed has drifted from this area to other shores of the west and eastern Atlantic, possibly brought by the Canary Current that runs south and westward brushing upper West Africa.

UNEP representative said that Côte d'Ivoire had also approached the Secretariat seeking for measures to be taken to deal with the seaweed invasion along the shores of Grand-Bassam, a UNESCO world Heritage site and Côte d'Ivoire's first capital.

Three activities will be organized in 2015 to support Ghana. They include a regional training workshop on Strategic Environmental Assessment of oil and gas development projects; production of a documentary film on the socioeconomic potential of the coastal zones of Ghana; and engagement of a Panel of Experts for the development of a legally binding additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management, with focus on the blue economy.

The blue economy is the marine equivalent of the green economy. It is expected to lead to significant earnings through creation of more jobs and a far greater likelihood of keeping marine and coastal environments free of pollution and depletion of resources.

UNEP Equips Experts with Advanced Technology to Explore the Untapped Geothermal Resources in Africa

Together with the Icelandic International Development Facility (ICEIDA), UNEP provided technical support to national experts from Ethiopia and Kenya to acquire and use the Geothermal Leapfrog Software.

Using 3D conceptual model, the new software will help African experts processing various geo-scientific data of the UNEP ARGeo supported project and the Tendaho Geothermal Prospect.

The technical support provided by UNEP through the ARGeo project will boost experts capacity to develop a three dimensional (3D) Conceptual model of the geothermal systems. This conceptual model will provide experts with information on location of target sites for drilling and minimizes risk of drilling dry wells while maximizing the chance of productive wells.

A total of 10 experts from Ethiopia and Kenya are now well equipped with this advanced technology to collect and integrate relevant geothermal data. They are also able to develop conceptual models of geothermal systems.

To support African countries attracting private investments to develop geothermal, UNEP, IGA-East African Regional Branch and ICEIDA organized an African side event during the World Geothermal Congress (WGC) 2015 which was held in Melbourne, Australia from 19 to 25 April 2015. The side event provided a platform to showcase and share information on Geothermal activities in Africa with Global geothermal communities, developers, and investors.

ARGeo is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded regional project being implemented by United Nations Environment Programme whose core objectives entail promoting geothermal resource exploration, development and utilization as well as catalyzing private and public investment to accelerate development of geothermal energy through mitigation of risks associated with resource exploration. The project aims at supporting the development of the large untapped geothermal resource potential in the Eastern Africa region with the main objective of reducing the risks associated with the resource's exploration.

UNEP Establishes a Consortium of Universities to Develop Curricula on Waste Management



The world population currently stands at 7.3 billion; it is projected that it will have crossed the 9 billion mark by 2050. More than half of the world's population now resides in cities. The increase in urban populations coupled with rising income levels is resulting in a change in consumption and production patterns, and hence, in growing amounts of municipal waste.

To support African countries overcome this challenge, UNEP is supporting a major initiative for local, national and regional capacity building on waste management in Africa. Experts from selected Universities met in Nairobi on 25 March to discuss the development of an academic curricula for waste management and agreed to establish a consortium of Universities to develop this curricula.

The Consortium aims to stimulate a holistic waste management approach to train the next generation of experts through the creation of educational modules and training courses. The Consortium will develop a unique Master (One year professional/executive Masters) programme to equip students, waste managers, policy makers, and technicians in Africa with both technical and managerial tools on holistic waste management. This is because most of the existing academic curriculum and other capacity building programmes on waste management have a compartmentalized approach of dealing with solid waste management, wastewater treatment, and gaseous emissions. Usually, these stages of waste are not considered from a holistic perspective in an integrated urban waste management planning approach.

This development of a holistic approach project will be jointly implemented as part of UNEP Programme of Work, through the UNEP International Environmental Technology Center (IETC) based in Osaka, Japan and the UNEP Regional Office for Africa. The project shall also be implemented in coordination with UN Habitat and other relevant partners such as NOPS.

Support to the Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) in member countries of COMIFAC

UNEP is executing a Regional project for the members of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) to support the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The project, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility, has ten participating countries i.e. Burundi; Cameroon; Chad; Central African Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Republic of Congo; Rwanda; and Sao Tome & Principe. Four countries (Burundi, DR Congo, Gabon, and Rwanda) have already ratified the Protocol and need support for its implementation. The rest of COMIFAC countries have not yet ratified the Protocol.

The inception workshop for this project took place in Kigali on 16-17 March, in collaboration with the COMIFAC Secretariat, and Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) which hosted it. The objectives of the workshop were to: facilitate exchange of experiences and lessons learned from the ratification process; promote awareness and advocacy on the obligations of countries under the Nagoya Protocol; and develop national roadmaps towards ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.



The workshop brought together 35 participants from members of COMIFAC, partner organizations, such as IUCN, GIZ, ABS Capacity Development Initiative and the CBD Secretariat among others to discuss how to support the countries to develop these national road maps.

During the opening, the Director General of REMA, Ms. Rose Mukankomeje stressed the importance of the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in the sub-region as the Protocol protects the rights of provider countries and of indigenous and local communities that allow their genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge to be used. She added that the protocol also gives researchers in user countries improved, simple and reliable access to quality samples of genetic resources. Rwanda being one of the first African countries that ratified the Protocol in March 2012, she shared steps taken by her country including the involvement of key stakeholders in the ratification process.

The workshop provided a platform for sharing the various provisions of the Nagoya Protocol and steps each country has to take in developing and adopting legislative, administrative and policy measures that suit its particular situation and govern access to genetic resources and associated Traditional Knowledge under its authority.

It was further discussed that functioning ABS policies and regulatory frameworks at the national level are essential if ABS mechanisms are to have a positive impact on sustainable development, poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. Such legislations/regulations should be linked to provisions on land and property rights, access to resources, national market mechanisms, profit sharing, technology transfer, capacity building, as well as to the recognition of traditional knowledge (TK) and intellectual property (IP). Thus, governments need to establish a broad participatory process to raise awareness and to ensure a balanced policy development and support of all stakeholders including the civil society and the private sector. These developments need to be linked to regional and international policy development and implementation activities.

African Countries Adopt a Common Strategy to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade



Left to right: Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture at the African Union, H.E Firmin Ayessa, Minister of state, Congo, - H.E Henry Djombo, Minister of Forest Economy and Sustainable Development, UNDP representative, Rosalie, Matondo, Advisor to the President of the Republic

The conference developed the first-ever Africa-wide strategy to tackle the illegal trade in wild fauna and flora. It was qualified by some partners as a millstone and a turning point in fighting against illicit wildlife trade in Africa and the world. The Conference was held in Brazzaville from 27 to 30 April 2015. It was attended by H.E President Sassou Nguesso, H.E. President Idriss Déby of Chad, Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, and representatives from other UN agencies including UNDP, UNODC and World Bank, among others.

Addressing the participants H.E President Sassou Nguesso said: "Forests and wildlife are part of our common African heritage but are disappearing at an alarming pace. We have a duty to work together, as a continent, to safeguard our unique biodiversity for present and future generations and to craft strong collective solutions to address this calamity."

"The plundering machine is forging ahead. I urge the international community to further mobilize against environmental crime and to commit firmly for this cause, the same way they are engaged in the fight against climate change and other global challenges," he added.

The objective of the strategy is to prevent, reduce and eventually eliminate illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa. Beyond confirming the political commitment of African countries to stop the illegal wildlife crimes, the strategy will enhance regional and international cooperation, strengthening the enforcement and compliance in illegal wildlife trade, promoting inclusive governance of wildlife, strengthen technology, and raising awareness and information sharing.

"Stopping national riches from being sold out cannot happen without modernizing legal frameworks. In many countries, engaging legal reforms will be necessary to forestall corruption and complicity at the national and outside of origin countries," said Ibrahim Thiaw, the Deputy Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The strategy addresses issues relating to source, transit and destinations of illegally wildlife fauna and flora. It guides a common, coordinated response as well as actions by African Countries to fight illegal wildlife trade. It also aims at operationalizing decisions reached at various international fora, and mobilization necessary resource to support its implementation.

May
4-5
2015

Basel COP 12, Rotterdam COP 7 and Stockholm COP 7 *Geneva, Switzerland*

May
14-15
2015

3GFAFR Meeting

The 3GFAFR meeting will address key African green growth policy and sectoral priorities and look at how regional and international partnerships could help to accelerate the implementation of green growth plans and priorities. *Nairobi, Kenya*



May
24
2015

AMCEN Steering Committee Meeting RFP

May
25-26
2015

AMCEN Bureau Meeting, Cairo, Egypt

June
5
2015

World Environment Day

The WED theme this year is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. *Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire*



June
8
2015

World Oceans Day

The theme this year is "Healthy oceans, healthy planet"

