

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ACP MEAS 3 PROGRAMME

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PROGRAMME



ACP MEAs 3 Programme Partner

Programme Contacts

Email: balakrishna.pisupati@un.org or
ladu.lemi@un.org

Twitter: [@MeasAcp](https://twitter.com/MeasAcp)

YouTube: [ACP MEAs Programme](https://www.youtube.com/ACPMEAsProgramme)

Website: www.acpmeas.com

SOME SNIPPETS

The ACP MEAs is an EU-UNEP partnership programme that began in March 2009 as an initiative of the European Commission to address challenging environmental issues through the implementation of the MEAs in the African, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP) regions. The programme is currently in its third phase of implementation, aiming to assist 79 ACP-countries to enforce and comply with MEAs related to biodiversity and chemicals and waste and to deal with issues of Ocean/Seas governance.

Key actions through the programme in the last quarter include:

- Facilitation Women and Youth in Waste Management –3rd Clean Pacific Roundtable;
- Conducting sensitization workshops on the Caribbean region's legal framework on Marine Pollution;
- Holding collaborative meeting with government of Trinidad and Tobago to support the phase out of mercury added products;
- Addressing mangrove restoration and Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in the Caribbean;
- Launching of the ACP MEAs Programme-SAMOA Pathway Strategy to achieve SIDS Development;
- Organization of an annual Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting;
- Developing Land-Based Sources (LBS) of Marine Pollution Protocol and the Caribbean Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (RAPMaLi) to help the region deal with issues of marine litter.

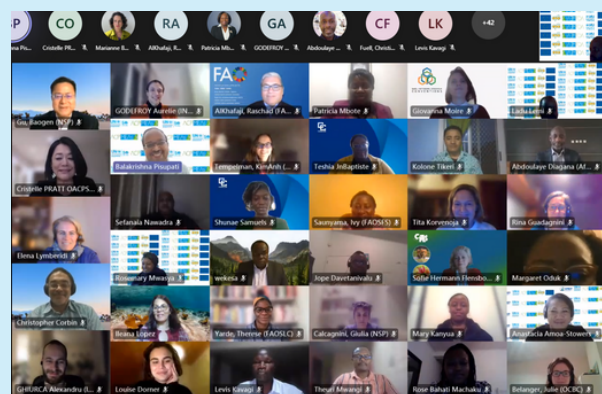
Special Focus on the African Region

2021 ACP MEAs 3 Annual Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting for 2021 Ends with New Implementation Ideas

The Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific Countries (ACP MEAs) Programme is an initiative of the Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (OACPS) funded by the European Union, under the Intra-ACP envelope of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is the high-level decision-making body of the programme whose mandate is to oversee and validate the overall direction, policy and coherence of the Programme, and provide guidance on specific outputs, discuss, amend and approve the Programme activities and reports.

From 7-8 (or 8-9 Pacific dates) December 2021, the committee held virtually its second annual PSC meeting for ACP MEAs 3 programme which together 62 participants representing more than 15 various institutions to (i) review and update on the status of implementation of the programme, impacts made, and lessons learned; (ii) discuss the workplan and budget from all partners, confirm any modifications, considering the pandemic related restrictions and delays and approve the same, including the associated budgets; and (iii) identify strategic priorities and cross-cutting issues and enhance the visibility and outreach of the programme. During the two days, the programme implementing partners presented details of activities undertaken in 2021, highlighted impacts that programme created, lessons learnt, gender and communication actions and challenges encountered.



Participants during the PSC meeting, December 2021

In order to ensure successful implementation of the programme, the PSC was requested for a no-cost extension to account for the one-year delay in 2020/2021 occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic and promote exchange programmes for learning purposes and best practices including south-south cooperation for the duration of the programme. On the other hand, the ACP MEAs 3 programme partners will internalize some elements of the programme within their institutions for an effective knowledge management and capacity development and also identify activities that would benefit from partnerships and synergies while strategically assessing opportunities for the synergized implementation of MEAs and proactively share networks relevant to policy work to ensure a more coherent implementation of the programme and strengthening cross regional partnerships through south-south cooperation.

For a detailed meeting report, please contact Dr.

Balakrishna Pisupati or Ladu Lemi at

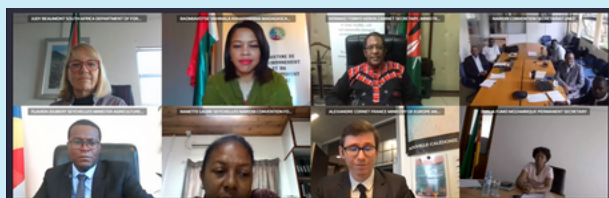
Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org or

Ladu.lemi@un.org

Governments in the Western Indian Ocean Region Agreed to New Actions to Protect, Manage and Develop the Ocean Resources of the Region

The Nairobi Convention Secretariat recently convened its tenth biennial Conferences of Parties (COP10) in November 2021. The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making forum of the Nairobi Convention where

policies and strategies are agreed on to continue the protection, management, and development of the Western Indian Ocean. Hosted by Madagascar, the Nairobi Convention COP10 brought together the 10 signatory countries to the treaty– Comoros, Kenya, France, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania. Contracting parties adopted decisions to protect and manage the Western Indian Ocean and discussed and approved the Programme of Work of the Secretariat for 2022-2024 period. A detailed outline of all adopted COP10 decisions can be found [here](#). The three-day meeting was broken into two segments: a partners, experts, and national Focal Points meeting on 23-24 November 2021, and a high segment for Heads of Delegation meeting on 25 November 2021.



Heads of Delegation during the 10th Conference of Parties of the Nairobi Convention

Discussions during the tenth Nairobi Convention COP10 reflected on the progress made by Contracting Parties in protecting the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region since 2018, which include among others;

- Ratification of the Amended Nairobi Convention and the Land Based Sources Activities (LBSA) Protocol by four member countries and agreement to the final language of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) protocol
- Full commencement of the Project on African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries Capacity Building of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP-MEAs 3). The project has supported the initialization of the review of the Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region to ensure its consistency with the 2010 Amended Nairobi Convention.
- Development of a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and establishment of a regional

taskforce on marine litter and microplastics. The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter will inform the ongoing development of National Marine Litter Action Plans in Comoros and Tanzania, with the support of ACP MEAs 3 project.

The COP10 was preceded by a regional, virtual science to policy dialogue held on 23-25th March 2021, as well as a partnership meeting held on 30th and 31st August 2021 that brought together representatives of the consortium for the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-C), representatives of regional economic communities (RECs) and commissions, regional fisheries bodies, the Forum for Academic and Research Institutions (FARI), representatives of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat and other partners. During the science to policy dialogue meeting that saw 238 participants attend virtually, thirty-three papers were presented, and key Policy recommendations identified for consideration by Contracting Parties of the Nairobi Convention.

Furthermore, the partnership meeting, which had 74 attendees, allowed for sharing of priority issues and highlighted possible policy interventions relevant to fisheries and marine environment-related interventions by the Nairobi Convention. A final pre-COP10 meeting of the Convention's National Focal Points took place 21-22 October 2021 to review the draft decisions that were eventually presented during COP10. Reports of the science to policy, partnership and focal points meetings are available at the [Convention's Clearinghouse website](#).

For further information, please contact Theuri

 Mwangi at theuri.mwangi@un.org

Creating Synergetic Actions In ACP MEAs 3 Programme Implementation

Earlier this year (March 22-24, 2021), the Abidjan Convention organized a regional virtual workshop to showcase the activities of the ACP MEAs 3 programme implemented by the Convention and to collect experts' contributions and suggestions for best criteria for the implementation of the programme activities and to identify synergies with other regional and or national projects.



Abidjan Convention's Meeting Announcement

The workshop brought together participants from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal as well as from regional and international organizations including the Regional Partnership for the Conservation of the Coastal Zone of West Africa (PRCM), the West African Marine Protected Areas Network (RAMPAO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the WACA-ResIP project, the Ecological Monitoring Centre, WWF, SST, CEMLAWS Africa, FASEP among others.

Using a working groups approach to review the programme activities under the domains of Plastic, Communication, MPA and Governance in order to identify synergies, the groups discussed and made the following recommendations:

Communication: Define a list of key messages relating to both plastic pollution and other issues, including MPAs, avail scientific information with statistical data to inform key messages and advocacy, raise awareness using communication tools such as drama in local languages and comic books, establish a network of champions predicated on key themes and build their capacity through training sessions and the provision of relevant communication tools, create awareness among politicians of the negative impacts of plastic and the opportunities of the enhancement of plastic waste and establish communities of practice that will be mobilizing a critical mass of role-players about issues like ocean governance, plastic pollution, MPAs.

MPA: Develop a framework for managing plastic pollution at the MPA level by identifying sources of pollution and developing monitoring systems, implementing regulatory arrangements and involving key stakeholders in waste management, including local communities.

Governance and plastics: To craft the intervention strategy of the Convention on alliances to incorporate the States Parties' concerns into the holistic vision of AMCEN, in particular on plastics waste, the need to ensure waste management in coastal countries and the countries of the hinterland, promote regional governance of plastics by engaging existing Economic Communities (i.e. ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC) and implementing related action plans against plastic pollution, and implementing marine spatial planning tools and the role of MPAs in a comprehensive multi-sectoral planning process in terms of marine and coastal spatial planning.

The meeting also discussed and agreed on modalities on how to better support Contracting Parties in implementing the ACP MEAs 3 programme in the Abidjan Convention region at the national levels.

For further information, please contact

 Abdoulaye Diagana at abdoulaye.diagana@un.org

News From Other Regions

Women and Youth in Waste Management – 3rd Clean Pacific Roundtable

From 16-25 November 2021, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) facilitated virtually the Third Clean Pacific Roundtable under the theme creating a safe Pacific Circular Economy; waste industry-based enterprise with enhanced public-private partnerships through technology innovations; and bridging people and waste by enhancing consciousness in managing waste. The Roundtable was designed to promote networking and dialogue, improve donor coordination, mobilize technical and financial resources and to monitor the progress of the Cleaner Pacific 2025.



Participants segregating solid wastes during a cleaning event in the Pacific

Waste and pollution management is a major problem for the Pacific, threatening sustainable development. Human activities such as industrial and agricultural run-off, marine debris, oil and chemical pollution, population growth, coastal development and modernization, overfishing and resources extraction are putting pressure on the environment leading to unprecedented waste and pollution. This challenge has prompted Hon. Josep Manaute, the New Caledonia Minister of Environment and Chair of the meeting to call for an ambitious global and coordinated response to waste management and pollution control. He also reminded that waste management and prevention of pollution is everyone's responsibility, both at the local and international level.

The Third Clean Pacific Roundtable forum is an important platform to discuss progressing innovative solutions and capitalizing on new initiatives towards a pollution-free Pacific. The Cleaner Pacific 2025 is a regional Blueprint which combines the efforts of SPREP's key regional partners, EU, AFD, JICA and Australian Aid, to assist Pacific Island communities to improve waste and pollution management practices.

The Roundtable focused on a broad range of waste management issues, including hazardous chemicals, healthcare medical waste, asbestos, mercury, used oil, solid waste management, disaster waste management, sustainable financing, legislation, and policy.

At this Roundtable a side event organized by SPREP's ACP MEAs 3 Programme which featured key activities involving women and youth from Caribbean and Africa regions in support of cross regional exchange of knowledge and information, and to explore opportunities to work with other regional hubs. This side event also gives the opportunity for the ACP MEA hubs to share and learn from each other and to strengthen our networks while implementing the ACP MEA Phase 3 Programme activities.

For further information, please contact Ms.

 Anastacia Amoa-Stowers at anastacias@sprep.org

Upgraded Portals to Improve Access to Environmental Data in the Pacific

Environmental data management and availability is important for an informed decision-making process in environmental governance. This was reiterated during the official launch of the upgraded environmental data portals developed by the SPREP through the Inform Project.

The inform project has developed a network of data portals throughout the Pacific for each of its 14 Pacific Island member countries for cataloguing and sharing of national environmental data. The portals were set up as a data

management mechanism, enabling member countries to make informed decisions based on useful insights on collected data.



SPREP senior officials at the launching of the upgraded environmental data portals

The data portals were initially launched in 2018 and has since amassed a staggering total of over 12,000 datasets that have been created by either SPREP, national environment ministries, or related partners operating in the Pacific region. They cover a range of environmental thematic topics such as climate change, biodiversity, built environment, land, inland waters and other thematic areas.

SPREP Deputy Director General, Mr. Stuart Chape revealed that the resources contained in the datasets have formed the basis and justification of many priorities that Member countries are obligated to report on, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as national State of Environment reports.

The Pacific Environment Portal has been upgraded from Drupal 7 to the latest Drupal 9 platform, incorporating all the security updates and additional features from the global open-source community. As part of the upgrade, all previous core functionality in each of the data portals have been retained. The user interface has also been revamped for ease of use and overall improve stability, and the search function has been rebuilt to make it easier to find datasets and related content. The upgraded data portals can be accessed at www.pacific-data.sprep.org

For further information, please contact Ms.



Anastacia Amoa-Stowers at
anastacias@sprep.org

Governments in the Wider Caribbean Benefitted from Sensitization Workshops on the Region's Legal Framework on Marine Pollution

During the month of November 2021, the UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat hosted two workshops for Non-Contracting Parties to its Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS). The objective of the workshops was to assess the level of national progress in the ratification of the LBS Protocol, identify major barriers to ratification and the type of support that could be provided by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, the LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs), through ongoing programmes, projects and activities.

These workshops directly supported the Secretariat's efforts to strengthen the governance framework of the LBS Protocol in the region and increase national awareness about the importance of this legal instrument in addressing marine pollution. One workshop targeted English and Dutch-speaking countries, while the other was held with Spanish-speaking countries in the Wider Caribbean. Both sessions were supported by the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) in Trinidad and Tobago and the Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport (CIMAB) in Cuba, in their capacity as Regional Activity Centres for the LBS Protocol. Members of the Secretariat's Regional Activity Network were also in attendance.

A total of 9 Non-Contracting Parties including Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Curacao, Cuba, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela benefitted from the presentations and discussions. The sessions were interactive, allowing focal points to share their feedback on discussion questions and seek clarification on issues of concern. Among the barriers to ratification, focal points noted the need for capacity-building to strengthen their monitoring capabilities, a lack of understanding by stakeholders on the economic, social and environmental impacts of pollution, personnel changes at the ministerial level and the restruct-

uring of political priorities.

During one of the workshops, participants were able to hear first-hand about the challenges and lessons learnt from Barbados throughout their ratification process. Barbados is the most recent country to ratify the LBS Protocol, having done so in June 2019.

At the end of the sessions, focal points expressed that they had a better understanding of the Protocol and its benefits. They also shared their immediate next steps following the workshop and their willingness to further engage with the Secretariat and LBS Regional Activity Centres to request specific training and support for ratification.

The LBS Protocol of the Cartagena Convention is the only agreement of its kind for the protection of the Caribbean Sea against marine pollution. It consists of a set of procedures developed to respond to the need to protect the marine environment and human health from land-based point and non-point sources of marine pollution. To date, 15 governments in the region have ratified this Protocol.

Download a copy of the LBS Protocol at:
<https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/policy-and-strategy/lbs-protocol-text>

For further information, please contact

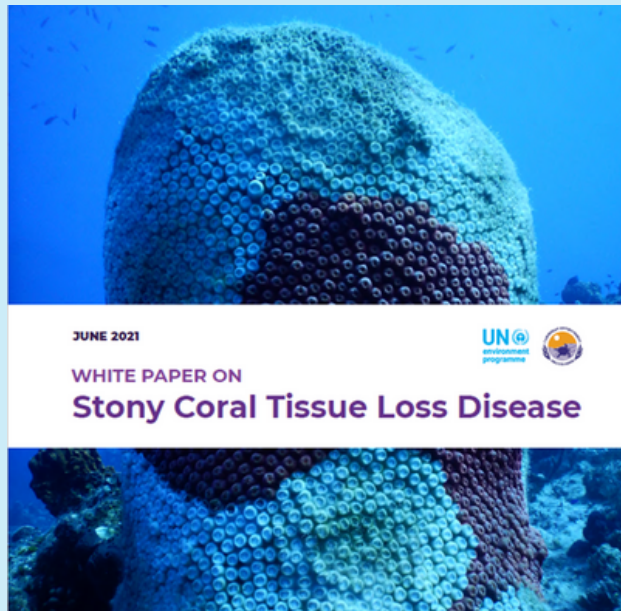


Christopher Corbin at
christopher.corbin@un.org

Addressing Mangrove Restoration and Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in the Caribbean

Mangroves in the Mesoamerican Reef Region (MAR) and the Wider Caribbean are the economic foundation of over 134 million people living in the coastal regions. Due to their close relationship with other ecosystems, such as coral reefs and seagrasses, mangroves and the ecosystem services they provide are the conservation pillars of coastal ecosystems. The vast spreading coral reefs of the Caribbean alone consist of over 60 species of corals and 1,500 species of fish. Both mangroves and coral reefs are crucially important for local economy, creating income for tourism, fisheries, pharma-

ceutical industries, as well as protecting the coastline and vulnerable communities against the impacts of climate change, erosion, flooding, hurricane and storm damage. However, these vital coastal ecosystems of the Caribbean face serious pressures.



Great star coral (*Montastrea cavernosa*) affected by Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease. Photo credits: Alizee Zimmermann

Mangroves are threatened by changes in land use, urban development, natural events, industry, and extraction of timber products, whilst the region's unique coral reef ecosystems face a new threat: Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD). First discovered in Florida in 2014, SCTLD is a rapidly spreading disease which has now spread to the Caribbean affecting over 20 species of hard corals in the region.

In order to sustain the livelihoods of the Caribbean people and protect them from floods and hurricanes, to which the region is highly vulnerable, it is vital to conserve these coastal ecosystems. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Cartagena Convention Secretariat works to improve the management of marine protected areas (MPAs) and enhance marine biodiversity in the region. The Secretariat, through its Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Sub-Programme, aims to continue working towards establishing a functional ecological network of SPA-listed MPAs covering interconnected marine and associated habitats and ecosystems for

restoring and sustaining the health of oceans. This directly contributes to the objective of ACP MEA 3 programme to improve the enforcement of and compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements related to biodiversity.

In October 2021, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) launched a new White Paper to help regional partners make informed decisions about coral disease monitoring and response to the newly identified SCTLD, where more than [69 persons attended the launching](#). The questions raised by participants, along with their active participation, demonstrated keen interest and concern about the topic, with proposed recommendations focusing on the need to follow up with capacity building efforts and a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach in addressing challenges jointly in the region.

The new paper provides a comprehensive overview about the coral disease – from its distinguishing characteristics and appropriate monitoring strategies, to its impacts on coral reef ecosystems and threat to economies in the region. It presents a series of recommended actions that can be adopted by stakeholders at various levels in the Wider Caribbean to help reduce the impacts of this coral disease.

In addition, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat together with the Ridge to Reef Integrated Management Project of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion (MAR2R/CCAD/WWF-GEF) and Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund) hosted [a virtual launch](#)

Available resources include:

- SCTLD White Paper at: <https://www.un/ep.org/cep/resources/publication/white-paper-stony-coral-tissue-loss-disease>.
- Mangrove restoration manual in Spanish: <https://marfund.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Manual-Restauracion-de-Manglar.pdf>

For further information, please contact



Christopher Corbin at

christopher.corbin@un.org

How Marine Pollution is Harming Caribbean Marine Ecosystems and Related Livelihoods

Few sources of pollution affect a wider area or a larger number of people globally than marine litter or debris. In the Caribbean, plastic waste is a major problem. In 2015 alone, 1.3 million tons of plastic were discharged into Caribbean waters and in 2019, 10 Caribbean countries were among the top 30 plastic waste producers globally. Seventy to eighty-five per cent of marine litter in the Caribbean Sea comes from land, and most of it consists of plastics. Together with agrochemical run-off and domestic wastewater, it is one of three priority pollutants for the Wider Caribbean region.



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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_13680

