

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



United Nations Environment Programme



UNEP ANNUAL REPORT 2011

The mission of the United Nations Environment Programme 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.

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MESSAGE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY- GENERAL



BAN KI-MOON
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Addressing inequalities, overcoming poverty, maintaining peace and building prosperity for the entire human family depend on rejecting the old economics of heedless pollution and the excessive exploitation of the world's natural capital.

The global population has reached 7 billion people. In just five years, we will add another half billion people – all needing food, jobs, security and opportunity. Environmental, economic and social indicators tell us that our current model of progress is unsustainable. Ecosystems are under stress. Economies are faltering. We need to chart a course that strengthens equality and economic growth while protecting our planet.

In less than six months, leaders from governments, business and civil society will meet in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. Rio+20 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put the world on a more sustainable path – to

expand on the blueprint provided by the 1992 Earth Summit and create the future we want.

I expect UNEP to play a central role in helping to deliver on the promise of Rio+20 by continuing to provide the cutting-edge ideas the world needs. UNEP is a pioneer of the green economy, which is one of the themes of Rio+20. It is also responsible for much of the science on which a sustainable future will be built – from its involvement in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to its own Global Environment Outlook family of assessment reports. It is essential that we act on the science of sustainability.

This Annual Report shows the full range of UNEP's work for environment and development. It also illuminates how the UN system as a whole is increasingly Delivering as One with respect to sustainability. Anyone interested in making green economy and sustainability principles an integral part of their decision making will find this volume rich in theory and practice. I commend it to a wide global audience.

Ki Mow Ban



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"The global population has reached 7 billion people..."

We need to chart a course that strengthens equality and economic growth while protecting our planet."

INTRODUCTION BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ACHIM STEINER
UNEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Propelled by the global preparations for Rio+20, set against the backdrop of the ongoing economic and emerging employment crisis, 2011 marked a year of reflection and re-engagement on fresh ways of scaling-up and accelerating sustainable development.

UNEP, through its Green Economy work involving partners world-wide, provided to the Rio+20 regional preparatory meetings compelling analysis indicating investing two per cent of global GDP in 10 key sectors of the economy could—backed by the right kinds of creative policy switches—grow economies and generate jobs but in ways that keep humanity's footprint within ecological boundaries.

Indeed as the year closed, support for taking forward the Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication at Rio+20 had gained traction across the vast majority of member states.

The work also acted as a catalyst for improved coordination within the United Nations System in part via the Environmental Management Group, which as UNEP Executive Director, I have the honour to chair.

The EMG's two landmark reports in 2011—one on desertification and the other on the Green Economy—underpinned a fresh and evolving determination of a 'One UN' to put environmental sustainability at the centre of its work. 2011 also witnessed rapidly intensifying

debate among governments, civil society and the private sector on the second major theme of Rio+20—an institutional framework for sustainable development—with UNEP providing advice and support on the options in respect to the international environmental governance dimension.

The message from the UNEP Governing Council earlier in the year, and echoed through the Rio+20 preparatory meetings, was that the status quo is not an option.

The structures, architecture and delivery systems founded in a previous century need a fresh sense of realism and direction if the aims, ambitions and opportunities of a new century are to be realized.

In terms of strengthening UNEP as it stands today, 2011 also marked a moment when many of the reform measures introduced in 2008 really began to flourish.

An internal evaluation, drafted in 2011, concludes that out of 21 expected accomplishments in the UNEP Programme of Work, 15 are fully achieved, 5 partially achieved and 1 insufficiently met.

The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) review was also supportive of what UNEP has achieved so far in terms of, for example, results-based management and project accomplishments.

This year's annual report is also rich in cutting edge assessments and projects, some of which were launched several years ago but reached completion or took on fresh relevance in 2011.

Let me perhaps single out some of special relevance and resonance for UNEP.

In August, we handed over the **Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland** to Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan—the first report ever to provide to the government and to the public systematic and scientific evidence on the nature, extent and impacts of oil contamination dating back over half a century.

We believe that the findings can catalyse not only significant environmental and social improvements in the region but a strategic policy on how the oil industry there will function in a way that truly benefits the lives and livelihoods of these communities now and in the future. The decoupling report by the UNEP-hosted International Resource Panel estimated that the consumption of natural resources will triple by 2050 to some 140 billion tonnes while highlighting some countries that are starting to de-link GDP growth from resource use.

The environmental changes that have swept the planet over the last twenty years were spotlighted in a new compilation of statistical data—**Keeping Track of our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20**.

The worrying decline in bee colonies in many parts of the world, and the links to agricultural productivity in respect to lost pollination services, was also brought into sharp focus through a UNEP-led assessment that highlighted 12 possible factors from losses of flowering plants to insecticides and air pollution.

UNEP's two assessment reports on the health, agricultural and climate benefits of fast action on short-lived climate forcers were also in many ways special, building on over a decade's worth of work on black carbon and other 'non-CO₂' pollutants.

They and the 'emissions gap' report for the Durban climate conference offer additional shining examples of how the organization's science base is responding to new challenges

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, nations demonstrated forward-looking leadership and governance by requesting UNEP to spearhead a broad partnership to phase out lead in petrol across the developing world.

In 2011 UNEP supported a peer-reviewed paper by scientists on the value to the global economy of the phase-out: the answer, annually over 1.2 million less premature deaths and savings of \$2.4 trillion a year in terms of reduced health costs to declines in criminality.

In a sense this brings the work of UNEP in 2011 full circle, back to the Green Economy with its potential to deal with multiple challenges and assist the international community realize and implement sustainable development while fulfilling the promise and the intent of world leaders when they met in Rio nearly 20 years ago.

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