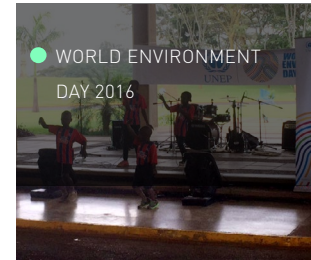




REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA NEWSLETTER

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

MAY-JUNE 2016





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UNEA

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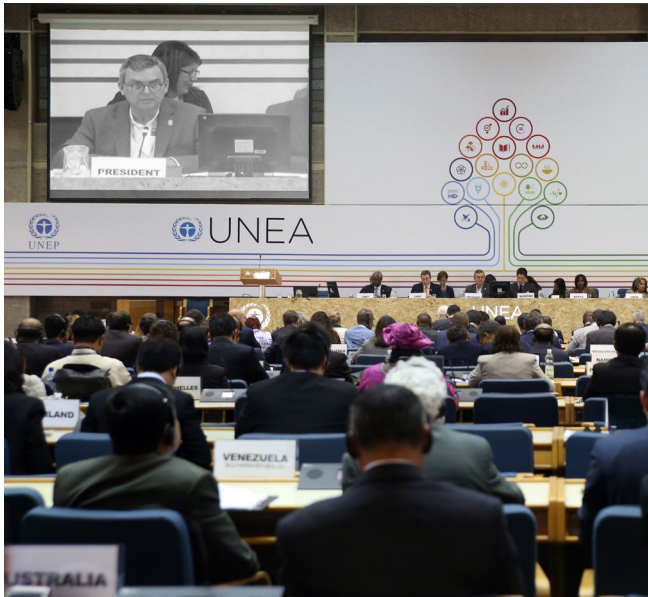


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STRONG AFRICAN PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP AT UNEA-2



UNEA-2 was held from 23-27 May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya under the overarching theme of 'Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

With 160 delegations including 49 from Africa, the last week of May was a beehive at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, where environment ministers and delegates from all over the world gathered for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2). The delegates had a plateful to discuss, with the aim of reaching decisions on a number of environmental issues ranging from the illegal trade in wildlife, chemicals and waste, marine litter, biodiversity, armed conflicts, natural capital, oceans and seas, multilateral environment agreements among many others.

UNEA-2 aimed to bring together member states and other stakeholders to agree on the best actions forward to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Climate Agreement.

A Science-Policy Forum on May 19-20 and a Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on May 21-22, 2016, preceded the official opening of UNEA-2, while a Sustainable Innovation Expo ran parallel with UNEA-2. All of these side events attracted participants from African countries, many of whom had exhibition stands showcasing their work. Delegates from Africa consisted of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and focal points from Ministries as well as representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations.

Africa tabled a number of proposals at UNEA-2 that were agreed upon by member states during the Sixth Special Session of AMCEN held in April in Cairo and pushed for adoption of resolutions on the same. In addition, a number of round-tables and panel discussions also featured delegates from Africa who shared their views, experiences and expertise on topics under discussion within the agenda of the conference. The Regional Office for Africa facilitated a high level ministerial panel discussion on Illegal Trade in Wildlife, a media round table on Natural Capital and a luncheon on prioritizing gender into the sustainable development agenda. The resolutions adopted at the end of UNEA-2 signaled a victory for Africa as they included four resolutions championed by African governments on Land Degradation, desertification and sustainable pastoralism, illegal trade in wildlife, and sustainable management of natural capital.

A common message emanating from participants at the conference was the need for less talk and more accelerated action in implementation of policies towards realization of the SDGs. Delegates called for better partnerships and enhanced collaboration in implementation of the resolutions adopted at UNEA-2, urging member states to be diligent in taking concrete and urgent action steps at national and regional levels towards promoting and achieving sustainable development.

UNEA-2 officially closed on May 28th with the adoption of 25 resolutions decisions. The next UNEA session will be held in December 2017.

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR MEETS AFRICAN MINISTERS FOR ENVIRONMENT DURING UNEA-2

The UNEP Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, held several bilateral meetings with African Ministers for Environment and other partners during the UNEA-2 conference in Nairobi.

The consultative bilateral meetings were held with a view to discuss and explore new avenues of strengthening UNEP's partnerships with governments and stakeholders, through taking stock and reviewing the progress of ongoing projects in the African region, as well as identifying potential entry points for more strategic support in new areas that align with UNEP's programme of work and respective country needs towards achieving their national development plans.

Among government delegations the regional director met with were the Minister of Agriculture and Environment Cape Verde, H.E. Mr. Gilbert Silva; Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Côte D'Ivoire, H.E. Rémi Allah-Kouadio; Minister of Environment Uganda, H.E. Ephraim Kamuntu and Project Manager from the High Commission for Water, Forestry and Desertification Control of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mr. Youssef Hammouzaki.



The director also met with representatives from the European Union led by Daniel Calleja, EC Director General for Environment Ibrahima Sow from the Global Environment Facility; Deputy Director, Institut de la Francophonie pour le Développement Durable (IFDD), Mr. Bernard Dubois and officials from the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

During the meetings, Ms. Koudenoukpo pointed out that financial resources is one of the major constraints in implementing these agendas in Africa hence, emphasized that it is imperative for countries to ensure that the available domestic and external resources are channeled into strategic initiatives that can lead to more robust and sustainable socio-economic development. As such, countries ought to ensure that the limited available resources are well managed and utilized.

The meetings agreed on follow-up actions to be undertaken by respective parties on various issues that were tabled for discussion by each delegation.



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CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT



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THE PARTIES TO THE BAMAKO CONVENTION MEET IN NAIROBI TO REVIEW PROGRESS AND AGREE TO ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Representatives of Parties to the Bamako Convention held an informal consultative meeting on May 28, 2016 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi to review the status of the implementation of the Bamako Convention.

The meeting was chaired by the President of the Conference of Parties to the Bamako Convention, His Excellency Mr. Ousmane Kone, Minister of Environment and Sanitation of the Republic of Mali and was attended by Ministers and representatives from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Senegal, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

The UNEP Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw said that this meeting illustrates the determination of Parties to the Bamako convention to address Africa serious environmental challenges arising from illegal trade and traffic of hazardous chemicals, as evidenced by many dramatic cases of dumping in Africa.

Mr. Thiaw further assured participants that UNEP will continue to place this programme, and specific regional priorities, at the core of its agenda and looks forward to continuous cooperation with the Parties to the Bamako convention.

In her welcoming remarks, Ms. Juliette Biao, UNEP Regional Director for Africa, highlighted the unanimous recognition of the success of the first Conference of Parties to the Bamako Convention held in Bamako in June 2013, saying that many important decisions were taken on key issues for the operationalization of the Convention.



"It is now time to implement these decisions, and this meeting gives an opportunity to elaborate strategies on how the Bamako convention can reach its objectives. This is our unique opportunity to show the world Africa's firm commitment on the implementation of the Agenda of the Bamako convention," she added.

Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to implement the Agenda of the Convention in their respective countries. They commended the support provided by UNEP, which provides secretariat functions to the implementation of the Convention, and emphasized the need to maintain momentum in the implementation of the Bamako Convention through regular review and monitoring.

"This meeting will contribute to help parties and furthermore African countries to move forward the agenda of sound management of waste," said Ms. Biao.

The next meeting of the Conference of Parties is expected to be held in Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan in 2017.



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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2016



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2016: #WILDFORLIFE

World Environment Day (WED) is the United Nations' most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in over 100 countries. WED serves as the 'people's day' for doing something to take care of the Earth and/or become an agent of change. It is celebrated on June 5 every year, and is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. This year, WED sought to bring the world's attention to eight threatened animal species i.e. Orangutan, Sea Turtle, Pangolin, Rosewood, Helmeted Hornbill, Tiger, Elephant, and Rhino.

Angola was host for WED 2016, whose theme was the illegal trade in wildlife under the slogan 'Go Wild for Life'. In the run up to WED, a campaign #WildforLife was launched during a high-level ministerial round table on the sidelines of UNEA-2 in May. The campaign encourages people to use their own sphere of influence to raise awareness and reduce the demand for illegal wildlife products by engaging in the campaign and making a pledge. UNEP Goodwill Ambassadors including Yaya Touré, Gisele Bündchen and Ian Somerhalder are leading the way and lending their weight to the cause.

Speaking during the celebrations in Angola, UNEP Regional Director,

Regional Office for Africa, Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, said she was optimistic the world is on the right track in addressing illegal trade in wildlife, but urged governments to tighten laws to curb the issue. "In Africa, governments are taking measures by adopting resolutions to tackle this vice. This includes the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, the resolution taken by AMCEN during its sixth special session, and the recently approved resolution by the UN Environment Assembly," she said.

UN staff involvement in WED celebrations is also key to create staff awareness about each WED theme and encourage staff support to campaign outreach across the UN. At the United Nations Office in Nairobi, staff marked the day on May 3 at an on campus concert and activities that sensitized them on achievements made over the last year on environmental sustainability at the UN Gigiri compound. The renowned musician Suzanna Owiyo, who is also a UNEP Good Will Ambassador, was the show stopper for the day. Owiyo gave a sterling performance, coupled with strong messages advocating for urgent action against the illegal trade in wildlife, a vice she said is so rampant globally and which is not only pushing animal and plant species to extinction, but is also threatening human survival and global security.

Addressing staff during the Nairobi celebrations, UNEP Deputy Director, Ibrahim Thiaw said "On this World Environment Day and the other 364 until the next one, we need to take professional action to support the global momentum for change in areas like ending the illegal trade in wildlife, but we also need to take personal action to take care of our own backyard".





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IN THE NEWS



KENYA'S NEW FRONT IN POACHING BATTLE: 'THE FUTURE IS IN THE HANDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES'

It's hard work. I cut their tusks off with an axe," said Abdi Ali, a northern Kenyan pastoralist who became a full-time poacher at 14.



BACK KENYA'S WAR ON IVORY TRADE, PRESIDENT UHURU URGES

President Uhuru Kenyatta has urged the world to back the country's call for a total ban on illegal ivory trade. This comes a month after President Kenyatta presided over the burning of more than Sh31 billion worth of ivory.



CHANGE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM TO COMBAT HUNGER, USE NATURAL RESOURCES

A major overhaul of the global food system is urgently needed if the world is to combat hunger, use natural resources more efficiently and stem environmental damage, the International Resource Panel (IRP) says.



AIR POLLUTION KILLS SEVEN MILLION YEARLY

A new report has indicated that seven million people die every year from air pollution. The report further highlights that the situation could become worse as global air quality declines.



GLOBAL WILDLIFE PROGRAMME TO FIGHT GLOBAL WILDLIFE POACHING AND TRAFFICKING CRISIS

Kenya is expected to benefit from the Sh9 billion (\$90 million) Global Wildlife Programme to fight global wildlife poaching and trafficking crisis.



VIDEOS





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SWITCH AFRICA



SUPPORTING AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE TRANSITION TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE GREEN ECONOMY

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is one of the key pillars in building inclusive green economies in order to sustain the environment. The concept brings to the fore front the need for African countries to develop business models that are not only sustainable but those that give back to the environment in a safe and secure manner.

Initiatives such as the Switch Africa Green (SAG) project supported by European Commission, UNEP, UNDP and UNOPS have come together to guide six pilot countries in Africa on the implementation of SCP and other Green business development practices which are a critical element to poverty alleviation.

Over 200 participants took part in the first ever Switch Africa Green regional networking forum held on 28-29 May 2016 in Kampala Uganda.

“The EU is keen to help Africa seize that opportunity not just for the sake of helping the environment but also create jobs in Africa. Jobs that are sustainable and good for the economy,” said Kristian Schmidt, EU ambassador to Uganda.

Speaking at the forum, UNEP regional office for Africa deputy director Dr. Desta Mebratu, reiterated UNEP’s support in the establishment and implementation of coherent SCP policies at the national level that aim to promote green business development.

“Significant progress has been made from the most comprehensive national policy and strategy up to sector specific measures happening in Africa and the most encouraging development is that SCP is not stopping at the policy level, it is influencing national planning processes. A majority of African countries are now having SCP and green economy principles,” he said.

Since its inception in 2014, SAG, funded by the European Union with a total budget of EURO 19 million is supporting over 3,000 Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in six pilot countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda), to develop and create green business development models that are sustainable.



MALAWI ADOPTS NEW SECTOR POLICIES FOR FORESTRY AND FISHERIES WITH STRONG LINKS TO POVERTY REDUCTION

The well-being of Malawians and Malawi's economy depend on the well-being of the country's natural resources. Fisheries generate jobs for 400,000 people and livelihoods for 2 million Malawians, and fish provides up to 40 % of the protein consumed in the whole country. However, the pressure from overfishing are exacerbated by shorter rainy seasons as a result of climate change, which reduces water levels in the country's lakes and disrupts fish breeding and nursery sites.

Forest resources contribute to 6.1% of the country's GDP and solid fuels (fuel wood and charcoal) meet 98.7% of the total energy needs of the country. The dependence on solid fuels has led to high rates of

To turn this trajectory around, the Government of Malawi in June 2016 adopted new sector policies for Fisheries and Aquaculture as well as Forestry that better links issues of environmental sustainability, livelihoods and poverty reduction. The UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) has worked with the Government of Malawi to ensure that the revised policies include mechanisms for community benefit sharing and community based natural resource management.

During the drafting process of the policy, PEI supported the Government to undertake local consultations. During these outreach efforts, a local district leader observed that if natural resources were managed by the communities in collaboration with the government and under the guidance of a strong legal and policy framework, illegal charcoal and timber production could be reduced and poverty alleviated.

In November 2015, during his opening speech of the 46th session of Parliament, President Peter Mutharika highlighted that "the implementation

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