



Foreword

Dear Friends,

It gives me a great pleasure to present the second issue of UNEP ACP MEAs 3 programme newsletter for 2021.

Like the first issue that focused on the Caribbean region, this issue has a special focus on the Pacific, with articles contributed by colleagues from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), a regional hub of the Programme. News from the other regions and partners have also enriched this issue.

In spite of the ongoing challenges caused by the pandemic, the programme implementation has picked up considerable speed during the last few months.

During the period April – June 2021, the ACP MEAs 3 programme re-oriented itself by not just delivering a set of activities in the three regions but by making the programme relevant for larger environmental governance issues confronting the regions.

Our digital presence increased steadily through our Twitter handle with some significant reach. While we maintained supporting all partners with a number of strategic issues, this quarter focused on developing the youth engagement strategy for youth

empowerment and inclusion in all programmatic activities. The Programme also undertook analyses of the outcomes of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (FMELAC) meetings to map the potential areas that the programme could contribute to realizing the outcomes.

The ACP MEAs programme was also thrilled to participate at the European Development Days 2021 event, provided inputs for the first-ever Ministerial Resolution on biodiversity at the invitation of the Organization of the ACP States Secretariat (OACPS Secretariat), established partnership with the Africa Network of Environmental Journalists (ANEJ) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), among others.

Happy reading and reflecting!

Balakrishna Pisupati
Programme Manager
United Nations Environment Programme

Some Snippets

The ACP MEAs is an EC-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 Multilateral Environmental Agreements (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 (CITES, CMS and CBD) and chemicals and waste (BRS and Minamata Conventions) and deal with issues of Ocean/Seas governance.

Key actions through the programme in the last quarter include:

- Invitation of the ACP MAEs 3 programmeto speak at the European Development Days 2021 event on 16th June 2021
- Contributions to the organization of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Secretariat (OACPS), drafting of the first-ever ministerial resolution on biodiversity, focusing on CBD COP 15, and the implementation of the global biodiversity framework.
- Supporting national and regional preparations for CBD inter- sessional events such as SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 meetings
- Supporting a consortium of partners to organize sessions in support of preparing for CBD COP 15 through IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC, 2021).
- Supporting the Asia regional office of UNEP to organize capacity building actions in support of post-2020 global biodiversity framework
- Partnership with the Africa Network of Environmental Journalists (ANEJ), for long-term capacity building and awareness-raising for media professionals and journalists in the African region.
- Engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to organize briefing and orientation sessions for Parliamentarians in the ACP region on key environmental issues.

Special Focus on the Pacific Region

The Past, Present, and Future: ACP MEAs in the Pacific Region

The ACP MEAs Programme has made a splash across the Pacific Island's region, demonstrating commitment towards supporting the PacificIslands when it comes to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The preliminary impact of the programme has reached a wider generation of audiences through various activities. The following are some of our Pacific highlights of work undertaken, as well as a peek at our future activities on the horizon for our Pacific.

Our future generation at the heart of ACP MEA 3 works in the Pacific

The Secretariat of the PacificRegional Environment Programme (SPREP) celebrated its 28th Anniversary in June with an Open Day that saw over 150 students, teachers and members of the Diplomatic Corp hosted for an interactive tour. Environment stations were established for the school students to visit and participate in a range of learning activities. Ensuring intergenerational and inclusive participation of youth, a virtual component was also included for this event which saw students from American Samoa, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu participate. "We're part of the solution" was the theme for the event that saw students participate in a number of interactive stations learning about biodiversity, climate change, environmental governance, waste management, and the corporate aspects of an environmental organization.



SPREP Director General with students from Siumu Primary School. Photo credit-SPREP

In Tonga, “Healthy Ecosystems” was the theme of the 2021 Environment Week, which included the National Environment Week Secondary Schools Quiz competition involving 10 schools in which Tonga High School emerged as the winner of the event. The event attracted local journalists and was broadcasted on national television in Tonga.

In Samoa, the ACP MEAs 3 celebrated World Biodiversity Day in collaboration with the Government of Samoa through its Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Samoa Conservation Society, and SPREP. Commemorating the “We are part of the Solution” theme, an open invitation to the local communities in Samoa to visit the Malololelei Recreation Reserve for an interactive tour of the grounds highlighting the work done to protect and conserve species in the reserve. The Malololelei Recreation Reserve was established in 2015 and is home to rock formations that are approximately three million years old, as well as a number of globally threatened IUCN Red listed species including at least five endemic birds.



Tonga Environment Week. Photo credit-SPREP

Talking Biodiversity with the Convention on Biological Diversity

The Pacific region is a leader in the development of global biodiversity governance frameworks with active participation in many initiatives. On 16 May 2021, UNEP in collaboration with SPREP organized under the ACP MEAs 3 programme, a virtual regional preparatory briefing for the Informal 3rd Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3). The three objectives of this event were to provide an overview of all issues that are to be discussed during the SBI 3 meeting of the CBD; enhance the understanding of key issues relevant to the Pacific countries; strengthen the regional network of CBD and SBI focal points in preparation for SBI 3; promote better regional preparations for forth-

coming CBD meetings with inputs from Parties and other stakeholders. SPREP through the ACP MEAs 3 programme supported the Pacific delegates on the virtual participation in the 24th Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice as well as the SBI 3 meetings of the CBD with access to an internet connection to facilitate their virtual participation in the meetings.



Lake Lanoto'o Ramsar Site_Samoa -
Photo credit- Stuart Chape

ACP MEAs 3, a selection of planned activities on the Pacific horizon

In September 2006, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and SPREP on behalf of its member States concluded a Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region. Since 2012, the signatories to the MOU have not met despite having made significant achievements in the region including the Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference in 2017, and the identification of Important Marine Mammal Areas for the region. This year from 5-6 August 2021, CMS and SPREP will host a virtual 4th Meeting of the Signatories to the MOU. The same meeting anticipates the adoption of the new Whale and Dolphin Action Plan which is the basis for the MOU.

SPREP is also coordinating the ACP MEAs 3 programme activities under the Noumea component focusing on strengthening the coordination role of the Secretariat. A virtual meeting of the Sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention has been scheduled for 2nd September 2021. Three important in-country consultancies for the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to review and update their protected area data, including collation of data on management effectiveness and potential Other

Effective Area-Based Conservation Management (OECM) is set to be completed.

Planned national virtual training for Kiribati on the Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal focusing on basic navigation, accessing information, resources, and tools to assist planning and decision making is scheduled for the end of July. While in August, a regional virtual training on the concept of OECMs is tentatively scheduled for the Pacific on other effective area-based conservation measures in collaboration with IUCN, Oceania Regional Office, and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) through the assistance of the EU-ACP Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme.

For further information on the ACP MEAs 3 programme activities in the Pacific please visit www.sprep.org

Supporting the Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) in the Pacific

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea entails dealing with issues for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), with a specific focus on access and benefit-sharing of marine genetic resources, area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, capacity building and the transfer of marine technology.

In the Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) undertakes a wide range of Ocean work, spread across four programmes of Climate Change Resilience, Environmental Monitoring, and Governance, Island and Ocean Ecosystems as well as Waste Management and Pollution Control. In these “splashes” we take a look at SPREP’s work focused on the BBNJ.

SPREP, as the lead agency in developing institutional capacity of the Pacific countries, is providing technical support to the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) Chair and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Law of the Sea

on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). This support involves providing technical advice on the application of the EIA process on sea-bed activities and area-based management tools including marine protected areas. SPREP continues to assist PIFS and PSIDS in the provision of technical advice on lessons learned from MEAs implementation in the Pacific in a discussion forum for the Pacific regional representations ahead of the Fourth BBNJ IGC expected to be held in August 2021.

A webinar on addressing the needs and special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the future BBNJ instrument was co-hosted by the Chairs of the Alliance of the Small Island States (AOSIS), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) where SPREP presented to national and permanent mission representatives from SIDS. Knowledge and sharing of experience are critical for achieving sustainable environmental governance. Hence, the webinar featured Pacific and Caribbean experiences in terms of implementation of SIDS provisions from existing multilateral environmental agreements/instruments and explored potential mechanisms for implementation and funding BBNJ within SIDS.



Whales, Protection of Life Below the Sea
photo credit-SPREP

The livelihoods and cultures of the Pacific people are intrinsically linked to the ocean that surrounds them, and as custodians of the Pacific Ocean, PSIDS which comprises of many small islands maintains leadership and collectively resolve to manage, conserve and protect the Blue Pacific while focusing on Ocean priorities for the Pacific

Small Island Developing States in line with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which will run from 2021 to 2030.

Building Capacity through Amplified Voices in the Pacific

Building institutional capacity and raising awareness on pressing environmental problems affecting the Pacific is critical for achieving sustainable development. On 30 April 2021, SPREP launched the State of the Environment and Conservation Regional Report, which outlined the critical connections between society's actions and the services nature provides. The report provides indicator status for 31 indicators including protected areas, pollution, migratory species among others, which contributes to the regional monitoring and exchange of technical information in the region.

Improving the understanding of Pacific Islanders about the richness of their biodiversity particularly the least understood Soil biodiversity is an important topic for the region. In May 2021, the Food and Agriculture Organization, in collaboration with the Pacific Community and SPREP held a virtual preparatory thematic session that brought experts from the Environment and Agriculture sectors together to discuss specific key issues, priorities, and needs to conserve soil biodiversity in the Pacific islands. The session helped the Pacific prepare as the world moves towards a new global framework to halt biodiversity loss under the CBD.



Biodiversity Day in the Pacific. Photo credit-SPREP

Supporting local voices for the protection of our marine species

The challenge of maintaining local livelihoods and conserving marine species is at the heart of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP). Faced with this challenge, SPREP's institutional approaches involve engaging with the local communities that live in and around the coasts to obtain their voices on the priority actions needed to conserve marine species and coastal ecosystems.

Through its Regional Marine Species Programme which provides a strategic overview for the management of migratory and threatened marine megafauna in the region, a draft Regional Marine Species Programme 2022-2026 is currently being finalized following the review of the 2013-2017 Plan and circulated to SPREP Members and partners for further review. The reviewed programme which is expected to be endorsed by the members during meetings scheduled for the end of July and early August 2021, adds more focus on local priorities for the protection of marine species in the Pacific.

In Vanuatu for instance, the legislation and regulations on CITES are undergoing review through a consultancy engaged under the ACP MEAs 3 Programme. This is to update existing legislation and regulations on CITES to facilitate the implementation of the electronic CITES permit system for the effective management of permits and other obligations under CITES including reporting. Acknowledging the importance of electronic CITES in better targeting inspections and law enforcement, Papua New Guinea has indicated a keen interest to update its legislation for the implementation of e-CITES.

Snapshots of the ACP MEAs 3 in the Pacific

- SPREP provided comments on the review of Kiribati's draft Environment Bill.
- A Pacific Hub for the virtual International Assessment for Impact Assessment 2021 Conference was hosted by SPREP in May to provide Samoan-based EIA practitioners an opportunity to interlink with local and international impact assessment experts.
- The ACP MEAs 3 Team organized inception workshops with Samoa, Tonga, and the

Solomon Islands to provide insight on the ACP MEAs 3 Programme, specific activities targeting these countries and the regional activities planned.

For further information, please contact Ms. Anastacia Amoa-Stowers at anastacias@sprep.org

News From Other Regions

Building the Capacity of Regional and Sub-regional Authorities on the Safe Removal of Mercury Stockpiles (MAP) in the Caribbean

Mercury pollution is among the most dangerous environmental toxins that are spreading across national borders through air and water currents. In the Caribbean region, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat is currently providing technical assistance to Parties to implement Articles, 4, 10, and 11 of the Minamata Convention on interim storage, disposal of waste in mercury-added products (MAPs) using the Convention's guidelines. More specifically, through twelve individual consultation meetings, a competency-based training action plan is being developed and a subsequent training programme with competent regional/sub-regional authorities will be rolled out from 19 August to 15 September 2021 in nine Caribbean countries including – Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Republic of Cuba, Dominican Republic, Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts, and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Republic of Suriname.

Effective capacity building in the Caribbean requires a clear understanding of resource availability, existing systems (formal and informal), and in essence what is 'doable' in the project countries. The baseline assessment informed by a combination of analysis of relevant reports to ascertain the existing and planned institutional systems and training needs assessment of the stakeholders conducted during April 2021 determined the countries' current competencies. Each country has its own national framework; however, they are often underpinned by similar legislation thereby resulting in regional similarities. As a result, the profiles of stakeholders involved in each stage of the removal of mercury process will be developed and these will broadly reflect the region's capacity to manage waste MAPs.

The training action plan will be used to measure the existing capacity against the desired capacity, which will be derived from the various guidelines and best practices. The training action plan including an assessment of countries with existing guidelines for the management of mercury and mercury-added products once finalized will inform the development of the training manual and associated training material which will be used to facilitate virtual training sessions for the targeted Member States.

Findings to date indicate that MAPs of concern to the Caribbean region based on Minamata Initial Assessments emissions inventories and stakeholder consultations include:

Source Category 5.5: thermometers with mercury, electrical and electronic switches, light sources with mercury, batteries containing mercury

Source Category 5.6: dental mercury amalgam fillings, manometers, and gauges, laboratory chemicals, and equipment.

CARICOM and CITES Secretariats join forces in support of Caribbean Parties' efforts to improve wildlife trade controls

Illegal wildlife trade poses a serious threat to many species of wildlife and plants across many parts of the world, robbing the livelihoods of local communities and eroding the global commons. The Caribbean region is extremely biodiverse and home to significant numbers of species listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices, with large forests and vast marine ecosystems including coral reefs, mangroves, and deep benthic areas. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has 15 Member States that are CITES Parties.

As part of the wider ACP MEAs 3 programme which supports the African, Caribbean, and the Pacific countries in their efforts to address a number of challenges associated with implementing multilateral environment agreements such as CITES through capacity building at both the national and regional levels, the CARICOM Secretariat in partnership with the CITES Secretariat, held a virtual workshop on e-CITES permit management to

support the implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean region on 15th June 2021. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of the potential benefits of automated permitting systems, including the increased transparency and control they can bring to the supply chain and the role they can play in the development of electronic risk management systems.



Delegates from nine CARICOM Member States attended the workshop, including representatives of CITES Management Authorities, technical officers, and focal points of Customs, forestry, fisheries, and environment agencies. Participants discussed lessons learned in implementing systems for electronic permitting for CITES trade in other regions, as presented by representatives of the United States Department of the Interior. These lessons included a step-by-step look at the processes needed to implement electronic solutions, providing orientation on the training, legislation, and other law enforcement efforts needed to put such systems in place.

The participants also learned about the status of the Automated System for CustomsData (ASYCUDA) projects in the Caribbean context, which illustrated the customs and trade automation reforms in the region and the move to paperless processing, with enhanced and integrated operations that were receiving technical and functional support from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Representing the Bahamas' CITES Management Authority, Dr. Deandra S. Delancey-Milfort presented the Bahamas' progress towards the implementation of CITES. She outlined the Bahamas' efforts at implementing e-CITES and the collaboration and national consultations on the matter, conducted with the CITES Secretariat and UNCTAD.

With CARICOM's coordination, delegates provided their feedback on their country's ability to implement electronic solutions, as well as the opportunities that could be provided and the challenges, they would face in setting them up. This feedback will help establish the needs of CITES Parties in the Caribbean and the kind of support they require for the development of a simplified permit process that is compatible with the e-CITES tool to improve customs control of trade in wildlife.

For more information, please contact Ms. Teshia JnBaptiste at teshia.jnbaptiste@caricom.org

Building Back Biodiversity in the Western Indian Ocean: Revision of the Nairobi Convention Protocol

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region is endowed with rich marine biodiversity and ecosystems, which are vital to the health of the economies of coastal communities. In recognition of the value of this biodiversity, the Nairobi Convention for the protection, management, and development of the coastal and marine environment of the WIO region adopted the Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Flora and Fauna in the Eastern African Region in 1985 to aid Contracting Parties in protecting their coastal and marine resources.

However, increasing pressures – ranging from over-exploitation of natural resources, conversion of coastal habitats for other uses, and natural factors such as climate change – coupled with a lack of adequate coordination of various sectors continue to put the integrity of the region's marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity at risk.

These threats have made the need to revise and update the clarity of the protocol, as expressed at various Conference of Parties (COPs) of the Nairobi Convention to make it more practical and relevant to the current situation and to incorporate recent scientific advances as well as management and conservation practices and tools. The protocol revision, which is underway, is supported by Phase 3 of the Through the support of the European Union's funded program, ACP MEAs 3 programme,

the Nairobi Convention has initiated the revision of the protocol to ensure its legal framework is strengthened to make it more effective at conserving biodiversity, managing marine, and coastal ecosystems, and addressing current and emerging threats. The final report of the protocol will be presented to the contracting parties during the next Conference of Parties of the Nairobi Convention, to be held in mid-November 2021.



A health coral reef ecosystem in the Western Indian Ocean. Photo credit: WCS

For further information, please contact Mr. Theuri Mwangi at theuri.mwangi@un.org

Regional Preparations for COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions

The conference of Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) conventions are organized to make appropriate decisions to implement the objectives of the conventions. The COP meetings discuss key issues related to policy, cooperation, budget, and enhanced coordination of joint activities. However, given the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the conventions bureau agreed to hold the 2021 COPs in two segments, an online segment on 26-30 July 2021, and a face-to-face segment over two weeks in 2022 (tentatively scheduled for June 2022, in Geneva).

The BRS COPs are expected to consider a limited number of “prioritized” items of their respective agendas for the online segment, in accordance with the agreement of the bureaux, taking into account the essential and time-sensitive nature of the items.

In order to assist Parties in preparing for the online segment of the COPs, online regional preparatory

meetings took place for the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, and the Caribbean regions in May-June 2021. The objective of the online regional meetings was to give Parties in those regions the possibility to hear briefings, exchange views, and consult each other on the items of the provisional agendas of the respective meetings of the COPs that are expected to be considered during the online segment. An approximate total of 437 participants took part in the online regional meetings representing a total of 131 country Parties and 28 observers.



Plastic waste overflowing in Cambodia's Mekong, one of the world's most polluted rivers. Photo credit-BRS

As a programme for building capacity for the effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), the ACP MEAs 3 Programme will support the participation of government representatives from ACP countries in the second set of regional preparatory meetings comprising of a face-to-face 3-days meeting expected to be held in 2022, in advance of the face-to-face segment of the COPs. More information about the BRS COPs at: www.brsmeas.org/2021COPs

Advancing the effective implementation of MEAs: The role of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions

The secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) convention has a global mandate of advancing the implementation of MEAs related to the sound management of chemical and wastes. As a key partner of the chemicals and waste component of the ACP MEAs 3 programme, the Secretariat made three key achievements in the last quarter, that crosscut the work of other MEAs relevant for the implementation of the programme across the ACP region.

BRS and Minamata conventions launched two reports on 5th and 21 June 2021 that mapped the interlinkages between hazardous chemicals, wastes, climate change, and biodiversity. The “Chemicals, Wastes and Climate Change: Interlinkages and Potential for Coordinated Action”, presents a comprehensive overview of the interrelations among climate change and hazardous chemicals and wastes management, towards identifying opportunities for a coordinated action that simultaneously address the two challenges of the broader sustainability agenda. The second report on the “Interlinkages between the chemicals and waste MEAs and biodiversity: key insights” is inspired by the ongoing discussions of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that illustrates the interlinkages between the work of the four global chemicals and wastes conventions (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata) and the convention on biological diversity (CBD) and other biodiversity-related conventions.



Persistent organic pollutants present an adverse threat to human health and the environment. As part of the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention, the Secretariat published the third regional monitoring report of the Stockholm Convention’s global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in May 2021. The reports synthesize information from the first, second, and third phases of implementation of the global monitoring plan, and present up-to-date information on POPs concentrations and on their changes over time in the five UN regions. While the first and second monitoring reports provided baseline information and first indications to the changes in concentrations of the chemicals listed in the Convention as of 2013, the third monitoring

report marks an enhanced information basis for effectiveness evaluation through the generation of time-series data to support assessment of trends in concentrations over time and the further inclusion of newly listed POPs, covering the full scope of the chemicals listed in the Convention.

Contributing to SDG 17 on strengthening partnership, the BRS secretariat organized the second meeting of the Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP) working group from 14th to 16th June 2021. The Basel convention partnership on plastic waste, established by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention in May 2019, as a platform that unites stakeholders from governments, international organizations, NGOs, and industry towards the common objective of eliminating the leakage of plastic waste into our environment. The work of the PWP partnership contributes directly to objective 1 of the ACP MEAs Programme as its partners such as CARICOM and the Regional Seas conventions secretariats are key members of the working group.

The ACP MEAs 3 programme will follow up on the key recommendations from this report.

For more information, please contact Ms. Giovanna Moire at giovanna.chiodi@un.org

Innovating national MEAs reporting system using DaRT Tool

The accession to and ratification of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) requires that countries report to the respective MEAs on the status of their implementation. For many countries, however, the preparation of national reports is a daunting process that involves the participation of national experts spread across Ministries and other national institutions, and the challenge of identifying pertinent information sources.

The Data Reporting Tool (DaRT) for MEAs is the first tool supporting Parties to use synergies in the field of knowledge management for national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions. It eases the national reporting load by promoting effective knowledge management across

Ministries and administrative units in one national working space, enhancing synergies across conventions and increasing the effectiveness of national efforts to achieve global environmental targets.



Data Reporting Tool. Photo credit-
DaRT Project

Developed with the knowledge of user convenience, DaRT facilitates the re-use of information in the spirit of “enter once, re-use several times” as a one-stop-shop to relieve the reporting workload and foster communication and cooperation across Ministries by amalgamating several national biodiversity information sources into one source. The UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen underscored the importance of DaRT tool in strengthening our understanding of the linkages between the global biodiversity, sustainable development, and health agendas and creating institutional synergies beyond the domains of the environmental institutions.

Thanks to the generosity of the Swiss Government and the European Union for the financial support to develop and roll out of the DaRT tool to countries and MEA Secretariats, which is now exchanging information with other knowledge management platforms including Online Reporting Systems (ORS), Bioland, and the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Despite the significance of DaRT tool in easing MEAs reporting workload, however, several countries in the African, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP) region are not English speaking and so often, they are unable to use most of the available resources/tools developed in English to enhance effective communication with

MEAs convention. Through the ACP MEAs 3 programme support, DaRT tool now has both French and Spanish translations to enhance the efficiency of the French and Spanish speaking countries. As an innovative tool with the potential to contribute to the implementation of biodiversity-related MEAs and the achievement of the Agenda 2030, the DaRT tool was recently awarded the Kipepeo Award by UNEP.

For more information, please visit the DaRT website:

<https://dart.informea.org/>

The introduction video also available:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1V68r4VU5Q>

Or the DaRT Focal Point, Ms. Diane Klaimi, UNEP Law Division at diane.klaimi@un.org

ACP MEAs 3 Policy Brief 1/2021: "#BuildBackBetter"

The ACP MEAs 3 programme launched the first policy brief for 2021, under the series #BuildBackBetter, focusing on issues of supporting the development of New Development Plans for countries in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions, using key entry points related to environmental governance, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and ocean governance. Recommendations include:

- Review and adoption of legal and related measures to deal with issues of nature conservation, monitoring, and managing pollution, and safe handling of chemicals and wastes;
- Develop guidelines and toolkits necessary for stakeholder engagement in implementing the
- legal and regulatory measures, and
- Comply with provisions of rule of law in supporting partnerships, both vertically and horizontally that support future environmental management that is responsive and inclusive.
- Synergistic implementation of the biodiversity and chemical cluster MEAs, among themselves and across;
- Enhanced commitments to realizing the objectives of the MEAs that are measurable and impactful;
- Strengthening institutional and individual

capacities of various stakeholder groups, including youth and women to deal with current and emerging issues on linking environmental management and sustainable development.

- Developing national, sub-regional, and regional action plans on ocean governance and management that aligns with emerging local and global priorities, including discussions through the biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) framework;
- Develop options for building robust blue economy options-based actions that are in support of local and national priorities and development needs, carefully considering issues of ocean mining, managing biodiversity, and
- Address ways to mainstream issues across sectors such as fisheries and ensure management is predictable and progressive.

For more information, please contact Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati at balakrishna.pisupati@un.org

ACP MEAs 3 Programme Set to Support AMCEN and FEMLAC Meeting Outcomes

In support of realizing the outcomes and decisions through the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (FMEALAC), the ACP MEAs 3 programme undertook a mapping exercise of how the programme potentially contributes to realizing the outcomes of 8th special session of AMCEN and the XXII meeting FEMLAC held in November 2020 and February 2021, respectively.

The 8th special session of the AMCEN meeting held under the theme, “Enhancing environmental action for effective post-COVID recovery in Africa” discussed regional issues that give countries the opportunities to take necessary actions for increased environmental protection and restoration to increase resilience to crises and place the continent on a more sustainable path.

The XXII FEMLAC culminated into the signing of the Bridgetown Declaration that set the ground for the adoption of eight Decisions which included among others, countries that welcome UNEP’s new initiative on Global Opportunities for Sustainable

Development Goals (GO4SDGs) which serves as a platform to accelerate action that brings together and scale up regional solutions for the three planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and promote more policy coherence for sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, and inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

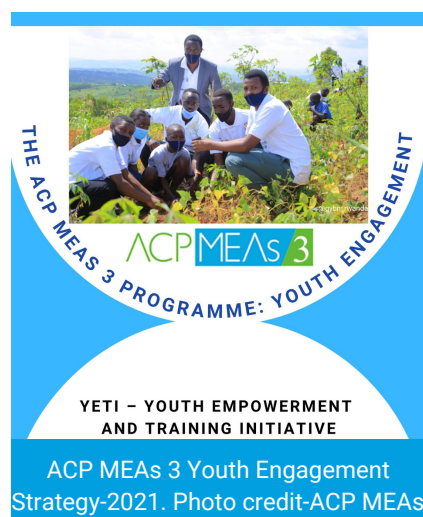
In collaboration with regional hubs and programme partners, the ACP MEAs 3 programme will focus on linking the ongoing actions with the outcomes of the above two meetings.

For more information, please contact Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati at balakrishna.pisupati@un.org

ACP MEAs 3 Youth Engagement

The ACP MEAs programme aims to empower governments and stakeholder groups on awareness-raising and capacity building to effectively deal with environmental governance at various levels. Engaging with youth has been identified as a priority by the Programme. In support of this, the ACP MEAs 3 programme is currently finalizing a Youth Engagement Strategy that will be supported by a number of specific initiatives such as the Youth Engagement and Training Initiative (YETI) that will focus on issues of biodiversity during 2021.

In support of this, the Programme has engaged with several youth networks in East Africa region, the Africa regional chapters of the Global Youth Biodiversity Networks (GYBN), the InforMEA programme of UNEP, the Kenya Inter-Universities Environmental Students Association (KIUESA) amongst others.



For more information, please contact Ms. Mary Kanyua at mary.kanyua@un.org

Forthcoming Events

- ANEJ orientation on Chemicals and Wastes – 6th July 2021
- The online segment of COPs for BRS conventions -26 to-30 July 2021.
- Briefing sessions for the ACP States on the outcomes of SBI 3 and SBSTTA 24 – July-August 2021
- Launch of the “Support SAMOA Pathway” note from ACP MEAs 3 Programme – July 2021
- Youth Engagement and Training Initiative (YETI) activities – July – September 2021
- CBD negotiators training (with IUCN WCC 2021 partners) – July – August 2021
- Launch of new ACP MEAs 3 website – September 2021.
- Bamako Convention COP4 -February 2022

The ACP MEAs 3 Project Team

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