QUARTERLY REPORT

to the 168th Meeting of the

COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

UN environment programme

TWENTY-THIRD ISSUE

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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to provide the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) with an update on key global, regional and national developments during the third quarter of 2024, in implementation of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2025) and Programme of Work for 2024-2025, both of which are aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Report further references linkages between programmatic delivery and progress on the implementation of resolutions adopted by the UN Environment Assembly.

The report covers the period 1 July to 30 September 2024 and is organized into three sections:

Section One highlights key (non-programmatic) global and regional developments (major inter-governmental meetings, other policy/political updates) in relation to the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, nature and land loss and pollution.

Section Two provides results from the implementation of UNEP's 2024-25 PoW in accordance with the three strategic objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy (Climate stability, Living in harmony with nature, Towards a pollution free planet), the two foundational sub-programmes (Science Policy, Environmental Governance), the two enabling sub-programmes (Digital Transformation, Finance and Economic Transformation), cross-cutting issues (Gender, Environmental and Social Safeguards, Repositioning of the UN Development system, South-South Cooperation) and pertinent challenges, opportunities, lessons learned and actions taken.

Section Three provides updates on the financial and human resource situation of UNEP and developments in other important management areas including audits and evaluations.

ACRONYMS

AEF	African Elephant Fund
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission in Human Rights
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
APRFHE	Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment
AQMx	Air Quality Management Exchange Platform
ASCM	Annual Subcommittee Meeting
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BoA	United Nations Board of Auditors
BHR	Business and Human Rights
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition
CFIT	Circular and Fair Information and Communications Technology Pact
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CODES	Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability
COP	Conference of Parties
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CRF	Conflict Recovery Framework
CSM	United Nations Climate Security Mechanism
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
DaRT	Data Reporting Tool for Multilateral Environmental Agreements
EAA	Environmental Alliance of America
EANET	Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia
EMG	United Nations Environment Management Group
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
EU	European Union
GBF	Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GBON	Global Basic Observing Network
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEDS	Global Environmental Data Strategy
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook

GFP	Gender Focal Point
GHG	Green-House Gas
GPML	Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter
HLCP	High-Level Committee on Programmes
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ILWRM	Integrated Landscape and Water Resources Management
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting system
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDC	Least Developed Country
LLDC	Land-Locked Developing Country
LMO	Living Modified Organisms
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MEF	Massive Earth Foundation
MEPS	Minimum Energy Performance Standards
MGS	Major Groups and Stakeholders
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NbS	Nature-Based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan
NCAP	National Cooling Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEA	National Ecosystem Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTS	National Transparency System
NZAOA	Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance
NZBA	Net-Zero Banking Alliance
OIOS	United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PoW	Programme of Work
RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
RDNA	Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
RMRP	Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAFE	Safety Across Asia for the Global Environment
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Seas of East Asia
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SIP	Specific International Programme
SLCP	Short-Lived Climate Pollutants
SOFF	Systematic Observations Financing Facility
TNFD	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures

UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP FI	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VEHA	Virtual Environment Humanitarian Adviser
VISC	Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions
WEOG	Western European and Others Group

1. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

A. Global developments

Summit of the future

The UNEP executive director delivered a statement during the Summit (New York, 22-23 September) where she highlighted the importance of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; financial and economic transformations that build equity and resilience; circularity and sustainable consumption and production – including in the energy transition and digital transformation; and one health approaches.

Preceding the Summit were its action days (20-21 September), where UNEP co-hosted a side event on *empowering youth for sustainable futures: intergenerational responsibility and skills for a just transition* (20 September), to enhance youth participation in policymaking through the green jobs for youth pact. Key outcomes included commitments from member states to integrate green education and support sustainable initiatives, as well as private sector pledges to train young people.

UNEP also co-hosted a side event (21 September) on *the global digital compact: a roadmap to advance sustainable digital transformation for an equitable and sustainable world* where it launched an issue note outlining the environmental impact of artificial intelligence across its life cycle.

UNEP supported the faith-based solutions impact coalition in promoting the inclusion of diverse faith actors within the multilateral system under the pact for the future. The event *faith-based solutions for the pact for the future and beyond* (25 September) resulted in a joint statement emphasizing the critical role of faith communities in fostering sustainable development, addressing polarization, and advancing inclusive partnerships. UNEP, through its faith for earth youth council, showcased how interreligious dialogue and digital tools foster intergenerational learning and collaboration to address global challenges, demonstrating faith actors' ability to drive impactful solutions at all levels.

UNEP sponsored seven representatives of major groups and stakeholders (MGS) to organize and participate in several events during the action days. It also supported the children and youth major group in organizing the youth forum on the future of the environment (20 September), which included the participation of the president of UNEA-7 and the UNEP executive director.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the opening of the Summit of the Future, 22 September, New York
(Photo credit: UN Photo)

Youth Forum on the future of the environment agenda, 20 September, New York
(Photo credit: UNEP)

UNEP concurrently co-hosted the 2024 super pollutant ministerial (23 September) focussed on augmenting ambition to cut super pollutants, culminating in a communique calling for their inclusion into the next round of NDCs to respond to the climate emergency and harness the unique potential to curb near-term warming. The CCAC's fossil fuel regulatory programme was also launched (24 September) to provide tailored support for up to 20 developing countries to develop and enforce methane abatement policies and regulations.

High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF)

The HLPF (8-17 July, New York) was held under the theme *reinforcing the 2030 agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions,* and focused on SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17. UNEP's engagement throughout the HLPF focused on highlighting the importance of the environment across these goals. The UNEA president delivered a message to the ministerial segment of the HLPF, while UNEP delivered statements during the thematic sessions on SDG13 and SDG16. UNEP also co-organized nine side events, conducted consultations on the global environmental data strategy (GEDS) and hosted an interactive exhibit on the digital accelerator lab.

On the margins of the HLPF, the UNEP co-produced *navigating new horizons: a global foresight report on planetary health and human wellbeing* was launched (15 July, New York). The report offers valuable insights into potential challenges that may hinder

environmental sustainability and impede SDG achievement, including eight critical global shifts that are accelerating the three planetary environmental crises. UNEP also launched a report from the chair of the 10 year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10 YFP) board to the HLPF. UNEP further participated in the SDG global business forum (16 July) and the 2024 parliamentary forum (16 July), while the UNEP chaired high-level committee on programmes (HLCP) adopted the *UN system common messages for COP29 and COP30*.

UNEP further launched a handbook (10 July) on policy coherence for sustainable development vis-à-vis SDG indicator 17.14.1 on strengthening means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. The handbook provides examples for each of the composite indicator's eight domains and sub-indicators. UNEP concurrently hosted a virtual dialogue (10 July) focused on understanding how policy coherence and alignment can facilitate the integrated implementation of MEAs, assess UN agencies' strategies for delivering on the common approaches, and identify actions to support policy coherence at national and local levels.

Fifth international day of clean air for blue skies

UNEP hosted a series of events globally under the theme of Invest in #CleanAirNow, to mark the international day on 7 September. In 2024, over 150 events were registered globally, demonstrating a growing commitment to tackle this issue. The events emphasized the urgent need for stronger partnerships, increased investment, and shared responsibility to combat air pollution.

Following the adoption of UNEA resolution 6/10 which called for stronger regional cooperation and urged countries to develop comprehensive policies to combat air pollution, UNEP is supporting regional cooperation and developing a knowledge sharing platform. Through the new climate and clean air coalition (CCAC) developed air quality management exchange platform (AQMx), UNEP has been able to offer tools and guidance to help countries address key areas like monitoring, emissions inventories, air quality standards, and health impact assessments. CCAC also approved support to an Africa clean air programme, with a subregional approach, including communities of practice and knowledge hubs as well as direct support to champion countries.

In Africa, UNEP co-supported the Nairobi city marathon (8 September) through installing 50 air quality sensors along the marathon route to provide real-time pollution data. This was part of a broader initiative to install air quality sensors in six African cities and schools, highlighting the importance of clean air for athletes' health. Over 10,000 participants joined the marathon, with electric buses promoting eco-friendly transport and mobile sensors on electric bikes collecting pollution data. Data from all sensors deployed is available here.

In Asia-Pacific, UNEP co-convened (5-6 September, Bangkok) over 200 participants onsite and online to highlight the multi-dimensional benefits of clean air investments. UNEP's executive director called for urgent investments in renewable energy and stricter emission standards, stressing the need for collective action to uphold the human right to clean air.

In Central Asia, UNEP organized the 3rd air quality for Central Asia conference (19-20 September, Almaty, Kazakhstan) to strengthen regional cooperation in air quality management and monitoring of sand and dust storms, in line with UNEA resolution 6/7 on combating sand and dust storms, and UNEA resolution 6/10 on *promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally*. International air quality experts presented strategies for clean air initiatives and the conference concluded with recommendations to enhance clean air actions in the region. The stakeholders recommended that the shift to clean air requires taking up technical solutions, introducing new legislation, strengthening institutions, improving cross-border cooperation and stepping-up public engagement.

In Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), UNEP co-launched a webinar series aimed at enhancing air quality management capacities of LAC countries. The initiative focuses on air quality surveillance, health impact assessments, regulatory framework development, and governance strengthening, aligning with the regional air quality action plan 2022-2025. The first two sessions were held on 7 August and 3 September, featuring Brazil and Chile discussing their recent regulatory and policy advancements.

In North America, UNEP co-organized an event (5 September, Washington, D.C.) to raise awareness of the urgent need for increased national and global action on air quality. Nearly 250 participants attended in person and virtually. An expert panel discussed fostering cross-border and cross-sector collaboration to reduce air pollution through strategic investments.

Third AQCA conference 2024, 19-20 September, Almaty
(Photo credit: AQCA)

As the lead agency for commemorations, UNEP's campaign saw widespread uptake. Hashtags #WorldCleanAirDay and #CleanAirNow were mentioned over 45,000 times, while multimedia content, was seen more than 250, 000 times. More than 600 news outlets covered stories relating to the critical need to invest in clean air solutions.

79th UN General Assembly session – high-level week

UNEP participated in the high-level meeting on *addressing the existential threats posed by sea-level rise* (25 September, New York) aimed at delivering action-oriented solutions for affected states and frontline communities. UNEP highlighted its support to countries in generating the science needed to assess the impacts of sea level rise and the urgency to act by increasing ambition in climate mitigation, strengthening adaptation and early warning systems.

UNEP also participated in a high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) (26 September) which approved a political declaration recognizing the need to act on the environment, given its significant role in the origins, development, spread and transmission of AMR. UNEP called for commitments to improve waste and wastewater management, the responsible use of antimicrobials, and more research on AMR's environmental dimensions, in order to reduce antimicrobial discharge into the environment and to reduce AMR transmission risks. The AMR toolkit for media engagement launched by the quadripartite organizations in July, provides valuable information to promote accurate, evidence-based information and to combat misinformation.

UNEP additionally co-organized a high-level event *galvanizing momentum for the global plastic pollution instrument* (25 September) to build political momentum and global partnerships to finalize the plastic pollution instrument at the intergovernmental negotiating committee's fifth and final session in Busan.

UNEP further participated in the 23rd annual ministerial meeting of foreign ministers of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) (26 September) held under the theme *building momentum towards Gaborone: partnering for a decade of action and transformation in LLDCs.* The meeting sought to mobilize high-level participation and explore approaches for full implement the new programme of action for LLDCs and for accelerated implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Engagement with Security Council on environment, peace and security

UNEP briefed visiting members of the Security Council (26 August, Geneva) on emerging risks to international peace and security, providing an overview of its work in conflict-affected and fragile settings. This includes its expertise on integrated analysis of environmental, climate, socio-economic and conflict data; and experience of integrating climate and environmental considerations into international peacekeeping, humanitarian and development efforts. Members

High-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 26 September, New York
(Photo credit: UNEP)

were also briefed on UNEP's central role within the UN climate security mechanism (CSM) as part of broader efforts to develop knowledge, capacity and solutions for addressing the interlinkages between climate, peace and security.

UN Secretary-General's panel report on critical energy transition minerals

UNEP, as part of the panel secretariat, facilitated the launch of the report (11 September) entitled *resourcing the energy transition: principles to guide critical energy transition minerals towards equity and justice.* The report identifies ways to ground the renewables revolution in justice and equity, so that it spurs sustainable development, respects people, protects the environment and powers prosperity in resource-rich developing countries. The report puts forward recommendations for fairness, transparency, investment, sustainability and human rights, not just where minerals are mined, but along the entire minerals value chain, from refining and manufacturing to transport and end-of-use recycling.

11th annual subcommittee meeting (ASCM) of the CPR

During the meeting (8-12 July, Nairobi), member states and stakeholders undertook deliberations on: implementation of the 2022-2023 programme of work (PoW) and budget, the biennial evaluation synthesis report 2022-2023, funding opportunities and challenges, the roadmap for the development of UNEP's next medium-term strategy (MTS) and PoW, the theme for UNEA-7, contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to the UNEP MTS and PoW, and coordination within the UN system on the environment through the environment management group (EMG). The outcomes of the meeting are elaborated upon in the chair's summary.

Accreditation to UNEP

During the reporting period, 14 new organizations were accredited to UNEP and its governing bodies, representing business and industry (2), farmers (1) and NGOs (11). The list of accredited organizations can be found here. As of 30 September 2024, there were 1182 accredited organizations.

UNEP Publications

A full list of UNEP publications released between 11 April and 1 October 2024, as well as concepts approved by the publications board for future release dates, can be found here. Upon release, select publications are made available here.

B. Regional developments

i. Africa

10th special session of the African ministerial conference on the environment (AMCEN)

UNEP, co-organized the session (30 August - 6 September, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire) to generate political momentum and secure essential financing and partnerships to address urgent environmental challenges in Africa. In her opening remarks, UNEP executive director encouraged African member states to take concerted actions on land under the three Rio conventions, account for the value of nature, and back circular approaches to minerals.

Key discussions focused on: mitigating droughts in Africa; enhancing ambition to achieve land degradation neutrality targets; promoting ecosystem restoration opportunities; and strengthening partnerships for implementation and resource mobilisation. The session culminated in the adoption of the Abidjan declaration to raise Africa's ambition to reduce desertification, land degradation and drought. It also adopted decisions on climate change and on advancing Africa's common positions at conferences of parties and meetings.

AMCEN was preceded by several associated meetings, namely the regional consultation for the upcoming 16th session of the conference of the parties (COPs) to the UN convention to combat desertification (UNCCD) (30 August - 2 September), which ran concurrently with the meeting of major groups and stakeholders forum (1- 2 September).

ii. Asia and the Pacific

Regional dialogue on ocean-based climate action

UNEP co-collaborated in convening the dialogue (19 September, Bangkok) where the draft regional initiative on ocean-based climate action was adopted as a contribution to the 2025 UN ocean conference. The initiative focuses on four key themes: protecting and enhancing blue carbon ecosystems; decarbonizing shipping and maritime connectivity; accelerating the deployment of ocean-based renewable energy; and enhancing ocean-climate resilience.

Asia-Pacific regional forum on health and environment (APRFHE)

UNEP co-convened APRFHE's 12th high-level official meeting (24-25 September) and 5th ministerial meeting (26 September 2024) in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the latter adopting the Jakarta declaration of cooperation on health and environment as a collective call for the Asia-Pacific region to enhance international cooperation in addressing complex health and environment issues. These were preceded by a UNEP co-organized regional workshop (23 September) where participants contributed insights on enhancing capacity for developing national air pollutant emissions inventories to support air quality management efforts.

10th session of the AMCEN, 30 August – 6 September, Abidjan (Photo credit: UNECA)

Panelists from across Pacific- participating in the side event on how to advance Environmental Rights in the Pacific, and identify joint action in line with the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy, 26–30 August, Nuku'alofa, Tonga
(Photo credit: OHCHR)

53rd Pacific Islands forum leaders meeting

At the forum (26 – 30 August, Nuku'alofa, Tonga), UNEP organized a side event on how to advance environmental rights in the Pacific, and identify joint action in line with the 2050 strategy for the blue Pacific continent.

Asia regional meeting of the coalition of finance ministers

The UNEP co-organized meeting (27-28 August, Manila, Philippines) promoted knowledge exchange on climate finance and facilitated peer-to-peer discussions. UNEP's contributions included guiding climate finance integration into public finance systems and sponsoring partnership for action on green economy (PAGE) member countries. The event laid the groundwork for the ASEAN climate finance policy platform and strengthened interest in UNEP's sustainable budgeting approach. The event facilitated UNEP's scale-up efforts in Southeast Asia by aligning its work with regional initiatives like the ASEAN platform.

Group Photo – Coalition of finance ministers for climate action Asia and the pacific regional meetings, 27-28 August, Manila
(Photo credit: UNEP)

iii. Europe

Incorporating environment and climate change agendas at the national level

UNEP co-spearheaded the development of tailored services for UN country teams (UNCTs) and resident coordinator offices (RCOs) across the region, to strengthen the understanding of how to mainstream global environmental and climate agendas within national development processes. Region-specific webinars and guidance notes have been created to provide practical insights on entry points, strategies, and tools for integrating environmental and climate considerations into UN sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) processes.

In addition, UNEP and the UN environment management group (EMG) have developed materials for a workshop and guidance aimed at enhancing coordinated UN actions to address the biodiversity crisis in Europe and Central Asia. These efforts focus on mainstreaming biodiversity into UNSDCFs while fostering stronger biodiversity action at both regional and national levels. The services will create a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned among UNCTs, ensuring that global concepts are effectively turned into country-level policies and action on the ground.

iv. Latin American and the Caribbean

Forum of ministers of the environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

The UNEP convened special session (11- 12 September, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) of the forum undertook dialogue on climate action, biodiversity, and land degradation and restoration in the region to arrive at common regional views for the upcoming CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD COPs. There was a strong call for the urgent strengthening of funding mechanisms and for integrated tools to assist countries in the implementation of the Rio conventions and other MEAs. Key areas for regional collaboration within the forum were identified, including the update of the regional plan on ecosystem restoration, the strengthening of integrated early warning systems, the development of a regional cooperation programme on open dumpsites and methane reduction, and the expanding of the water agenda in the region.

G20 bioeconomy initiative

In the context of the work undertaken by Brazil as the G20 presidency, UNEP provided support during the fourth and final meetings of the G20 initiative on bioeconomy (9-11 September, Rio de Janeiro), where 10 high-level principles on bioeconomy were established. The initiative aims to foster the development of a new, innovative production paradigm, integrating nature, traditional knowledge and science. This marks the first time that bioeconomy has been the subject of a multilaterally agreed document specifically dedicated to this theme. The principles are expected to serve as a foundation for future global discussions on bioeconomy.

UNEP provided continuous technical support to the secretariat of the Brazilian G20 presidency by developing guiding documents and specialized content on bioeconomy, including drafting the first version of the high-level principles, supporting establishment of a unified framework guiding countries on sustainable bioeconomy practices that integrate economic growth with environmental conservation and social inclusion.

v. West Asia

Rapid damage and needs assessment (RDNA) in Lebanon and Palestine

UNEP, as a member of the UN country teams in Lebanon and Palestine, is participating in the EU-UN-World Bank established working groups on RDNA and providing technical advice on damage monitoring and debris management. The RDNA methodology has been developed to assess damage, loss and recovery needs. Within this context and building on the successful interventions by UNEP in Iraq and the Beirut port explosion, UNEP continues to promote the mainstreaming of sound waste management and circularity in debris management as part of post-conflict environment recovery.

2. PROGRAMME OF WORK IMPLEMENTATION

A. Climate stability

International day of awareness of food loss and waste

The 5th international day (27 September) highlighted the critical need for financing to bolster efforts to reduce food loss and waste. This builds on UNEP's work as custodian of SDG indicator 12.3 and the development of the bi-annual food waste index report, and supports implementation of UNEA resolution 4/3 on promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste and UNEA resolution 2/9 on prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste.

Emissions gap report 2024 – annual steering committee and lead authors meeting

The UNEP hosted meeting (11- 12 September, Copenhagen, Denmark) discussed chapter content and the way forward, furthered clarity on key messages and the overall storyline, and agreed upon relevant cross-cutting issues, a revised workplan with defined responsibilities, initial communication and outreach plans.

Emissions gap report 2024 annual steering committee and lead authors meeting, 11-12 September, Copenhagen
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Startups for low carbon lifestyles in Asia Pacific

Over the years, UNEP and massive earth foundation (MEF) have successfully partnered for three editions of LowCarbon.Earth supporting climate tech startups in the region through mentorship sessions with experts and investors, which culminates with a demo day with climate-tech investors. Since its launch in 2021, the program has supported 94 climate-tech startups, including 30 women founders, and engaged with 35 climate-tech investors. Following its intake on 27 August, the LowCarbon.Earth 2024 edition will support start-ups from Asia-Pacific working on six areas: clean air, agrifood, renewable energy, digital innovation, sustainable mobility and plastic pollution.

18th regional workshop on climate change negotiations for Arab countries

UNEP co-collaborated to support the workshop (25-27 September, Tunis, Tunisia) through strengthening the Arab group's capacity in addressing climate finance, a main subject of COP29. Negotiators from across the Arab region benefited from hands-on training to enhance their skills and effectiveness in international climate negotiations.

Systematic observations financing facility (SOFF) South Asia regional workshop

As a SOFF cofounder, UNEP supported the workshop (24-26 September, Thimphu, Bhutan) where participants discussed how to close the region's significant weather and climate data gaps to meet the requirements of the internationally agreed global basic observing network (GBON) regulations and translate this data into effective climate action. In addition, UNEP co-launched (26 September) the US$ 4.6 million SOFF investment phase in Bhutan to strengthen in-country capacity for sustained collection and international exchange of essential surface-based weather and climate observations.

Strategic alliances for climate transparency in Ecuador

UNEP co-convened an event (16 September, Cuenca, Ecuador) to present the creation of three strategic alliances to strengthen the country's national climate

Presentation of strategic alliances for climate transparency in Ecuador, 16 September
(Photo credit: Universidad Del Azuay)

transparency system, including the promotion of civil society participation in the system's implementation, through citizens access to clear and accurate data on greenhouse gas emissions and climate policies. This will support Ecuador to implement the provisions of the Paris agreement's enhanced transparency framework as well as inform national policy making.

Indonesia national cooling action plan (I-NCAP)

UNEP supported Indonesia to develop and launch its first I-NCAP (Bali, 6 August) focusing on building space cooling, food cold chains, healthcare cold chains, mobile air conditioning and process cooling, aligning with the country's enhanced NDC. It represents a comprehensive policy roadmap to address increasing cooling demand, enhance energy efficiency in cooling appliances, and promote the use of low-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants.

Preparation of Iraq biennial transparency report (BTR)

UNEP organized a capacity building workshop (24-26 July, Erbil) to support the Government of Iraq in preparing the BTR. The event aimed at building capacities on climate change adaptation and loss and damage in the identified priority sectors related to water, agriculture, biodiversity, and health.

Reducing negative impacts of climate change on water resources in Jordan

UNEP is supporting the execution of a green climate fund (GCF) approved (18 July) project for three watersheds in the north Jordan valley (Kafrain, King Talal Dam, Yarmouk) to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on water resources through integrated landscape and water resources management (ILWRM). This includes improved ecosystem management, enhanced protection, supply/use of water, behavioural change and strengthened governance, in order to address climate change and water scarcity in the region. It represents a new wave of adaptation projects supported by UNEP that are larger, have a higher impact, and support an integrated package of solutions to address the three planetary environmental crises.

Tracking climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in Trinidad and Tobago

UNEP co-launched (30 July, Port of Spain) Trinidad and Tobago's national transparency system (NTS), marking the completion of the GEF-funded capacity building initiative for transparency (CBIT) project. The NTS will improve the tracking of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, enabling the country to meet its reporting obligations under the Paris agreement's enhanced transparency framework (ETF).

Validation workshop to translate Uganda's nationally determined contributions (NDCs), 27 August, Kampala, (Photo credit: UNEP)

Translating Uganda's NDCs into actionable climate goals

UNEP organized a validation workshop (27 August, Kampala, Uganda) to discuss the main outcomes and impacts of a project to translate Uganda's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) into concrete, actionable climate goals that support low-carbon development and climate resilience. This includes promoting climate-smart technologies, improving climate financing mechanisms, and supporting smallholder farmers and communities with sustainable solutions such as solar irrigation, e-cooking, and picture-based insurance. UNEP supported a team of local and regional partners by mobilizing additional funding from adaptation fund climate innovation accelerator to help them design an innovative hybrid insurance product for smallholder banana farmers which will help them implement climate resilient practices to adapt to adverse climatic conditions.

Implementing MEPS in Zimbabwe

UNEP co-organized a training of trainers workshop (7-8 August, Bindura, Zimbabwe) to build technical capacity to provide training to a broad audience for the smooth implementation of minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) in Zimbabwe. The workshop is part of the project to implement Southern Africa development community (SADC) harmonised MEPS for air conditioners and residential refrigeration appliances (cooling products).

B. Living in harmony with nature

World water week

UNEP presented (28 August) critical data during the week (25-29 August, Stockholm, Sweden) on the state of the world's freshwater ecosystems. The findings were derived from UNEP's mid-term status reports on SDG 6 Indicators on ambient water quality (6.3.2), integrated water resources management (6.5.1) and water-related ecosystems (6.6.1). With the support of UNEP-led information platforms, capacity-building and training on water quality testing and data collection, countries are now beginning to fill the existing data gaps, understand how to better protect, restore, and sustainably manage their precious water resources, and meet the targets and ambition outlined in UNEA resolution 6/13 on effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies.

The week also included a UNEP co-convened (25 August) freshwater challenge talk show on *mobilising transboundary action to achieve ambitious goal* which introduced the context, importance and necessity of the freshwater challenge and provided specific examples of how countries are taking action for water bodies, and how partners are supporting these initiatives.

Junior Rapporteurs at the World Water Week, 25-29 August, Stockholm
(Photo credit: SIWI Newsletter)

Leveraging ecolabels and sustainable procurement for biodiversity

In preparation for CBD COP 16, UNEP convened a webinar (5 September) on *leveraging ecolabels and sustainable procurement for biodiversity: a path for national plans* to promote the use of these tools in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). Government and sustainable certification representatives shared experiences, knowledge, and strategies to scale up the use of credible ecolabels, certifications, and sustainable public procurement to combat biodiversity loss in national contexts.

UN common approach to biodiversity

UNEP co-organized a third webinar (9 July) under the UN common approach to biodiversity webinar series, focused on human rights-based approaches to conservation, restoration, sustainable biodiversity use, and equitable benefit sharing. The webinar aimed to raise awareness of systematic biodiversity challenges and promote Kunming-Montreal GBF implementation. A key outcome was the finalization of a monitoring and reporting framework to support data collection later in 2024 on the UN system's contributions to the GBF.

Strengthening national ecosystem assessments (NEAs)

Under the umbrella of the biodiversity and ecosystem services network (BES-Net), UNEP co-delivered an annual global capacity-building workshop (17-20 September, Cambridge, UK) of the national ecosystem assessment (NEA) initiative. The workshop identified and boosted key capacity support for countries, celebrated project progress and lessons learned, presented tools developed by UNEP and partners, and strengthened global communities of practice around ecosystem assessments.

Participants from the Thailand National Ecosystem Assessment team at the NEA Initiative's annual global capacity-building workshop on national ecosystem assessments, 17-20 September, Cambridge.
(Photo credit: NEA Initiative)

Strengthening environmental dimension of LAC's humanitarian migration response

UNEP delivered an online training (23 July, Panama City, Panama) on environment and human mobility and the virtual environment humanitarian adviser (VEHA) tool. It also created a new environmental marker to support the humanitarian sector's assessment of the environmental impacts of planned activities in the LAC region, submitted on 14 August for inclusion in the 2025–2026 refugee and migrant response plan (RMRP). The marker was disseminated during a webinar (26-27 August) providing the humanitarian sector with orientation, best practices and guidance for their activity submissions.

Concretizing actions toward agrifood systems transformation for Pacific SIDS

The UNEP co-organized regional workshop (24-26 July, Nadi, Fiji) attended by 11 countries discussed how to translate food systems national pathways into action plans, with a strong focus on environmental dimensions and strengthened nexus with climate and nature actions.

One health

UNEP co-convened three back-to-back meetings (5-9 August, Nadi, Fiji) on one health and security for the Pacific, quadripartite-Pacific community one health, and climate and health with representatives of 11 countries. The meeting resulted in enhanced understanding of the Pacific Island countries on the one health joint plan of action and the environmental dimension of one health. The workshop resulted in key recommendations, which will serve as a basis for the further efforts on one health in the Pacific region.

UNEP also supported a symposium on one health in Azerbaijan (25 July, Baku) which addressed how the one health approach can address climate change as one of the three planetary environmental crises. UNEP promoted environmental rule of law, MEA implementation, and the integration of environmental considerations into national policies, particularly regarding antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and biodiversity conservation. Key outcomes included calls to institutionalize one health in strategic forums, establish a coordination mechanism, and integrate the approach into national policies, leveraging Azerbaijan's COP29 leadership.

Supporting environmental policy for sustainable development in Malawi

UNEP co-organised a workshop (12-26 August, Lilongwe, Malawi) in support of the development of the *Malawi national state of the environment report* that will assist decision-makers to identify solutions for sustainable development pathways, disaster risk reduction and resilience. The report aims to further strengthen national capacity to conduct periodic environmental assessments and aims to provide actionable analysis on the interlinkages between climate and disaster risks and food, land and water security.

A Workshop on "Concretizing actions towards agrifood systems transformations for Pacific Small Island Developing States, 24-26 July, Fiji
(Photo credit: FAO)

Saudi national biodiversity framework

UNEP co-organized a national stakeholder workshop (9-10 July, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) to begin preparations to develop the framework using a multidisciplinary participatory methodology, build a knowledge base, reach consensus on identifying national goals, and develop mechanisms to support and implement the goals of the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework. Participants formulated actionable targets that support national biodiversity conservation priorities.

C. Towards a pollution-free planet

Marine litter (GPML) digital platform

UNEP is advancing the global partnership on plastic pollution and marine litter (GPML) digital platform to provide a robust data and information hub on plastic pollution and marine litter, enabling informed decision-making. The platform's data hub integrated global datasets on plastics trade from UNCTAD, SDG indicator 11.6.1 datasets from UN-Habitat, and waste management data from the global waste management outlook. UNEP updated the knowledge hub interface, adding over 2,600 resources organized by plastic lifecycle, key topics, and geography. The country workspace now includes a plastics strategy workflow with links to UNEP tools, technical briefs, and case studies. Information is being made available in English, French and Spanish, with plans to expand to other languages.

Special programme and Minamata SIP joint call for applications

The UNEP special programme (chemicals and waste management programme) and the specific international programme to support capacity building and technical assistance (SIP) for the Minamata convention on mercury are two leading grant mechanisms for in-country capacity-building and institutional strengthening for managing chemicals and hazardous substances. In August, their secretariats coordinated calls for proposals: the eight round of the special programme with 30 eligible applications out of the 36 received, and the fourth round of SIP, with 17 eligible applications out of the 26 received.

Enhancing regional nutrient policy coordination

UNEP's global partnership on nutrients management hosted a webinar (29 August) to facilitate knowledge sharing and identify challenges in regional nutrient policy coordination through regional seas conventions and action plans. By highlighting successful practices and identifying gaps, the webinar provided a platform for improving regional nutrient management strategies and advancing towards more effective and sustainable solutions.

SEA (Seas of East Asia) of solutions 2024

Organized by the UNEP co-initiative SEA circular, the event (18-20 September, Bangkok) focused on collective actions to end plastic pollution. With 23 exhibitors and three field visits, it fostered hands-on collaboration and delivered relevant messages ahead of the fifth session of the INC on a plastics treaty. The event highlighted the need for stronger legislation, mandatory extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes, finance mechanisms prioritizing upstream solutions, and coordinated, inclusive approaches along the plastic value chain.

UN common approach to pollution

The executive summary of the approach was translated into all UN languages in September to facilitate the integration of pollution prevention into UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs) globally. A cross-mapping of the approach with the SDGs was completed to highlight alignment and enhance coherence between the frameworks.

Path to repurposing and reforming harmful subsidies

The second webinar of the EMG nexus dialogue series on harmful subsidies (17 September) was held with the objective of deepening the understanding of measuring the impacts of subsidies to inform policymaking and promote sustainable economic growth.
UNEP contributed to presentations that explored methodologies for measuring subsidies' economic, social, and environmental impacts, emphasizing the urgent need for reform.

Field visit to TerraCycle - waste prevention and collection in waterways together with communities, 20 September, Bangkok
(Photo credit: SEA Circular)

Promoting circularity in mining and extractive industries in Africa

In implementation of UNEA resolutions 5/12 and 6/9 on the environmental aspects of minerals and metals management, and the advancement of the work of the UN secretary general's panel on critical energy transition minerals, UNEP co-organized a regional consultative forum on critical minerals and just transition (21-22 August, Johannesburg, South Africa) to promote environmentally conscious extraction of critical minerals. The outcome was a briefing paper to guide policymakers, industry stakeholders, and civil society actors in harnessing Africa's critical minerals to benefit all its people.

Air quality management in Southern Africa development community (SADC)

UNEP co-organized a series of capacity building webinars on air pollution to build a SADC air quality management community of practice. These include: *introducing the "big five" in integrated clean air and climate actions in SADC* (18 July), *ground to the sky: best practice in air quality monitoring in Africa* (22 August), and beyond monitoring: using the low emissions analysis platform (leap) for examining air quality futures (5 September).

The regional community is an early exemplar of the response to the 2022 AMCEN decision 18/4 on air quality, calling for support to RECs to realize the implementation of integrated measures to curb air pollution and climate change, and UNEA resolution 6/10 on regional cooperation on air quality. The webinars were a vehicle to build a cohesive community of practice and identify the needs and priorities for air quality management in the region.

Acid deposition monitoring network in East Asia (EANET) working group meeting

The UNEP hosted EANET secretariat organized the 2024 WG meeting (20-21 August, virtual) focused on reviewing progress on activities in 2023 and 2024, preparing the next medium-term plan (MTP) for EANET (2026-2030), and considering new projects for 2024. Following this, the 25th senior technical managers' meeting of EANET (28-29 August, Bangkok) reviewed progress and discussed future air quality monitoring directions.

EPR for waste management in West Asia

UNEP co-organized a regional workshop on EPR for waste management (17–18 September, Manama, Bahrain) which equipped West Asian environmental agencies with the knowledge and tools to implement EPR systems, supporting sustainable waste management and the circular economy.

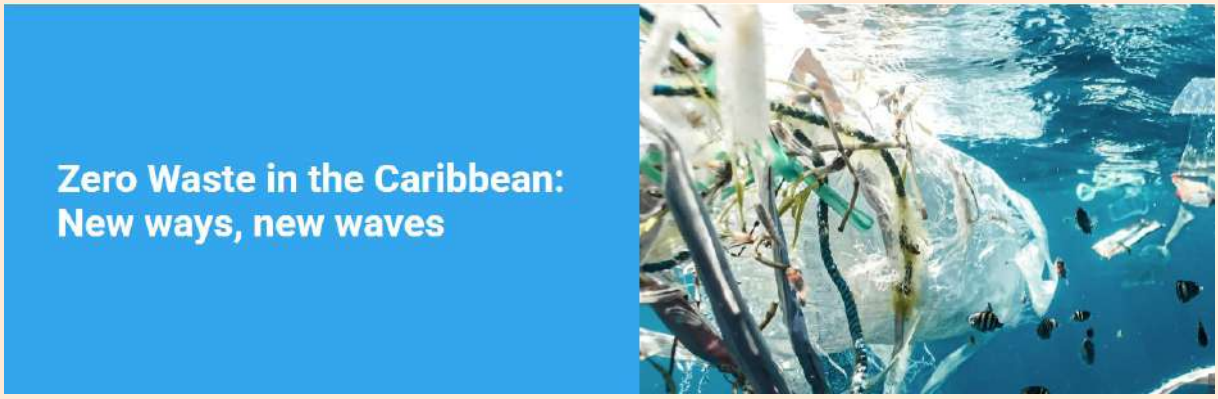
Capacity building workshop on EPR for waste management, 17–18 September, Manama
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Investing in circular economy solutions for Caribbean waste management

As part of the zero waste Caribbean initiative, UNEP organized the workshop *financing circular economy solutions for waste management* (3-6 September, Barbados) to strengthen national frameworks, develop a regional waste management policy, explore financial solutions and foster public-private partnerships to turn waste pollution into circular economy opportunities. The outcome included discussions on financial instruments and regional challenges and recommendations for enhancing mechanisms like tipping fees and EPR. Site visits highlighted best practices in waste management, emphasizing the need for accurate data and regulatory frameworks to attract investment for sustainable projects.

Supporting decommissioning of oil and gas infrastructure in Colombia

Under Norway's oil for development (OfD) partnership, UNEP conducted national training (17-20 September, Colombia) to support Colombia's efforts to decommission ageing oil and gas infrastructure safely to enhance environmental management and reduce pollution risks in the oil and gas sector. UNEP co-developed a curriculum to guide stakeholders in environmentally and socially responsible decommissioning. A field visit to a petroleum facility provided practical insights into the challenges of decommissioning.



Addressing plastic pollution in Ecuador and Peru

UNEP conducted national stakeholder consultation workshops in Peru (14-23 August) and Ecuador (August 20) as part of its project on *capacity development to catalyse actions and commitments at the national and global level to reduce plastic pollution, including in the marine environment*. The project supports 19 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific and LAC in developing national source inventories and strategies to combat plastic pollution. Participants shared their insights and data to aid in creating these inventories. A series of bi-weekly online technical sessions from end-June to mid-November will develop capacity in project countries on relevant subjects. This initiative aligns with GPML, facilitating data management and knowledge sharing.

Assessing debris and environmental impacts of the conflict in Gaza

UNEP co-supported a donor briefing in Ramallah (12 August) with the Palestinian ministry of public works and housing, as co-chair of the Gaza debris management working group. Building on the report entitled *environmental impact of the conflict in Gaza: preliminary assessment of environmental impacts,* UNEP emphasized the unprecedented scale of conflict-generated debris and the associated environmental challenges, including explosive ordnance management, asbestos, human remains, land use, and debris clearance operations. Eighty participants agreed under the working group to establish a digital clearing house for coordinating debris management.

Rapid damage needs assessment (RDNA) in Gaza

During the reporting period, UNEP contributed to preparatory work for the development of the RDNA of the impacts of the armed conflict in Gaza and of the deteriorating conditions in the West Bank since 7 October 2023, a process jointly coordinated by the World Bank, the European Union, and the UN system. UNEP will act as UN system focal point for the environmental sector in both the RDNA and the conflict recovery framework for Gaza (CRF).

Clean air workshops in India and Lao PDR

UNEP co-organized a national workshop in India (8-9 August, New Delhi) to explore innovative sector-specific solutions for mitigating air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and discuss opportunities to increase finance for these solutions. It also organized a national air quality awareness raising workshop in Lao PDR (27-28 August, Luang Prabang) focusing on enhancing knowledge about the sources, impacts, and status of air pollution, sharing best practices and successful strategies on reducing air pollution and facilitating collaboration between government agencies in addressing the subject matter.

Recovery of nutrients and microplastics from wastewater in Delhi, India

UNEP concluded an assessment (15 September) on the recovery of nutrients and micro-plastics from wastewater in Delhi, evaluating the recovery potential of several wastewater treatment plants and preparing ecosystem health report cards for surrounding lakes.

Japan study programme on transformation towards a circular economy for plastics

The UNEP co-organized programme (23-27 September, Osaka) focused on knowledge exchange and best practices in plastic pollution management, with the aim to strengthen the capacity of government representatives, private sector experts, industry associations, and academia to develop regulatory frameworks that reduce plastic pollution. The workshop enhanced knowledge by sharing Japan's best practices and identified actionable steps for stakeholders to foster cross-regional collaboration and strengthen systemic approaches to plastic management.

A Japan Study Programme on "Transformation towards a circular economy for plastics", 23-27 September, Osaka
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Supporting vulnerable coastal communities in Malaysia

UNEP co-organized a kick-off meeting (9 August, Sabah, Malaysia) with the mayor of Kota Kinabalu to mark the start of the 3rd phase of the project *enhancing wastewater, nutrient management and sanitation provision for marginalized coastal communities in Sabah, Malaysia* funded by the UN-Malaysia SDG trust fund. UNEP is co-supporting marginalized communities, including women and girls, in coastal areas of Sabah to improve their livelihoods and prevent and address the degradation of marine ecosystems through sustainable sanitation and wastewater management.

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Launch of the Minamata initial assessment project in Qatar

UNEP co-launched the project with a workshop (24-25 September, Doha) to strengthen national capacities, assess needs, form working groups, exchange best practices, and raise awareness of mercury's environmental and health impacts. The workshop led to discussions on improving cooperation for mercury management, initiating an assessment and inventory in Qatar, and evaluating legislative and administrative needs with proposed standards aligned with international and national contexts.

Enhancing capacity for recovery from the environmental impacts of war in Sudan

UNEP continued its efforts to address the environmental consequences of conflict in Sudan by co-organizing a hybrid workshop (17 September) focusing on the war's impact on ecosystems. The workshop offered insights into environmental assessments conducted by UN agencies and provided UNEP an opportunity to discuss preparatory work for establishing a working group dedicated to assessing environmental impacts and recovery strategies.

Support for green recovery in Ukraine

UNEP provided continued support to Ukraine during the reporting period, including provision of training on environmental sampling, field instrument use, and digital documentation to enhance the capacity of Ukrainian institutions to effectively monitor and evaluate environmental damage. It also co-convened stakeholders to initiate discussions and collaboration on asbestos-containing debris management. These are part of ongoing efforts to support Ukraine with management of, and recovery from the environmental consequences of war and supporting a science-policy dialogue for the country's green recovery.

Third Authors Meeting for the Seventh Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7).
(Photo credit: UNEP)

D. Foundational subprogrammes

i. Science policy

3rd authors meeting for 7th global environment outlook (GEO-7)

UNEP convened the authors of GEO-7 (2-5 September, Nairobi, Kenya) to advance the drafting of chapters and the summary for policy makers, aiming for a second order draft quality for the chapters and a first order draft for the summary. The meeting facilitated cross-chapter discussions to enhance coherence and interlinkages, while also raising awareness about GEO-7 through a science-policy dialogue focused on transforming food systems globally and regionally. Additionally, the intergovernmental and multistakeholder advisory group (IMAG) and the multi-disciplinary expert scientific advisory group (MESAG) held separate sessions to provide insights on policy relevance and scientific integrity of the chapters.

The main outcomes of the meeting were: (a) progress made on all chapters to align their narratives, eliminating overlaps and creating greater coherence; (b) harmonized regional narratives across the report, focusing on the environmental priorities in each region and identifying the social and economic impacts; (c) cross-cutting themes were addressed consistently throughout the report including climate change adaptation behavioural, social and cultural issues and indigenous knowledge and local knowledge; and (d) GEO-7 side events were successfully organized.

Working group on implementation and statistical capacity building (area D)

UNEP's work on system of environmental-economic accounting (SEEA) capacity building was presented to the UN committee of experts on EEA area D working group. The group focuses on coordination of implementation initiatives and statistical capacity building activities for SEEA in countries, administration of global assessment of EEA and supporting statistics.

ii. Environmental governance

UN environment management group (EMG)

UNEP facilitated a senior consultation among EMG deputies (20 August) to consider ways to address findings and recommendations of an earlier meeting on the EMG evaluation to increase its effectiveness and strengthen ownership and collaboration among UN entities. The results were shared with EMG members for consideration at their 30th meeting.

During the CRP's 11th annual subcommittee meeting, UNEP and EMG co-organized a panel discussion (10 July, Nairobi) focused on enhancing global interagency collaboration and policy coherence on environmental issues. The discussion emphasized the role and potential of the EMG in mainstreaming environmental concerns across development, peace, health, human rights and humanitarian action.

UNEP also co-organized online briefing sessions (29 August and 30 September) for EMG members to prepare for effective UN collaboration at the upcoming CBD and UNFCCC COPs. The objective was to enhance UN system cooperation to address climate change and nature and land loss through joint initiatives, shared platforms, and unified messaging aligned with COP goals.

21st annual colloquium of IUCN academy of environmental law

UNEP supported the colloquium (4-7 July, Gandhinagar, India) on enhancing understanding of environmental law among academics and lawyers, by providing insights on the Montevideo Environmental law programme, the UNEP law and environment assistance platform, and other capacity-building resources aimed at advancing environmental law. A key outcome was increased awareness on how to engage in global decision-making processes related to environmental law, including UNEA resolutions and commitments under MEAs.

Strengthening national institutions for Montreal protocol compliance

UNEP OzonAction provided assistance to 24 countries during the reporting period to prepare their new institutional strengthening project requests, which will be considered by the Montreal protocol's multilateral fund's executive committee. The protocol's Kigali amendment, which recently entered into force, has added complexities related to data reporting, new technical sectors, policy development, and stakeholder interaction. Through institutional strengthening projects and other services, UNEP is assisting the countries to successfully meet and adapt to this changing landscape.

10th Asia-Pacific mediation forum 2024

UNEP co-hosted the forum (19- 21 August, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea), facilitating discussions centred on *regional challenges, regional solutions, global outcomes: using mediation to resolve environment and climate change disputes*. Outcomes included recommendations for developing appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms, emphasizing the protection of the rights of vulnerable populations, integrating traditional knowledge in dispute resolution, and the need for sustained capacity building in environmental law. Discussions reinforced the necessity of establishing a Pacific environmental dispute resolution centre to enhance regional cooperation and address environmental issues effectively.

Capacity building for MEAs implementation in the Caribbean and Pacific

UNEP supported 79 countries in the Caribbean (11-13 September, Miami, USA) and the Pacific (9-14 September, Apia, Samoa) through the ACP MEAs III programme to enhance their capacity and negotiation skills in preparation for CBD COP16. The workshops provided these countries with a platform to consolidate regional priorities and build capacity to advocate for stronger international commitments to biodiversity conservation, secure resources for ecosystem protection, and collaborate on global strategies for preserving natural heritage. This initiative aligns with UNEA resolution 6/6, which called for enhanced capacity-building efforts to support the implementation of MEAs at the national level.

African elephant fund (AEF)

The AEF secretariat participated in the CITES African elephant dialogue (23 to 26 September, Maun, Botswana) to address issues related to the trade in live African elephants, in line with AEF decision 19.167, and to discuss broader conservation challenges for African elephants. UNEP's AEF secretariat contributed by presenting the status of AEF administration. The dialogue led to proposed amendments to the decision and emphasized the importance of sustainable financing for elephant conservation, as well as enhancing regional cohesion and coordination among range states.

6th UN Asia-Pacific responsible business and human rights (RBHR) forum

UNEP co-organized the forum (24-27 September, Bangkok) held under the theme the *remedy blueprint: bridging gaps and accelerating access,* where it facilitated two sessions. One session was on *building a path to effective remedy in the financial sector* which highlighted the importance of strengthening social and environmental frameworks in financial institutions. The other session was on *bridging rights and responsibilities: tackling plastic pollution together with the informal sector* which focused on the integration of waste pickers into EPR schemes. UNEP also co-organized a session on *access to remedy in the energy transition sector: regional `scan of the 'right' pathway to the just transition,* which discussed human rights-based approaches to identifying and addressing risks and impacts in extractive and renewable energy sectors.

Rights-based pathways to climate mitigation & just energy transition in Asia-Pacific

The UNEP co-organized dialogue (22-23 September, Bangkok) provided a safe space for environmental human rights defenders to discuss the current situation and challenges they face in advocating for climate justice and action. The event focused on developing an output document to be presented at the UN RBHR Forum in Asia-Pacific, COP29 (12-22 November) and the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights (26-28 November).

UN interagency dialogue on business and human rights (BHR) in Asia-Pacific

UNEP participated in the dialogue (3 September, Bangkok, Thailand) which provided a platform for ten UN agencies, including national and regional specialists, who work on business and human rights (BHR) in Asia-Pacific to analyse global and regional

trends, exchange best practices, and re-imagine and finetune BHR programming.

Regional platform of environmental law lecturers in LAC

The platform's first in-person meeting (27 August, Montevideo, Uruguay), followed by a collective rights regulations workshop (29 August) were held alongside the 3rd Uruguayan congress on environmental law (27-29 August). The meeting discussed and coordinated the development of its 2024 workplan to address environmental access rights, plastics, climate change litigation, environmental education, and the BBNJ treaty. UNEP facilitated discussions, identified regional training needs, established leaders and working groups, and prepared a regional questionnaire.

ASEAN environmental rights working group (AER WG)

UNEP supported the 5th AER WG meeting (1-3 July, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) in finalizing the draft ASEAN declaration on the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. The draft was submitted to the ASEAN intergovernmental commission on human rights (AICHR) for consideration at its special meeting (1/2024) (23-26 July, Vientiane, Lao PDR). AICHR agreed to consult with ASEAN bodies to finalise the draft for submission to senior ministers.

Pacific regional lawyers workshop on environmental rule of law

The UNEP co-organized workshop (23-25 September, Nadi, Fiji) aimed to empower government lawyers and attorneys-general in the Pacific region to effectively address complex environmental challenges through improved policy, legislative development and review. It enhanced the capacity of lawyers from nine countries by providing them with knowledge and understanding of MEAs and their role in promoting environmental rule of law.

Strengthening Pacific lawyers understanding of environmental law, 23-25 September, Fiji
(Photo credit: SPREP)

Safety across Asia for the global Environment (SAFE)

UNEP co-organized an expert group meeting (11-12 July, Bangkok, Thailand), under the SAFE project which aims to mitigate the risks of wildlife-related zoonotic disease spillovers. The meeting brought together experts from ASEAN nations to strengthen regional dialogue on preventing zoonotic disease transmission from wildlife trade. UNEP facilitated discussions on the project's contribution to cross-sectoral collaboration and revisions to the SAFE discussion paper. Key outcomes included plans for an ASEAN-EU forum towards the end of 2024 and a roadmap for intensified cooperation at scientific and policy level.

Environmental rule of law in the Caribbean

The UNEP co-organized online event (20 August) raised awareness about the significance of environmental rule of law in addressing regional environmental challenges by introducing the findings and recommendations of the second environmental rule of law report.

Caspian Sea Day

UNEP celebrated the day (12 August) to commemorate the enforcement of the framework convention for the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian sea (Tehran convention). The event emphasized the commitment of the contracting parties to safeguard the Caspian environment, highlighting their obligations under four auxiliary protocols (Aktau. Ashgabat, Moscow, and EIA in transboundary context). The outcome of the event promoted regional legal instruments and frameworks as essential components of environmental rule of law in the pan-European region.

DaRT national workshop Ghana and regional workshop in Nepal

UNEP facilitated two workshops in Ghana (20-22 August, Accra) and Nepal (17-19 September, Kathmandu) to train biodiversity experts and focal points of MEAs on the data reporting tool for multilateral environmental agreements (DaRT). In Ghana, the workshop resulted in the refinement of national targets already submitted to the CBD Secretariat (August 2024) and the decision to implement DaRT. In Nepal, participants from seven countries shared experiences and learned how to use the tool to promote inter-ministerial cooperation and the preparation of national reports.

Caspian Sea Day 2024
(Photo credit: The Caspian Environment Information Centre portal)

Human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in Lao PDR and PNG

UNEP co-conducted a training for the UN country team in Papua New Guinea (22-23 August, Port Moresby) to augment their capacity to undertake programmatic and advocacy work to uphold the right to a healthy environment. UNEP also co-conducted a training in Lao PDR (27-28 August, Luang Prabang) for government officials from various ministries to enhance understanding of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, resulting in the identification of entry points for national action.

Environmental legislation making in Cameroon

UNEP participated in a national workshop (16- 21 September, Ebolowa, Cameroon) aimed at revising Cameroon's framework environmental law (Law 96/12 of 1996) to update the legislation to address current environmental challenges and align it with international best practices. UNEP shared trends and practices on environmental legislation-making and emphasized the link between effective environmental protection, robust legislation and strong enforcement mechanisms.

E. Enabling subprogrammes

i. Finance and economic transformations

One planet network forum 2024

UNEP participated in the forum (12-13 September, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) convened in the framework of the Brazilian G20 presidency to promote global sustainability, resulting in the endorsement of key action areas for addressing inequalities and achieving just transitions through sustainable consumption and production. Notable outcomes included the addition of four organizations to the global tourism plastics initiative and seven new signatories to the Glasgow declaration for climate action in tourism. UNEP joined the circular and fair pact (CFIT) pact, enhancing sustainable public procurement, and ten youth-led projects received funding to advance sustainable consumption practices.

International roundtable on trade in critical minerals for climate transitions

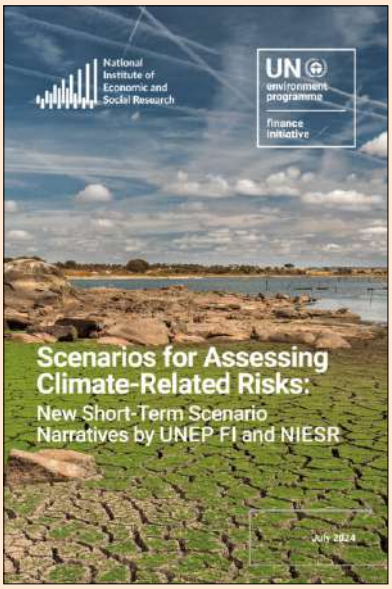
The UNEP co-hosted roundtable (12 July, Geneva, Switzerland) gathered experts to explore trade in critical energy transition minerals, climate action, and sustainable development, focusing on developing countries. Key outcomes included potential cooperation on the UN secretary-general's panel on critical energy transition minerals, and a notable opportunity to advance sustainable trade policy discussions.

Five-year progress report on the net-zero asset owner alliance (NZAOA)

The reporting of the UNEP-FI convened NZAOA highlights that the alliance now has 88 members across 19 countries, representing US$ 9.5 trillion in assets under management. The combined emissions of the alliance's portfolios have declined 6% annually and members invested US$ 555 billion in climate solutions in 2023.

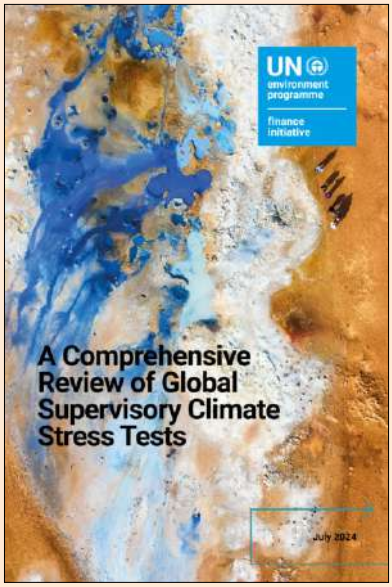
Climate-related risk assessment and stress testing

UNEP-FI released two resources aimed at helping financial institutions assess and integrate climate risks. The *scenarios for assessing climate-related risks: new short-term scenario narratives* (8 July) provides essential knowledge for financial institutions to assess climate risks. The *comprehensive review of global supervisory climate stress tests* (11 July) and its accompanying *climate risk dashboard* (20 September) offer resources for supervisors and financial institutions to understand climate stress testing and risk tools.



Disclosure and governance

UNEP-FI's net-zero banking alliance (NZBA) disclosure checklist – version 2 (30 July) provides guidelines to enhance climate target disclosures among NZBA and principles for responsible banking (PRB) signatories. In September, UNEP FI released the *principles for responsible banking guidance on effective governance* to guide banks in structuring their environmental and social governance strategies for responsible banking.



Policy advocacy and just transition

UNEP-FI's NZAOA has called for national policy reforms in line with 1.5°C carbon budgets and pathways (20 September). Additionally, UNEP FI's *G20 recommendations: advancing a nature-positive economy and just transition* (20 August) are aimed at guiding G20 countries in fostering a nature-positive economy, while ensuring a just transition aligned with global sustainability goals.

Costa Rican sustainable finance taxonomy

UNEP-FI co-introduced new resources in Costa Rica to help banks incorporate circular economy principles into their operations. The taxonomy (8 July) emphasizes the role of circular economy in fostering a sustainable and resilient financial system. A declaration signed by key financial authorities endorsed its adoption by financial institutions.

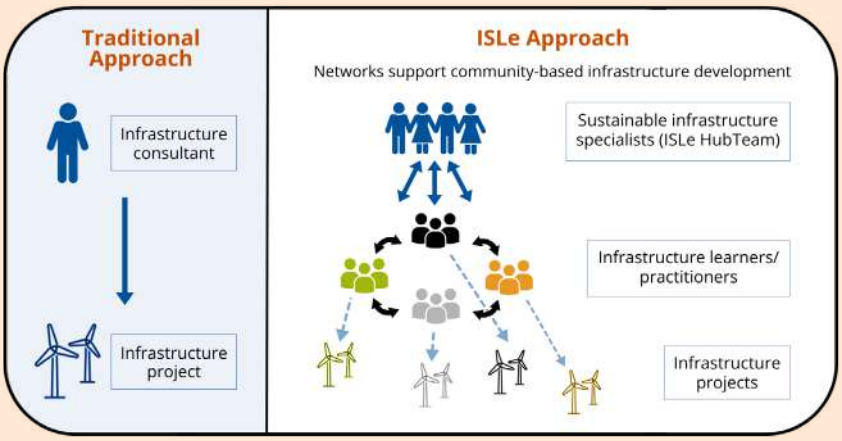
Global youth empowerment for sustainable development

UNEP organized *GenerAcción youth community of practice for resilient cities* (10-12 July, online) to accelerate climate action from LAC cities by protecting and restoring ecosystem services through nature-based solutions (NbS). UNEP supported phase 1 of the project with tailored mentoring sessions for youth teams from Cuba, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

UNEP also supported the visions for the future virtual dialogue (3 August) on climate change, energy transition and sustainable development between young people and adolescents in LAC. UNEP supported the piloting exercise, the dissemination of questionnaires to youth and education networks, and report review. The launch of phase II of UNEP's green nudges through a series of five planned webinars began with a webinar (28 August) where UNEP showcased the llittle book of green nudges and its recommendations for more sustainable lifestyles at university campuses.

Sustainable infrastructure case studies

UNEP published eight sustainable infrastructure case studies (3 September) highlighting global best practices in line with UNEA resolution 5/9 on sustainable and resilient infrastructure. These case studies promote the implementation of international good practice principles for sustainable infrastructure, with one case emphasizing guiding principle 4 on avoiding environmental impacts. Lessons learned show a strong interest in case-based learning, which can be advanced through the infrastructure sustainability learning initiative.



Environmental alliance of America

The UNEP supported EAA was formally established (10 July, Bogotá, Colombia) with five founding members through a signatory act solidifying its foundational framework and operational structure. The initiative stems from decision 2 of the 23rd meeting of the forum of ministers of environment of LAC, emphasizing the need for a regional ecolabel and harmonized eco-labelling standards.

Subsequent developments including a workshop (23-25 July, Panama City, Panama) established its operational framework, elected its leadership, established governance structures and decision-making processes, prioritized recycled plastic for eco-labelling, and fostered discussions on promoting circular economy in the region. Paraguay was welcomed as a sixth member on 9 August.

Strengthening sustainable practices and environmental policies in Latin America

UNEP conducted several significant activities across Latin America aimed at fostering sustainable practices and enhancing environmental policies, including the organization of a taskforce on nature-related financial disclosures (TNFD) workshop (26 August, Brazil) addressing the integration of nature-related risks in finance, and online meetings for the Bogota declaration for sustainable insurance on 30 July and 3 September, emphasizing climate risk management.

ii. Digital Transformation

Digital economy report 2024

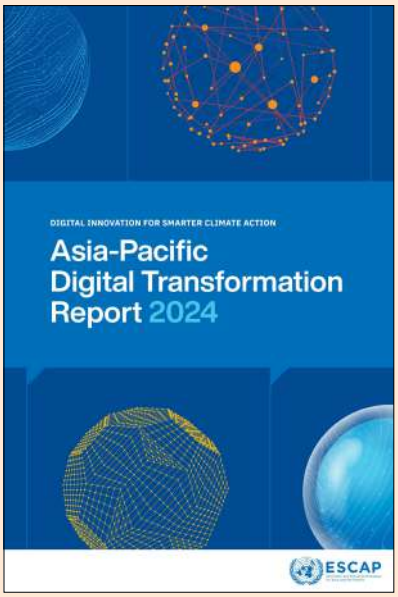
UNEP contributed to the report (launched 10 July) themed on shaping an environmentally sustainable and inclusive digital future, which explores how digital technology and infrastructure depend heavily on raw materials, and how the production and disposal of more and more devices, along with growing water and energy needs are taking an increasing toll on the planet. UNEP contributed to the expert group and peer review process, as well as substantive content through the coalition for digital environmental sustainability (CODES).

Education for digital sustainability

UNEP co-launched (31 July) module 4 of the Digital4Sustainability e-learning programme, focusing on digital technologies for pollution action. The course delves into the crucial role that digital technologies play in combatting pollution. It explores the role of emerging technologies in accelerating systemic change to prevent pollution. The module provides insights into how digital technologies can mitigate the risks arising out of six major types of pollution rising at an alarming rate globally.

Asia-Pacific digital transformation report 2024

UNEP, as a consortium partner of the UN climate technology centre and network (CTCN), contributed to the report themed on digital innovation for smarter climate action. The report was launched (3 September, Kazakhstan) at the Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on digital inclusion and transformation and presents innovative cases demonstrating the power of digital applications for climate actions. This includes real-time transport information systems for public transport in Bangladesh, a digital climate information system platform in Cambodia, and digital early warning systems for flooding in Thailand.



Global environmental data strategy (GEDS) consultations

Member states were invited to participate in consultations (19 September) on the formulation of UNEP's global environmental data strategy (GEDS), with a focus on its five pillars: improve data governance, enhance data quality and provenance, promote data interoperability, promote inclusive data access and affordability, and facilitate capacity building.

Open call for funding and technical support

UNEP launched an open call for funding and technical support as part of its digital accelerator lab initiative (15 August-13 September). The call was open to all UNEP teams, provided they had completed at least two modules of the Digital4Sustainability e-learning course. Successful internal applicants stand to receive funding, along with mentoring and technical support. The evaluation criteria for grants include problem definition, unique value proposition, scalability, impact, user-centricity, and the project's assumptions and risk

profile. Building on last year's success, where four projects received funding and five others benefited from varying levels of technical support, the 2024 call aims to foster further innovation and impact across UNEP's digital initiatives.

Environmental impact of Artificial Intelligence
UNEP launched (20 September) an issue note titled *artificial intelligence (AI) end-to-end: the environmental impact of the full AI lifecycle needs to be comprehensively assessed.* The note highlights UNEP's role in promoting the integration of environmental considerations into digital technologies, outlines key areas where AI affects the environment across its entire lifecycle and seeks to inform Member States, civil society, the private sector, and the broader public. UNEP also calls upon the research community to develop scientific methods for objectively measuring AI's environmental footprint, aiming to foster a more comprehensive understanding and promote informed decision-making.

F. Cross-cutting Issues

i. Gender

UNEP gender focal points (GFP) retreat
The retreat (17-19 September, Nairobi) built capacities of 30 GFPs on gender integration in UNEP publications, projects and reporting, while sharing knowledge and experience on these subjects. Additionally, the retreat explored interconnections between women's empowerment, gender equality, human rights, and the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle.

Addressing gender imbalances within electric mobility industry in Indonesia
UNEP organized a session on gender-transformative transition to electric mobility (9 July, Jakarta) during a workshop on *empowering sustainable mobility: low emission, inclusive, and active transport in Indonesia,* to raise awareness about the gender imbalances within the electric mobility industry and to foster collaborative strategies that promote gender equality and inclusivity throughout the transition to electric mobility.

Achieving women's economic empowerment through SCP
UNEP co-organized a plenary session (12 September, Rio de Janeiro) during the 2nd one planet network forum to share initiatives, experience and best practices on how the transition to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) can concretely enable women's economic empowerment, while addressing the challenge of gender inequalities. The session took a deep dive into the key role that governments and businesses must play in designing and implementing SCP strategies/policies that fully integrate women's economic empowerment and the reduction of gender inequalities as a core objective, in particular through regulatory measures, new institutional cultures and business practices.

Paraguay + verde initiative
To strengthen the participation of women within the framework of the UNEP co-led initiative in Paraguay, childcare spaces were created during consultation workshops (3-4 July, Filadelfia; 17-18 July, Coronel Oviedo). These spaces integrated didactic games,

Gender Focal Points Retreat, 17-19 September, Nairobi,
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Paraguay + Verde initiative, childcare spaces
(Photo credit: UNEP)

recreational and motor activities, and allowed women to effectively participate in the dialogues and capacity buildings events. UNEP also developed a concept note on the *rights and knowledge of indigenous women: a space for empowerment* (10-11 September, Asuncion) to build the capacity of indigenous women leaders on public policy instruments that benefit their peoples and further intergenerational exchange of ancestral knowledge.

Inclusion and equity criteria for high-impact projects in Colombia

UNEP provided technical support (2 August, Bogota) to the Colombian ministry of environment in consolidating a prioritization methodology for the acceleration of NDC projects that incorporate inclusion and equity criteria.

Integration of gender-specific indicators in NDC action project in Uganda

UNEP conducted a validation workshop with women in Uganda (27 August, Kampala) on a NDC action project to integrate gender-specific indicators in monitoring frameworks to assess the impact of policies on women and men and to ensure accountability. Consultations led to the incorporation of gender perspectives into policies, with specific actions and resources allocated to address gender equality. In data collection, gender was captured to enable the national technical institution to keep records on participation by gender.

Construction of gender, environment and climate change indicators

UNEP participated in a workshop (5-6 September, Aguascalientes, Mexico) to mainstream gender, environment and climate change indicators in ministries of environment, national statistical institutes and women's advancement mechanisms in eight LAC countries, with the objective to share experiences among countries on gender and environment indicators. UNEP on behalf of the Regional Working Group on Gender and Environment, was invited to present a tool for gender and environment indicators.

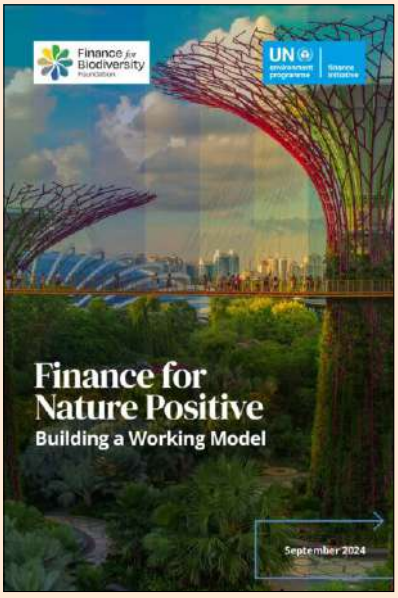
Gender as driver of SLCP mitigation in transport sector

UNEP organized a webinar (10 September) on how gender can help drive short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP) mitigation in the transport sector. This webinar is part of a series on gender mainstreaming that aims to tackle SLCP sectors, break down key gender considerations and opportunities to develop better, more sustainable plans and policies in discussion with sector and gender experts, NGOs, and country partners.

ii. Environmental and Social Safeguards

Finance for nature positive framework

Environmental and social safeguards are included in UNEP FI's draft discussion paper (25 September) on finance for nature positive framework. The objective is to seek feedback on a proposed model for financial institutions to contribute to the nature positive global goal in line with the Kunming-Montreal GBF. It aims to



clarify concepts and provide a working model for the financial sector to operationalize the nature positive goal.

iii. UN Reform

Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) 3.0

UNEP co-organized NDCs (NDCs) 3.0 regional forums for the Pacific (12-16 August, Apia, Samoa), LAC (27-29 August, Bogota, Colombia), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (3-5 September, Istanbul, Turkey) and the Middle East and North Africa (23-25 September, Tunis, Tunisia). Through engaging UNEP focal points in UN country teams, countries are being supported to develop their new NDCs for submission in 2025, for which they are encouraged to set ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets for 2035 – targets that align with limiting global warming to 1.5°C and increase their resilience to climate impacts. UNEP also hosted an event (16 July, New York) during the HLPF entitled keeping 1.5 within reach, setting NDCs 3.0 in motion to promote international and regional cooperation on NDC ambition and implementation.

Support to the UN resident coordinator system in Africa

UNEP provided direct support to the development of common country assessment (CCAs) and UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs) into the UN country programming processes in 14 countries.[1] UNEP's support ranged from providing technical inputs in diagnostic papers for UNSDCF development, technical backstopping in prioritization, theory of change and results frameworks, joint programme assessment, integrating practicable environmental data and statistics curated using 'futures and foresight' approaches, to joint programme development on issues such as gender and blue economy, household access to solar energy, digitalisation, and data and statistics. This resulted in stronger integration of environmental sustainability and climate action in UN country team (UNCT) processes for the environmental dimension to contribute more meaningfully to socio-economic development in Africa

iv. South-South cooperation

Training workshop on ecosystem restoration monitoring and assessment

UNEP and the Chinese academy of sciences co-organized a training workshop (20 July - 2 August, Beijing, China) for participants from the belt and road initiative (BRI) African countries. Through a combination of lectures on state-of-the-art progress, field visits, and round-table discussions on current ecological restoration policies, efforts and challenges, the participants gained valuable insights on the principles, methodologies, practices and challenges inherent in ecological monitoring and restoration efforts.

Field visit to Yucheng Ecological Station, 20 July – 2 August, Shandong
(Photo credit: UNEP)

1 Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda.

G. Opportunities and lessons learned

i. Opportunities

Wrapping up support on biennial transparency reports (BTRs) preparation

The current year is key in the implementation of the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris agreement, as parties are expected to submit their first BTRs by 31 December 2024 and thereafter, every two years. UNEP is currently supporting sixty-three (63) developing countries in preparation of their BTRs, out of which forty-two (42) are LDCs and SIDS. UNEP took part in several initiatives organized by the Azerbaijan COP29 presidency in collaboration with UNFCCC to raise political awareness of the importance of universal participation in the ETF and timely submission of BTRs. Two important reflections on BTRs include the need for developing country ministries to prioritize their work for 2024 submission, and to align their national approval and submission processes with the December 2024 timeline.

Wastewater, a low hanging mitigation measure

Wastewater treatment and reuse systems present an opportunity for achieving low cost, even no cost, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions, primarily through the short-lived climate pollutant, methane. These systems could produce energy for around 553 million households, build resilience by providing alternative water sources, and reclaim fertiliser components, reducing the need for mining. Many of these systems can actually pay for themselves in three to five years, thereafter, generating revenue. UNEP recently reviewed NDCs and discovered countries responsible for 85% of GHG emissions do not identify this low hanging fruit within their mitigation measures.

2024 global foresight report on planetary health and human wellbeing

The launch of the report provides the opportunity to better understand current and future uncertainty and disruptive changes, while supporting effective delivery of UNEP's mandate. The report identified eight critical shifts and 18 signals of changes that may significantly affect planetary health and human well-being.
The report points to the tremendous potential and human ingenuity that can be leveraged in the spirit of discovery and cooperation to deliver solutions across the three planetary environmental crises. The insights of the report will be used to inform UNEP's strategic planning.

ASEAN climate finance policy platform

The platform presents a significant opportunity for UNEP to scale up its work on integrating climate risks into fiscal policies. By aligning UNEP's expertise with regional initiatives, such as the Asian development bank's adaptation projects, UNEP can play a central role in advancing fiscal resilience across Southeast Asia. UNEP's partnership with the coalition of finance ministers is creating avenues for deeper collaboration with ministries of finance that, inter alia, is driven by strong interest in UNEP's sustainable budgeting approach and integrated green economy modelling.

Trade in minerals critical for climate transitions and the green economy

The UNEP co-organized roundtable (12 July, Geneva) explored and identified issues at the nexus of trade in critical energy transition minerals, climate action, and sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on perspectives from developing countries. There are opportunities to continue engaging the international trade community of experts, stakeholders and organizations, particularly those based in Geneva, to

further discussions on how trade can be a catalyst for solutions to promote a sustainable and inclusive social and economic development, coupled with environmental protection regarding critical energy transition minerals and the minerals and mining sector.

Exploring the journey of food
A digital interactive titled exploring the journey of food was created by UNEP and launched at the high-level political forum (8 July, New York) to raise awareness and garner support for solutions related to sustainable food systems. Through raising awareness about the environmental impacts and opportunities to transform food systems, there is an opportunity to garner multi sectoral support for solutions related to sustainable food systems.

Nature4Health multi-partner trust fund
The steering committee of the fund agreed (11 July) to initiate the expression of interest for phase 2 of its programme at CBD COP 16, and open the application window for member states from January to March 2025. Nature4Health is a key vehicle for implementing the global biodiversity framework and can serve as an important means for member states to meet their commitments under the proposed global plan of action for biodiversity and health.

ii. Lessons learned

Lessons learned from UNEA-6
The CPR's 167th meeting (12 September) adopted a decision with recommendations on lessons learned from UNEA-6. These will guide the UNEA president, CPR UNEA bureaux and the secretariat in preparing for UNEA-7. The recommendations address areas such as the planning and outcomes of UNEA, the preparatory process under the CPR, inclusive participation, documents for UNEA and the CPR, the link between UNEA and regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, and UNEA branding, media and communication outreach.

Sustainable infrastructure case studies
The exercise of developing and disseminating case studies with Member States and partners has uncovered a strong interest in case-based learning. Accordingly, there is scope to further promote and facilitate case-based learning through the infrastructure sustainability learning (ISLe) initiative, of which UNEP is a core partner.

UNEP Finance Initiative
Across its initiatives outlined in this report, UNEP FI has faced challenges related to fragmented policy and regulatory frameworks across jurisdictions. UNEP-FI is addressing these by adjusting work plans to align with relevant jurisdictional requirements while maintaining a global approach to sustainable finance practices. Further work is needed to enhance coordination across thematic areas and strengthen the link between institutional and system-level change.

Proactive risk management
During the reporting period, 59 GEF project implementation reports (PIR) for projects with moderate risk level were reviewed, indicating a moderate level of adherence to environmental and social safeguards (ESS). While many projects have successfully initiated measures such as establishing grievance redress mechanisms and assessments, there is a notable deficiency in comprehensive reporting on specific environmental and social risks and their management. The major takeaway is that ESS measures must include proactive, adaptive management strategies to effectively address emergent safeguards risks. Early risk identification and continuous monitoring are critical to ensuring long-term project success.

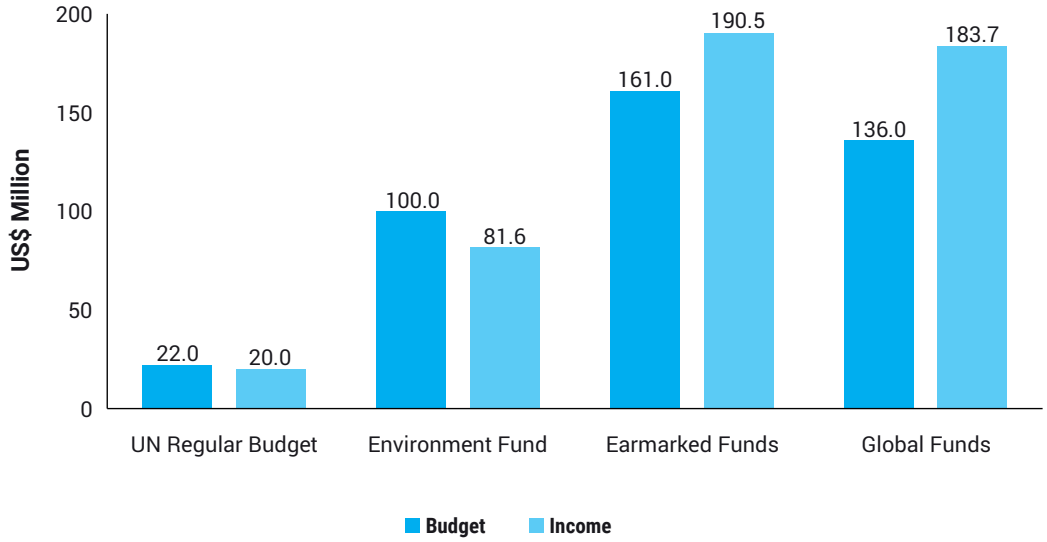
3. RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A. Financial resources

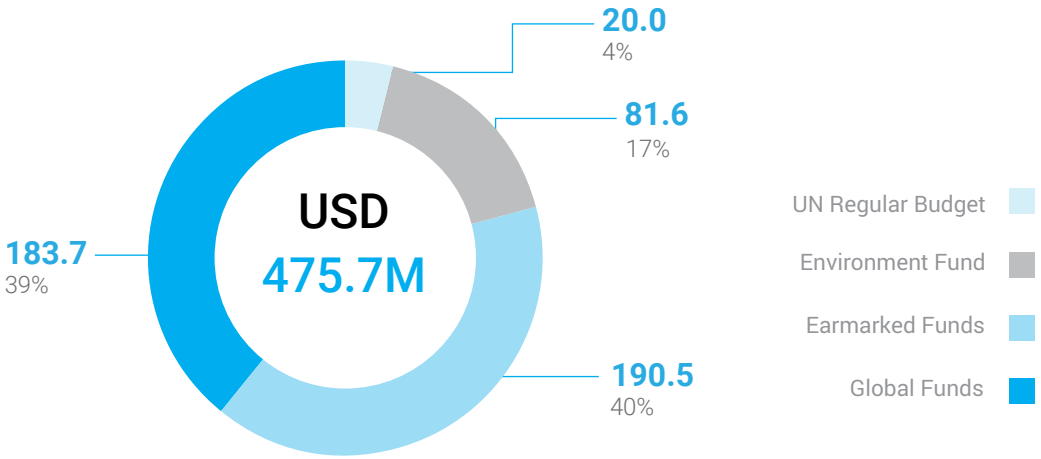
i. Financial update as at 30 September 2024

a. Overview of income[2]

Annual budget 2024 vs income (in million $) /January – September 2024



Income per source of funding (in million $) /January - September 2024



2. The figures do not include conventions and protocols administered by UNEP. Additionally, Umoja, the financial and administrative management platform does not permit breakdown of multi-year contributions into annual income figures.

b. Core funding

The UN regular budget and the environment fund provide the core funding for the organization which gives UNEP the flexibility to respond to the three planetary environmental crisis of climate change, nature and land loss, and pollution and waste, and implement the programme of work as approved by the member states.

United Nations regular budget

The United Nations regular budget provides core resources to UNEP to cover fundamental programme activities. Due to liquidity challenges, the 2024 allotment issued was restricted to US$ 20 million which is lower than the approved budget of US$ 22 million. Corporate services division, in consultation with UN headquarters, continues to manage the expenditures within the allocation as instructed by the office of the UN controller.

Environment fund

The environment fund provides UNEP with core resources that are essential for results-focused and balanced programme delivery with robust oversight. By 30 September 2024, the environment fund income amounted to US$ 81.58 million which is 82% of the approved 2024 budget of US$ 100 million. These contributions were received from 79 member states, which represents 41% of the 193 member states. Out of the 79 member states, 48 (61%) contributed their full share as per the voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC). Seventy-three (73) member states have paid their pledges as at 30 September 2024.

UNEP is grateful to all of these contributors with special thanks to the 48 Member States that have provided their full share and to the top-15 Member States who have provided 94% of the income to the environment fund.

Furthermore, UNEP appreciates the increased stability and predictability provided by multi-year agreements/ pledges from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Monaco, Netherlands, and South Africa, which amounted to a total of US$ 24.32 million or 30% of the environment fund income as at 30 September 2024.

Comparison with previous years

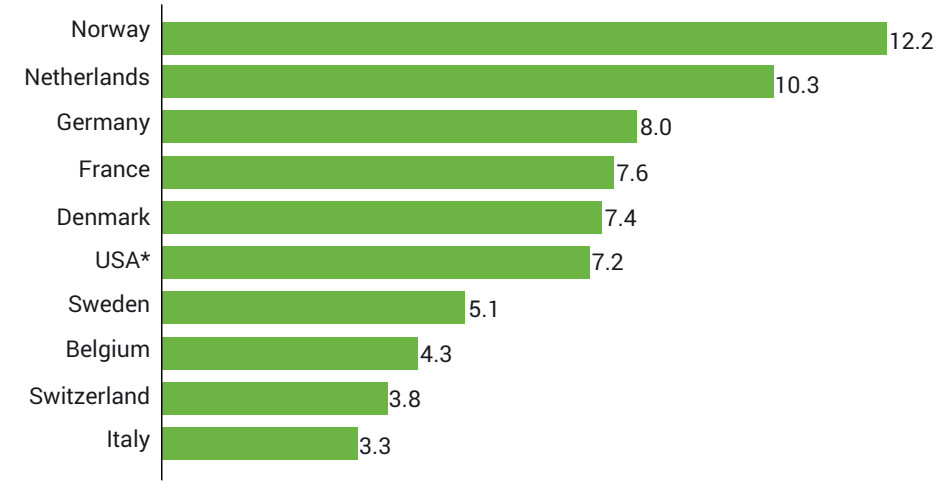
Core contributions received earlier in the year strengthen the stability and security of UNEP's core funding and organisation's ability to effectively and efficiently deploy its resources. UNEP is pleased to see the increasing trend for early contributions both in US$ amounts and in numbers of member states contributing. As at end September 2024 the total pledges are US$ 1.3 million or 2% higher compared to a year earlier and the number of member states having pledged is an increase of 27 member states or 52% from September 2023. Funding of UNEP is the shared responsibility of its 193 member states, and the support of member states is critical to allow UNEP to fulfil its mandate and to implement the programme of work.

Status of environment fund in 2024 (as at 30 September 2024)

INCOME vs UNFUNDED BALANCE of US$ 100m budget

NUMBER AND CATEGORY OF MEMBER STATE CONTRIBUTORS out of 193

Top 10 contributors to Environment Fund (in million $) as at 30 September 2024

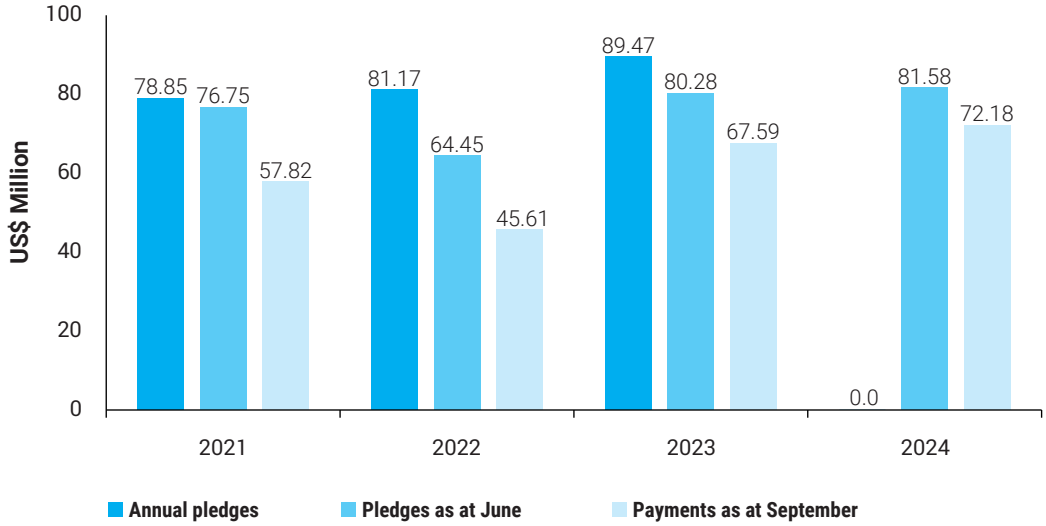


*Amount is based on a pledge.

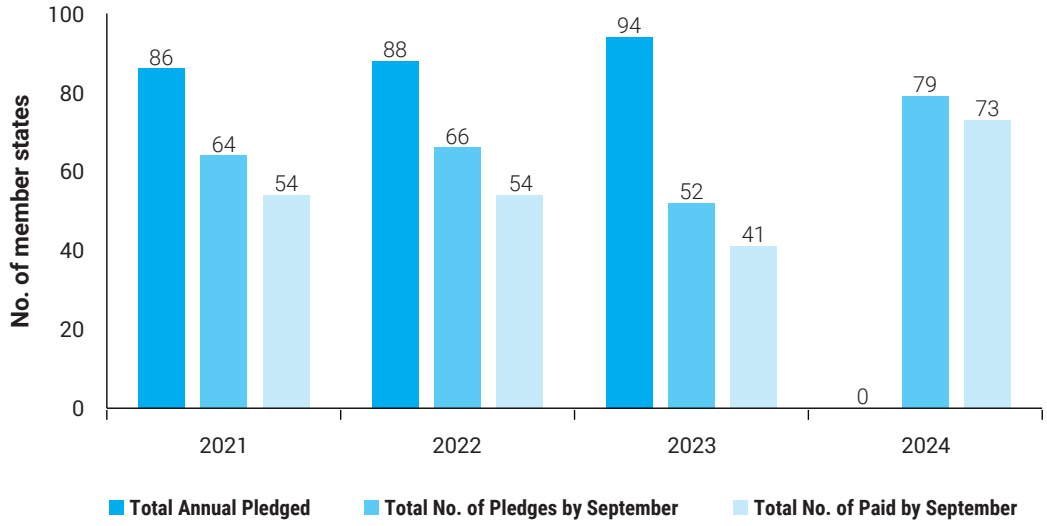
Member States that contributed their full share as represented by the VISC (as at 30 September 2024)

Paid				Pledged
Albania	France	Luxembourg	Norway	Monaco
Armenia	Gambia	Madagascar	Oman	
Belgium	Georgia	Maldives	Palau	
Belize	Grenada	Malta	Peru	
Bhutan	Iceland	Mauritius	Philippines	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Mongolia	Saint Kitts and Nevis	
Cyprus	Italy	Montenegro	Saint Lucia	
Denmark	Jamaica	Morocco	Slovenia	
Dominica	Jordan	Nauru	Somalia	
Dominican Republic	Kenya	Nepal	Sweden	
Eswatini	Latvia	Netherlands	Uruguay	
Fiji	Lithuania	New Zealand		

Pledges and payments to the environment fund as at September of each respective year



Number of contributors to the environment fund as at September of each respective year



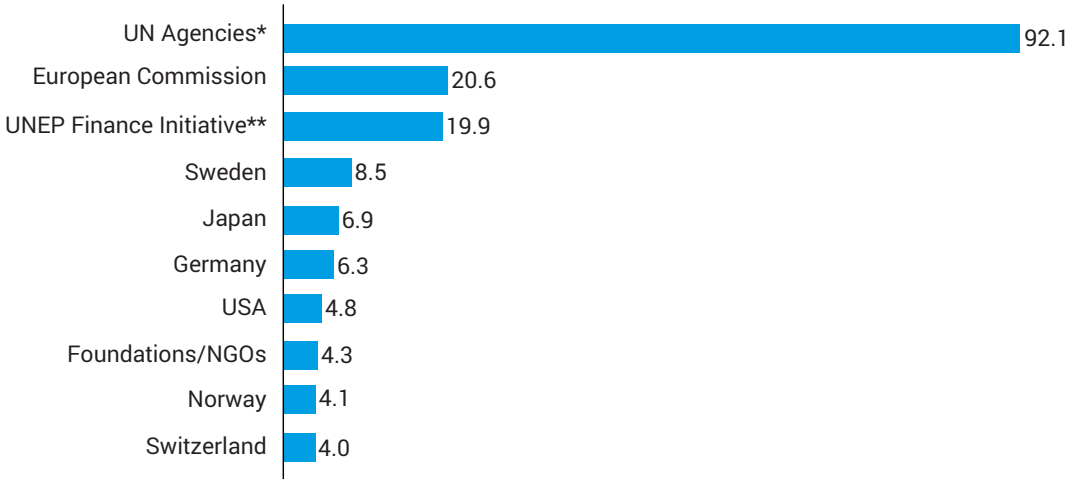
Earmarked funds

As at 30 September 2024, UNEP had received 118% of its total budgeted amount for the year including multi-year agreements. Out of the US$ 190.5 million received, 93% was tightly earmarked and 7% was softly earmarked funding received through the planetary funds (formerly thematic funds) and other softly earmarked funding agreements (SIDA programme cooperation agreement). To provide greater flexibility and effectiveness in the use of funds, UNEP encourages member states to consider softly earmarking, especially at a thematic level.

Planetary funds

The support to the three planetary funds remains strong, with total contributions of approximately us$ 30 million since their initiation in 2022. this funding includes Belgium's EUR 3 million to the climate fund, Norway's NOK 30 million, and the Philippines' USD 10,000 to the pollution fund, reflecting sustained backing from key contributors in 2024.

Top 10 funding partners for earmarked funds (in million $) as at 30 September 2024



*Funding received through multi-partner trust funds and other collaboration agreements with UN entities.
**Partnership between UNEP and the global financial sector to mobilize private sector finance for sustainable development.

Global funds

The funds provided by the global environment facility (GEF) and the green climate fund (GCF) are earmarked to specific programmes and projects. By the end of September 2024, GEF had received US$ 129.6 million and GCF US$ 54.1 million bringing the total multi-year income from global funds to US$ 183.7 million. The income received was 135% of the budgeted income for the year 2024.

ii. Status of allocations and expenditures as at 30 September 2024

Environment fund

The approved budget for the 2024-2025 biennium is US$200 million. The 2024 allocation for the environment fund is US$115 million taking into account that it's the first year of the biennium, this is aimed at encouraging implementation while allowing for flexibility in 2025[3]. As of 30 September 2024, expenditure was 62% of the allotment.

Environment Fund (US$)				
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 30 September 2024**
A	Policymaking organs	2,000,000	2,441,175	2,068,464
B.1	Executive direction and management	4,000,000	4,045,848	3,084,463
B.2	UNSCEAR			
	Subtotal (A+B)	**6,000,000**	**6,487,023**	**5,152,927**
C	Programme of work			
1	Climate action	12,000,000	10,361,788	7,541,507
2	Digital transformations	7,000,000	8,929,210	6,210,912
3	Nature action	12,000,000	13,334,197	8,933,738
4	Environmental governance	13,000,000	15,764,241	10,820,014
5	Chemicals and pollution action	12,000,000	12,861,883	8,168,707
6	Finance and economic transformations	13,000,000	13,545,959	7,291,996
7	Science-policy	13,000,000	13,651,359	10,123,151
	Subtotal C	**82,000,000**	**88,448,637**	**59,090,025**
D	Fund Programme Reserve	5,000,000	4,700,000	605,576
	Subtotal (C+D)	**87,000,000**	**93,148,637**	**59,695,601**
E	Programme Management and Other			
	Programme Support	7,000,000	9,864,340	6,983,038
	UNCT engagement		5,000,000	
	UNEA Implementation		500,000	
	Subtotal E	**7,000,000**	**15,364,340**	**6,983,038**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**100,000,000**	**115,000,000**	**71,831,566**

3. For reference see UNEP/EA.6/13

Overhead trust fund

Income in the overhead trust fund is earned from the programme support cost earned through program implementation and is used to cover essential administrative and operational expenses. The 2024 allotment is US$ 24.5 million against the biennium budget of $32 million which indicates a high implementation rate in 2023 allowing for a higher allotment in 2024. As of 30 September 2024, the expenditure level was 66% of the allotment.

Regular budget

The regular budget allotment is US$ 20 million due to the liquidity challenges; it is lower than the approved amount of US$ 22 million. This reduction prompted careful expenditure management. As at 30 September 2024, the expenditure rate was 78% of the allotment.

Overhead Trust Fund (US$)				
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 30 September 2024**
A	Policymaking organs	10,000		-
B.1	Executive direction and management		-	-
B.2	UNSCEAR			
	Subtotal (A+B)	**10,000**	**-**	**-**
C	Programme of work			
1	Climate action	2,250,000	2,325,500	1,195,594
2	Digital transformations	650,000	-	-
3	Nature action	1,200,000	1,585,540	1,255,404
4	Environmental governance	650,000	2,023,467	1,254,100
5	Chemicals and pollution action	1,550,000	1,590,485	909,717
6	Finance and economic transformations	1,250,000	784,716	499,101
7	Science-policy	350,000	348,975	303,078
	Subtotal C	**7,900,000**	**8,658,683**	**5,416,994**
D	Fund Programme Reserve			-
	Subtotal (C+D)	**7,900,000**	**8,658,683**	**5,416,994**
E	Programme Management and Other			
	Programme Support	8,100,000	15,841,895	10,777,887
	UNCT engagement			
	UNEA Implementation			
	Subtotal E	**8,100,000**	**15,841,895**	**10,777,887**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**16,010,000**	**24,500,578**	**16,194,881**

Regular Budget (US$)				
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 30 September 2024**
A	Policymaking organs	463,300	460,769	456,273
B.1	Executive direction and management	2,859,600	2,771,124	2,403,978
B.2	UNSCEAR	1,022,400	828,577	497,870
	Subtotal (A+B)	**4,345,300**	**4,060,470**	**3,358,121**
C	Programme of work			
1	Climate action	1,985,900	1,814,804	1,756,048
2	Digital transformations	1,451,400	1,338,018	554,451
3	Nature action	2,446,400	2,255,296	1,635,007
4	Environmental governance	4,321,100	4,059,689	3,469,572
5	Chemicals and pollution action	1,613,400	1,455,268	1,303,914
6	Finance and economic transformations	1,856,200	1,678,190	1,030,730
7	Science-policy	3,010,800	2,379,138	1,976,991
	Subtotal C	**16,685,200**	**14,980,403**	**11,726,712**
D	Fund Programme Reserve		-	-
	Subtotal (C+D)	**16,685,200**	**14,980,403**	**11,726,712**
E	Programme Management and Other			
	Programme Support	959,700	915,527	494,140
	UNCT engagement			
	UNEA Implementation			
	Subtotal E	**959,700**	**915,527**	**494,140**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**21,990,200**	**19,956,400**	**15,578,973**

Earmarked funds

The budget for earmarked contributions and global funds is based on estimated expected contributions derived from historical data and planned activities in support of the approved programme of work. On the other hand, the income received is multiyear in nature hence the variance between the estimated budget, the income received, and the expenditures incurred on annual basis as it is shown in the table below. The table does not include the annual allotments due to limitations in the ERP/Umoja system, which does not allow the division of multiyear budget for earmarked and global funds into annual figures.

Earmarked Budgets and Global Funds (US$)				
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 30 September 2024**
A	Policymaking organs	250,000	235,746	456,273
B.1	Executive direction and management	700,000	794,611	2,403,978
B.2	UNSCEAR			497,870
	Subtotal (A+B)	**950,000**	**1,030,357**	**3,358,121**
C	Programme of work			
1	Climate action	97,200,000	121,049,285	1,756,048
2	Digital transformations	13,400,000	952,238	554,451
3	Nature action	86,600,000	74,338,870	1,635,007
4	Environmental governance	13,550,000	31,324,573	3,469,572
5	Chemicals and pollution action	47,200,000	57,392,556	1,303,914
6	Finance and economic transformations	24,850,000	25,853,839	1,030,730
7	Science-policy	8,350,000	4,889,466	1,976,991
	Subtotal C	**291,150,000**	**315,800,827**	**11,726,712**
D	Fund Programme Reserve		-	-
	Subtotal (C+D)	**291,150,000**	**315,800,827**	**11,726,712**
E	Programme Management and Other			
	Programme Support	4,800,000	4,782,046	494,140
	UNCT engagement			
	UNEA Implementation			
	Subtotal E	**4,800,000**	**4,782,046**	**494,140**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**296,900,000**	**321,613,230**	**15,578,973**

iii. Resource mobilization strategy

At the 11th ASCM, constructive discussions were held with member states and major groups and stakeholders on UNEP's funding. The secretariat presented an overview of UNEP's financial status and outlook on challenges and opportunities, including an update on developments regarding the widening of the funding base, better recognition of the funding partners, and how to strengthen resource mobilization of the environment fund and the new thematic funds (now named UNEP planetary funds). As stated in the chair's summary, member states noted the importance of the environment fund in enabling UNEP to execute its mandate, implement its medium-term strategy and programmes of work and budget as approved by UNEA – and encouraged all member states to contribute their full share to the environment fund. The secretariat will continue to implement the recommendations from this and previous funding dialogues.

In response to one of the recommendations on the need to diversify funding sources for a healthier and more stable financial outlook, UNEP has started a comprehensive exercise to develop an institutional strategy, framework and policies for outreach to philanthropies. The aim is to increase institutional support from non-public sources to significantly complement and enhance UNEP's income. The institutional strategy will consolidate and expand on existing relationships, build internal capacity, and put in place policies such as a gift acceptance strategy.

With regards to increasing flexible funding to the organization, the first biennial reports on UNEP planetary funds (former thematic funds) for nature, climate and pollution, are being finalized and will be launched and widely disseminated through a dedicated engagement plan.

B. Human resources

General Overview

As of 30 September 2024, UNEP employed 1382 staff members consisting of 838 (61%) in the professional and above categories, 12 (1%) in the national professional officer (NPO) category and 532 (38 percent) in the general service category. This represents an increase of 17 staff members from 31 December 2023. While the gender distribution ratio has remained the same (62% female and 38% male) since then, as at September 2024, there were 859 female staff and 523 male staff, 6 and 11 more respectively than at 31 December 2023.

i. Senior level staff (UNEP secretariat and MEAs)

The total number of staff at grade P-5 and above was 187 as of 30 September 2024, compared to 184 in December 2023. The table below presents the distribution of senior-level staff across various levels for both 31 December 2023 and 30 September 2024.

ii. Appointments – P5 and above

The table below reflects appointments made between July and September 2024, during which UNEP added four new staff members at the P-5 level and above. Of these, three were internal selections and one was an external hire. These appointments highlight UNEP's commitment to geographical diversity, with two appointees from the Africa group, one from the Western European and others group (WEOG), and one from the Asia Pacific group. Further details regarding their commencement in these roles will be shared in due course.

Level	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	Total
Number of staff (30/09/24)	1	3	9	52	122	**187**
Number of staff (31/12/23)	1	2	10	48	123	**184**

Note: USG = under secretary-general; ASG = assistant secretary-general; D = director; P= professional

Position title	Grade	Gender	Nationality	Internal/ External	Division/Office/MEA
Director, programme management	D-2	Female	Of the Republic of Korea	Internal	Corporate services division
Chief of service, programme management	D-1	Male	Dutch	Internal	Early warning and assessment division
Senior programme management officer	P-5	Male	Egyptian	Internal	Multilateral fund for the implementation of the Montreal protocol
Chief of section, programme management	P-5	Female	South African	Internal	Convention on international trade in endangered species

The above information excludes temporary job openings.

iii. Gender distribution

a. Overall gender parity status

In 2023, UNEP gender parity targets were met and surpassed at certain levels within the professional and above categories. The representation of women is 100% at the ASG level, 57% at the professional level, and 71% at the general service level. UNEP continually monitored to ensure gender parity was maintained within the set margins.

b. Overall gender parity status for professional and above levels

The graphic provides information by percentages across each professional level and above, as of 30 September.

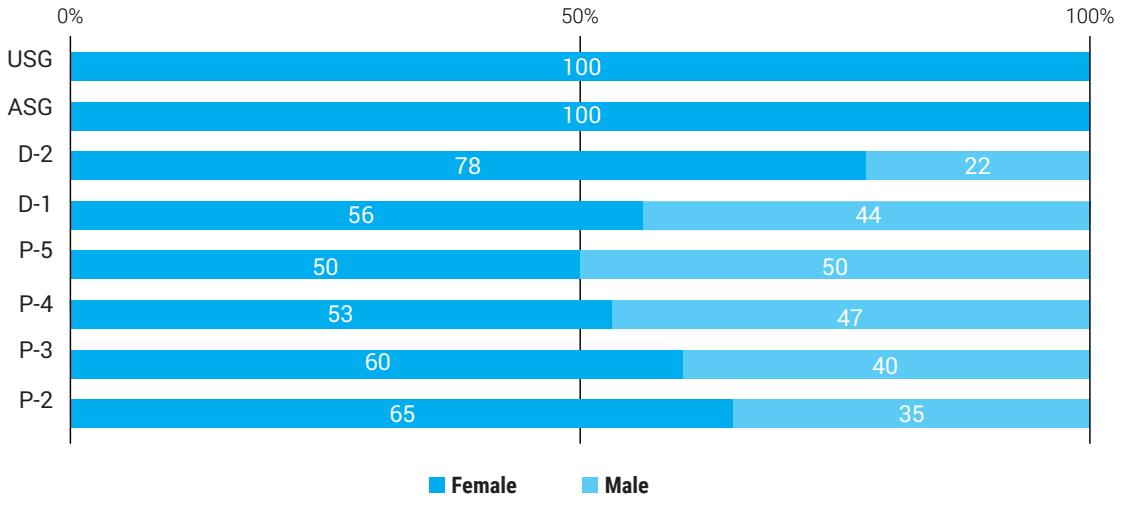
The table below shows the overall gender parity status as of 30 September 2024.

Overall - gender parity status

Gender	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2	Total P+	Total NO	Total GS	Total Staff
Female	1	3	7	29	61	151	156	69	477	4	378	859
Male			2	23	61	136	102	37	361	8	154	523
Totals	**1**	**3**	**9**	**52**	**122**	**287**	**258**	**106**	**838**	**12**	**532**	**1382**

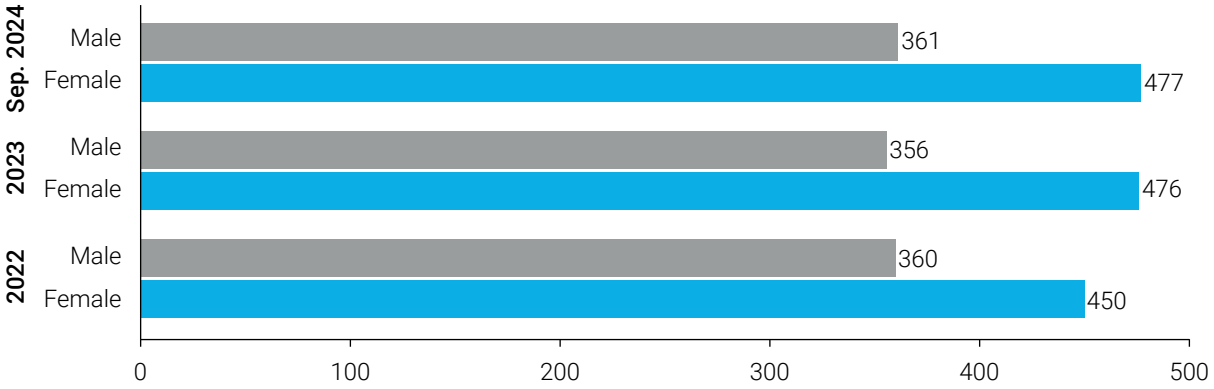
Note: USG=Under-Secretary-General; ASG=Assistant Secretary-General; D=Director; P=Professional

Overall Gender Parity Status Professional Level and Above

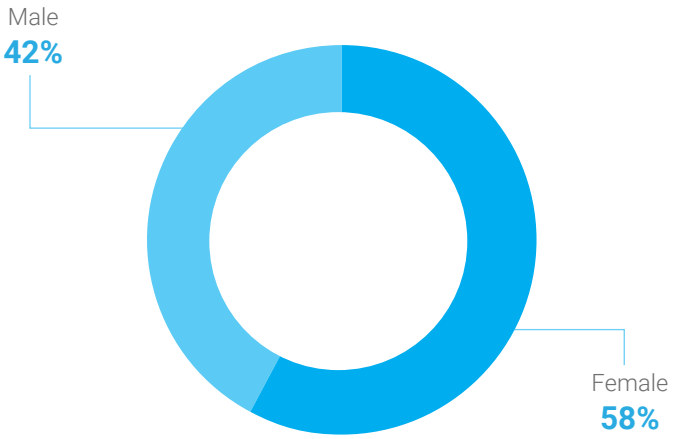


The overall gender parity status in UNEP at the professional and above levels is 43% to 57% (male to female) ratio. The gender data below includes personnel on temporary contracts, temporary assignments, and junior professional officers.

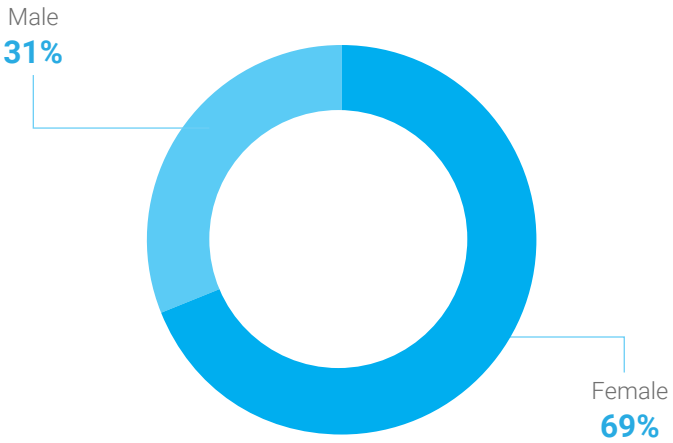
The charts below illustrate the gender distribution among UNEP secretariat staff. Gender parity remains intact; however, there is a notable 7% higher representation of female staff in the general staff category compared to the professional levels category.



Gender Status - Professional Level and Above - UNEP Secretariat



Gender Status - General Service Staff - UNEP Secretariat



c. Gender distribution - UNEP secretariat and MEAs – 30 September 2024

The table below disaggregates gender distribution between the UNEP Secretariat and MEAs.

UNEP secretariat												
Gender	**USG**	**ASG**	**D2**	**D1**	**P5**	**P4**	**P3**	**P2**	**Total P+**	**Total NPO**	**Total GS**	**Total**
Female	1	2	4	23	47	124	127	53	381	4	289	**674**
Male			1	21	48	114	75	21	280	8	128	**416**
UNEP MEAs												
Gender	**USG**	**ASG**	**D2**	**D1**	**P5**	**P4**	**P3**	**P2**	**Total P+**	**Total NPO**	**Total GS**	**Total**
Female		1	3	6	14	27	29	16	96		89	**185**
Male			1	2	13	22	27	16	81		26	**107**
Total	**1**	**3**	**9**	**52**	**122**	**287**	**258**	**106**	**838**	**12**	**532**	**1382**

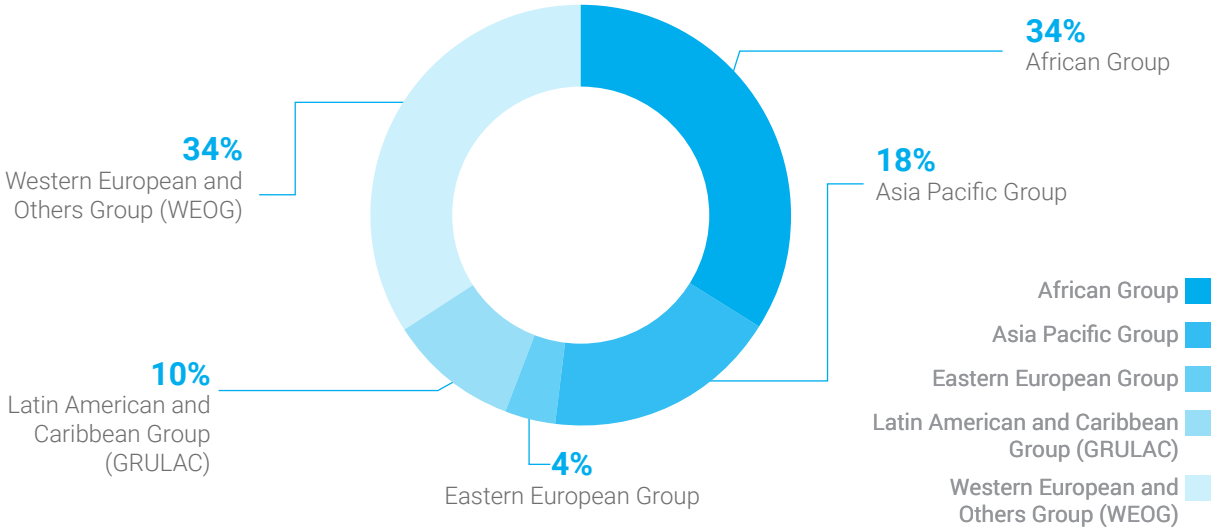
iv. Regional distribution

a. Overall regional representation of staff (UNEP and MEA secretariats)

The table below presents a breakdown of regional representation among UNEP staff as of 31 December 2023 and 30 September 2024. While the total number of UNEP staff has increased by 17 during this period, the data reflects UNEP's strong commitment to ensuring and enhancing geographical diversity within its workforce. Notably, these changes demonstrate the positive outcomes of UNEP's targeted outreach and HR initiatives aimed at attracting talent from underrepresented regions. This progress highlights UNEP's ongoing efforts to promote global representation while maintaining a focus on core competencies.

Region	Total as of 31 December 2023	Total as of 30 September 2024	Variation
African group	449	466	+17
Asia Pacific group	246	255	+9
Eastern European group	52	55	+3
Latin American and Caribbean group	126	134	+8
Western European and others group	492	472	-20
Total	**1365**	**1382**	

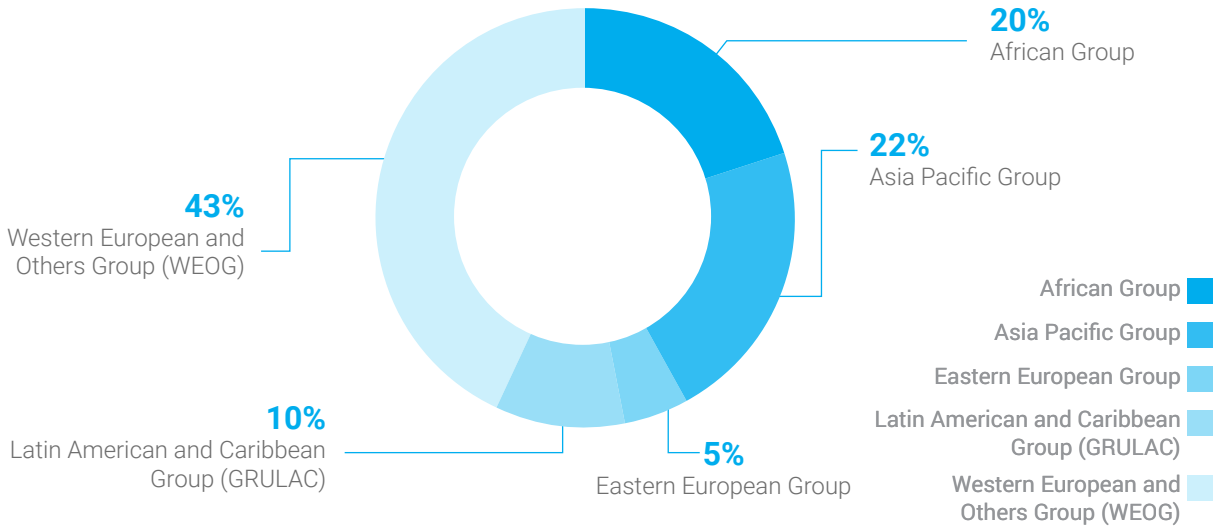
UNEP Overall Regional Representation



b. Overall regional representation of staff – professional level and above

As of 31 December 2023, the number of UNEP staff at professional level and above totaled 832, increasing to 838 by 30 September 2024, reflecting a growth of six staff members. However, there have been shifts in the geographical distribution of staff within these levels. UNEP continues to make significant efforts to ensure and promote geographical representation, which will be further elaborated in the challenges and opportunities section of this report.

Overall Regional Representation - Professional Level and Above



Overall regional representation - professional level and above

Regional distribution	Professional and above level								Total Sep 24	Total Dec 23	Variation
	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2			
African group		1	3	4	31	57	53	15	164	156	+8
Asia Pacific group		1	2	10	20	61	58	31	183	177	+6
Eastern European group				5	7	12	9	9	42	38	+4
Latin American & Caribbean group			2	6	15	26	31	8	88	82	+4
Western European and others group	1	1	2	27	49	131	107	43	361	372	-11
Total	**1**	**3**	**9**	**52**	**122**	**287**	**258**	**106**	**838**	**832**	

As part of UNEP's commitment to achieving geographical representation, particular attention is given to positions at the P-5 level and above. The table below provides an overview of the current regional representation at these senior levels.

c. Overall regional representation of staff - P5 and above

Building on the information below, the table and graph on the next page illustrate the progression of regional representation within professional and higher-level positions. This data is benchmarked against the status of geographical diversity as of March 2022, coinciding with the issuance of UNEA resolution 5/13, which emphasizes the principle of equitable geographical distribution. A comparative analysis with the same period from the previous year is also included to provide additional context.

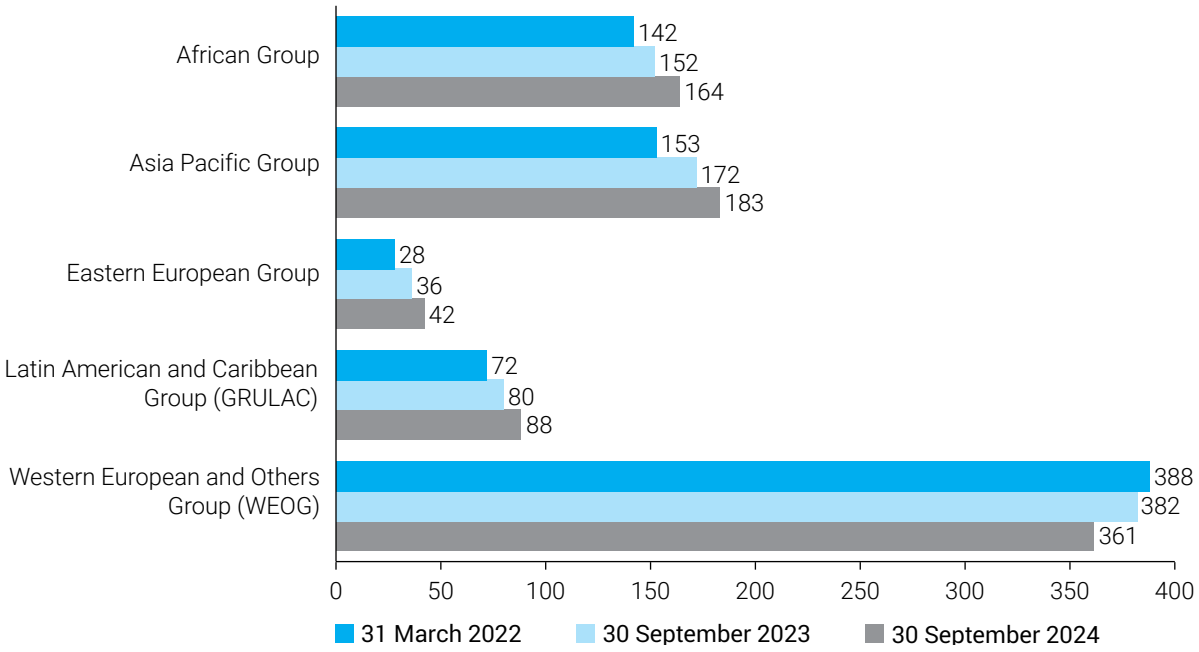
Overall regional representation - P5 and above

Regional distribution	P-5 & above					Total	% Total
	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5		
African group		1	3	4	31	39	21%
Asia Pacific group		1	2	10	20	33	18%
Eastern European group				5	7	12	6%
Latin American and Caribbean group			2	6	15	23	12%
Western European and others group	1	1	2	27	49	80	43%
Total	**1**	**3**	**9**	**52**	**122**	**187**	

UNEP overall P+ regional geographical representation trend 2022-2024

Region	31-Mar-2022	30-Sep-2023	30-Sep-2024	2023–2024 % variance	2022–2024 % variance
African group	142	152	164	+8%	+15%
Asia Pacific group	153	172	183	+6%	+20%
Eastern European group	28	36	42	+17%	+50%
Latin American and Caribbean group	72	80	88	+10%	+22%
Stateless	1	-	-	0%	0%
Western European and others group	388	382	361	-5%	-7%
Total	**784**	**822**	**838**	**+2%**	**+7%**

UNEP overall P+ regional representation trend 2022-2024



v. Human resources issues

In the third quarter of 2024, UNEP undertook a comprehensive suite of 14 talent outreach initiatives, including four in-person events, to enhance its recruitment strategy and promote geographical diversity. Notably, the UNEP executive director, alongside the director of the regional office and the chief of human resources, engaged directly with potential candidates at the Universidad de Brasília in Brazil. This initiative successfully reached students, alumni, and faculty members with an interest in environmental careers, thereby reinforcing UNEP's commitment to fostering a diverse talent pool.

In addition to in-person engagements, UNEP hosted ten online talent outreach events conducted in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. These events targeted over 5,000 early-career professionals and 200 mid-management experts across all less represented geographical regions, with particular emphasis on reaching Afro-descendant and indigenous communities. These efforts were integral to the recruitment campaign for the second cohort of the young talent pipeline.

Building on insights gained from the first cohort's recruitment process, a mid-cycle review was conducted to enhance applicant diversity from underrepresented regions. As a result, the application deadline was extended to maximize participation and facilitate additional outreach efforts. This adjustment yielded an increase of 1,000 applications from less-represented regions, with the young talent pipeline currently progressing into its assessment phase.

Furthermore, UNEP organized in-person outreach briefings with the committee of permanent representatives regarding the UNEP junior professional officer (JPO) programme. These meetings served as a strategic platform for fostering collaboration between UNEP and member states while discussing critical topics such as geographical diversity. The dialogues provided valuable insights into member states' perspectives on the programme and identified opportunities for enhanced cooperation and partnership. Engagements were conducted with representatives from the Latin America and Caribbean group, Eastern Europe group, and Western Europe and others group.

In Q3/2024, UNEP successfully implemented strategic learning programmes aimed at promoting workplace inclusivity and skills development. The launch of a buddy programme across 15 duty stations was particularly noteworthy, designed to facilitate the seamless integration of new staff members while fostering mentorship and collaboration within the organization. These initiatives reflect UNEP's ongoing commitment to cultivating an inclusive workplace environment and enhancing the overall experience for new employees.

This report underscores UNEP's proactive approach to talent management and its dedication to building a diverse workforce that aligns with its strategic objectives.

C. Audits

i. United Nations office of internal oversight services (OIOS)

a. Completed audits:

Audit of the UNEP secretariat of the convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals. OIOS recommended CMS to ensure that: complete and accurate documentation for meetings and conferences is provided on time; that the secretariat should develop an action plan to increase the number of parties by 2032, as well as a plan to implement the enterprise risk management and internal control policy; assess the necessity and scope of an evaluation policy; and explore the payment options for the unpaid contributions.

Audit of projects in the industry and economy division of UNEP. OIOS recommended that the division should strengthen project oversight by expediting the integrated planning, management and reporting (IPRM) system migration process, ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the division's project data, including the development of monitoring plans and appropriate reporting of relevant evidence in the system.

b. Audits in progress and planned

OIOS is currently conducting an audit of the climate action subprogramme at UNEP, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2024. The objective of the audit is to assess the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in the implementation of the subprogramme, including the implementation of UNEP climate action strategies, programme and project implementation, monitoring and reporting, donor relationship, implementing partners and evaluation management.

ii. United Nations board of auditors (BoA)

a. Completed audits

Report of the BoA YE 2023: The board has recommended UNEP to: enhance the management of long outstanding commitments; ensure sufficient implementation of some UNEA 5 resolutions; increase attention to and priority on the implementation of the Sendai Framework; and expedite operational and financial closure of expired projects and establish adequate oversight on collaborating centres.

b. Audits in progress and planned

The BoA will carry out the interim YE2024 audit of headquarters, the regional office for Asia Pacific, New York office and secretariat of the Minamata convention, on-site in Nairobi, Bangkok, New York and Geneva from 22 October to 22 November.

iii. Challenges

UNEP, including the MEAs and divisions have been challenged with the adoption of the integrated planning, management and reporting (IPRM) system which was designed and produced within the secretariat ERP system called Umoja. Although UNEP welcomes the application, and UNEP management has reiterated the importance of prioritising the work, it must be noted that transition and enhancement activities require extensive resources and time, especially for larger portfolios. In some cases, additional consultants have been recruited.

iv. Opportunities

Various auditors have indicated the need to roll out the enterprise risk management (ERM) framework in divisions and offices and UNEP-administered MEAs. UNEP has taken the opportunity to embark on a periodic review of its ERM processes and governance structure. A revision to current ERM practices is expected once consultations on the updated strategy have been concluded.

v. Lessons learned and actions taken

The oversight issues concerning collaborating centres have been emphasized by the auditors. In response to the audit recommendation, a consultant will, as of October 2024, assess all current UNEP collaborating centres and prepare recommendations for a way forward.

D. Evaluations

i. UNEP evaluations

During the reporting period, four independent project evaluations were completed, five management-led project terminal reviews were independently validated by the evaluation office,[4] and 24 project evaluations are currently ongoing. The evaluation of the climate action subprogramme was completed and presented to the 167th CPR meeting.

a. Completed independent terminal evaluations

Faith for earth initiative (2019-2023) (PIMS ID: 2053)
Overall performance rating: Highly Satisfactory

Key findings: The faith for earth project reflects a growing interest across the UN system and donor community in how faith communities engage with the SDGs and specifically the faith-environment nexus. The evaluation found that the project demonstrated "…strong effectiveness in meeting and exceeding stated output and outcome targets with consistently high levels and quality of stakeholder engagement, clear commitments, and advancement of thinking on key approaches (particularly green finance), effective knowledge products and other communications, delivered despite limited funding."

The project captured many initiatives. Among these, a key achievement was the adoption in 2020 of our sacred commitment by over 500 faith leaders calling for the institutionalization of interfaith engagement at UNEP through the faith for earth coalition, including calling for greater involvement by women faith leaders, and faith-youth leaders, demonstrating a vastly expanded scope beyond the initial target of 10 faith-based organisations signing the faith for earth charter.

The evaluation concluded that "faith for earth now represents a vast network seeking to connect faith-based and interfaith environmental thinking with broader global efforts to meet environmental goals" and "…a clear niche in faith for earth made possible through the role of UNEP in coordinating, mobilising, informing, and realising channels for dialogue and influence that could not be accessed without UN action. Some independent momentum is notable, however, there remains a clear need for UNEP in making connections and fostering external links as well as ensuring that scientific evidence is integrated."

Delivering the transition to energy efficient lighting in residential, commercial, industrial and outdoor sectors in Pakistan (2017-2022) (GEF ID 5799)
Overall performance rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Key findings: The energy efficient lighting project supported the implementation of efficient lighting policies and fostered innovative financial mechanisms to promote innovative and high-efficiency products in Pakistan aiming to yield substantial climate change mitigation and environmental benefits.

The project comprised four components: (i) developing a national efficient lighting strategy; (ii) enhancing monitoring, verification, and enforcement capacities to facilitate a smooth transition to efficient lighting practices; (iii) establishing a "lighting funding window" within Pakistan's revolving loan fund (RLF); and (iv) promoting the adoption of light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and related controls.

The evaluation found that the project made progress in the development of minimum energy performance standards and supporting policies, strengthening of monitoring and enforcement capacities, demonstrated success in analysing financial institutions and formulating strategies and showcasing communication campaigns and pilot projects. The project's sustainability underscores both successes and challenges across socio-political, financial, and institutional dimensions.

4 All evaluations are led by the Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for projects assessed through management-led Terminal Reviews are independently validated (i.e. benchmarked) by the Evaluation Office against clear evidence standards.

Efforts towards policy development and stakeholder engagement have supported sustainability prospects, yet challenges such as limited financing and institutional capacity remain significant. A key lesson learned is that the "development of financial mechanisms for energy-efficient lighting requires a deep understanding of the financial landscape and significant funding to attract borrowers, alongside time to convince stakeholders. Financial institutions are deterred by small funding amounts, hindering the creation of specialized financing entities."

Multi country project to strengthen institutional capacities on LMO testing in support of national decision making (GEF ID 5283)
Overall performance rating: Satisfactory

Key findings: The LMO project aimed to build and strengthen institutional and human capacities for the detection of living modified organisms (LMOs) to support national biosafety decision-making processes in six countries in Southern Africa: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique. Regionally, RAEIN-Africa, operating as the lead executing agency, worked in collaboration with national executing agencies. This partnership contributed to effective implementation and coordination across the participating countries.

The evaluation found that the LMO project marked a significant shift in LMO management and biosafety in the project countries, thus impacting the SADC region in terms of detection capacity. By offering training to laboratory personnel and supplying modern equipment, decision-makers can draw on scientific evidence enhancing both trade security and transparency, particularly in import-dependent countries.

Before the project, most laboratories in these countries were in poor condition, lacking modern equipment, reagents, and expertise in LMO analysis. National regulations and procedures were unfamiliar, and there were no national referential laboratories competent at verifying seed and product conformity, resulting in a lack of control over LMO circulation. Key lesson learned from the evaluation is the importance of operationalizing national legal frameworks in future interventions to secure policy and political commitment and consolidate long-term sustainability of results achieved.

b. Completed independent mid-term evaluation

Mediterranean Sea basin environment and climate regional support project (GEF 9686)
Mid-point performance rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Key findings: The MedProgramme is UNEP's first GEF programmatic multifocal area initiative, operating in the Mediterranean Sea aiming to operationalize priority actions to reduce major transboundary environmental stresses in its coastal areas while strengthening climate resilience and water security and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations. A timely mid-term evaluation is a critical adaptive management tool for the coordinating child project of the GEF impact programme, the Mediterranean Sea project (MedProgramme). The coordinating project is expected to: "implement mechanisms for programme-wide learning and dissemination of knowledge, monitoring the programme's progress to impacts, and fostering synergistic interactions among child projects.

At mid-term the coordinating project has demonstrated some progress, but faced significant challenges in transitioning from outputs to project outcomes and a need to improve knowledge-sharing and coordination and learning among child projects. The mid-term evaluation has prescribed a number of recommendations, including actions to strengthen coordination and integrated programmatic approach by: 1) conducting a robust analysis of synergies across child projects; 2) developing guiding policy papers for thematic areas under the programme; 3) identifying and communicating activities that represent synergies among child projects; 4) convening a monthly engagement platform with the stakeholders; 5) delivering an annual impact report; 6) addressing programmatic oversight and identifying areas of synergies in the steering committee; 7) conducting a series of country missions to engage directly with child projects and the participating governments; and 8) continue annual stocktaking meetings with greater emphasis on countries' participation.

c. Completed management-led terminal reviews

Validated terminal review of the UNEP-GEF project:

Integrated Stockholm convention toolkit to improve the transmission of information under articles 07 and 15 (2018-2024) (GEF ID 9884)
Overall performance rating: satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP-GEF project:

Building national capacity to implement the national biosafety framework of Islamic Republic of Iran and the Cartagena protocol on biosafety (2012-2021) (GEF ID 3730)
Overall performance rating: satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP project:

Promotion and delivery of environmentally sound waste management technologies and methods and in-country technical and advisory support (2018-2023) (PIMS ID 02010)
Overall performance rating: satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP project:

Protecting the marine environment from land-based pollution through strengthened coordination of global action (PIMS ID 02049)
Overall performance rating: satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP/UNDA project:

Investing in walking and cycling policies in African cities (within least developed countries), 14AC0001; 20231' (2020 – 2023)
Overall performance rating: satisfactory

UN environment programme

QUARTERLY REPORT

to the 168th Meeting of the

COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
PO Box 30552, Nairobi 00100, Kenya

e-mail:UNEP-PolicyProgramme-PMR@un.org