QUARTERLY REPORT

to the 169th Meeting of the

COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

UN environment programme



TWENTY-FOURTH ISSUE

October – December 2024

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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 fourth 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 October to 31 December 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
AFEPA	African Forum of Environment Protection Agencies
AFSD	Arab Forum for Sustainable Development
AGR	Adaptation Gap Report
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
AQCA	Air Quality Central Asia Platform
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BBNJ	Biodiversity of areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
BoA	United Nations Board of Auditors
CAMRE	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition
CODES	Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability
COP	Conference of Parties
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre And Network
DaRT	Data Reporting Tool for Multilateral Environmental Agreements
DAL	Digital Accelerator Lab
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EANET	Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia
EDF	European Development Fund
EGR	Emissions Gap Report
EMG	United Nations Environment Management Group
ESRA	Environmental and Social Risk Analysis
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSAT	Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool
ESSF	Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
EU	European Union
FfD	Financing For Development
FFRP	Fossil Fuel Regulatory Programme
FTA	Fashion Trust Arabia
GEDS	Global Environmental Data Strategy
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gas
GMP	Global Methane Pledge

GST	Global Stock Take
HLCP	High-Level Committee on Programmes
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IC-VCM	Integrity Council for Voluntary Carbon Market
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution
InforMEA	UN Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KMGBF	Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean
LARCF	Latin American Regulatory Cooperation Forum
LDC	Least Developed Country
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MGS	Major Groups and Stakeholders
MMM	Match Making Mechanism
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NbS	Nature-Based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	National Statistics Office
OEWG	Open-Ended Working Group
OHJPA	One Health Joint Plan of Action
OHHLEP	One health high-level expert panel
OIOS	United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
ORT	Online Reporting Tool
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PoW	Programme of Work
PRB	Principles for Responsible Banking
RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
RDNA	Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment
RSCAP	Regional Seas Convention and Action Plans
SAFE	Safety across Asia For the global Environment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SDS	Sand and Dust Storms
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
SRIF	Safeguard Risk Identification Form

UNAMnet	United Nations Accountability Mechanism Network
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
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
UNFCU	United Nations Federal Credit Union
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UN-REDD	United Nations collaborative programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VISC	Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions
WEOG	Western European and Others Group
WUF	World Urban Forum
YEA	Youth Education and Advocacy

1. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

A. Global developments

UN climate change conference (UNFCCC COP 29)

The 29th meeting of the conference of the parties to the UN framework convention on climate change (COP29) (Baku, Azerbaijan, 11-22 November) held under the theme of *Investing in a liveable planet for all*, culminated in the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) to triple climate finance to developing countries from US$ 100 billion to US$ 300 billion annually by 2035, and a second wider aspiration to scale it up to US$ 1.3 trillion per year by 2035, including from public and private sources.

UNEP's participation in COP29 included contributions to key negotiations on NCQG, climate technology, the enhanced transparency framework (ETF), loss and damage, adaptation, mitigation, article 6, technology, the global stocktake, and advancing NDCs ambition.

Additionally, UNEP supported the organization of eight COP presidency events, 11 ministerial and high-level events, 52 sectoral side events, and participated in over 40 official events further cementing its position in support of global climate negotiations. More than 5,000 news stories in 118 countries on COP29 covered UNEP's work and its videos had 2.7 million views on YouTube.

Additionally, parties provided guidance on the preparations for reviewing the functions and hosting arrangements of the climate technology centre and network (CTCN), the implementing entity of the UNFCCC technology mechanism, currently hosted by UNEP. The review is set to start at SB62 in June 2025 and a new host call is expected at COP30.

Various UNEP initiatives were launched in the lead-up to or during COP29, some of which are highlighted below.



UNFCCC COP29 Conference, 11-22 November, Baku Azerbaijan
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Launch of high-impact reports

UNEP launched several high-impact reports in the lead-up to COP29 including the 2024 emissions gap report (EGR) (24 October) and 2024 adaptation gap report (AGR) (7 November) which were instrumental for countries at the COP in advancing on multiple negotiations items. For instance, leaders from Eswatini and Kenya, among other member states, referenced the AGR 2024 during COP29. A series of World Adaptation Science Programme (WASP) related outreach and side events on the AGR 2024 were also organized at COP29 in collaboration with UNEP. UNEP also launched key knowledge products at COP29, including the eye on methane report and 2024 annual global cooling pledge progress report. The UNEP-Copenhagen and climate centre (UNEP-CCC) launched its flagship publication the 2024 climate technology progress report (1 November). These advocacy efforts culminated in widespread media coverage with over 4,800 articles published globally during COP29.

The emissions gap report (EGR) 2024: no more hot air … please! finds that nations must deliver dramatically stronger ambition and action in the next round of nationally determined contributions or the Paris agreement's 1.5°C goal will be gone within a few years. Cuts of 42% are needed by 2030 and 57% by 2035 to get on track for 1.5°C, with solar, wind and forests holding real promise for sweeping and fast emissions cuts. Sufficiently strong NDCs would need to be backed urgently by a whole-of-government approach, enhanced international collaboration that includes reform of the global financial architecture, strong private sector action and a minimum six-fold increase in mitigation investment. G20 nations, particularly the largest-emitting members, would need to do the heavy lifting. EGR coverage generated 4781 news stories in almost 3,000 outlets in 117 countries.



The adaptation gap report (AGR) 2024: come hell and high water finds that nations must dramatically increase climate adaptation efforts, starting with a commitment to act on finance at COP29. It recommends that: interventions should mobilize existing capacities, provide a balanced emphasis on technologies and enabling conditions, and place gender equality and social inclusion considerations at their centre; capacity-building and technology transfer plans should support adaptation across sectors, scales and development priorities; and adaptation strategies should be developed based on a holistic understanding of the needs rather than from the perspective of pushing a particular technology, making them part of broader development strategies. AGR coverage resulted in almost 600 media stories in more than 400 outlets in 64 countries.



High level event on reducing methane from organic waste (ROW)

The UNEP-convened climate and clean air coalition (CCAC) and COP29 presidency co-organized a high-level event (19 November) to launch the COP29 declaration on reducing methane from organic waste which calls for urgent action to improve waste management, which is key to reducing methane



UNFCCC COP29 - High level event on reducing methane from organic waste (ROW), 19 November, Baku, Azerbaijan
(Photo credit: COP29.az)

emissions and supporting broader environmental, public health and economic benefits. The event saw 50 countries signing the declaration, representing over 50% of global organic waste methane emissions, including 8 out of 10 of the top global emitters. The declaration provides a substantial opportunity for UNEP to continue to engage with countries to advocate for including organic waste methane emissions in NDCs and to provide support to its implementation.

Global methane pledge (GMP) ministerial meeting at COP29

CCAC facilitated the convening of the meeting (15 November) which highlighted raising global ambition in tackling methane abatement as countries prepare their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). It encouraged more countries to take leadership roles in the GMP which has pledges from 159 countries. There are opportunities to use the GMP platform to elevate countries that have made significant progress in tackling methane abatement, and advocate for increased ambition across the partnership.

COP29 summit on methane and non-CO_2 greenhouse gases

CCAC supported the Summit (12 November) aimed to build consensus and momentum on methane and other super pollutants, to enhance ambition and demonstrate a clear political will to tackle the pollutants that represent up to 50% of global warming. The event saw, inter alia, the announcement of GBP 5 million from the UK towards the CCAC's fossil fuel regulatory programme (FFRP), which will support up to 20 developing country governments in capacity building and projects to implement methane abatement policies and regulations.

Baku dialogue on water for climate action

UNEP co-launched the dialogue (21 November) as a platform to promote collaboration and initiatives that accelerate solutions for the water crisis. During the event, countries and partners endorsed the COP29 declaration on water for climate action, a call on stakeholders to take integrated approaches when combating the causes and impacts of climate change on water basins and water-related ecosystems.

Wastewater treatment

UNEP co-organized a session (18 November, Baku), highlighting the potential for wastewater treatment plants to become resource recovery facilities, reducing methane emissions and promoting circular practices.



CBD COP16 Plenary, 1 November, Cali, Colombia
(Photo credit: CBD/flickr)

UN biodiversity conference (CBD COP16)

The 16th meeting of the conference of the parties to the convention on biological diversity (CBD COP16) (Cali, Colombia, 21 October – 1 November), with the theme of *peace with nature*, approved the creation of a permanent body to represent indigenous people's and those of African descent and their communities' interests within the UN's CBD. It also agreed on the operationalization of a new global mechanism to share benefits from the use of digital genetic information.

Delegates took stock of progress in implementing the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework (KMGBF) since its adoption at CBD COP 15 and highlighted the need to accelerate action. To date, 119 of the 196 Parties to the CBD have submitted national biodiversity targets reflecting alignment with the KMGBF. Furthermore, 44 countries have submitted national biodiversity strategy and action plans (NBSAPs) - the policy documents supporting the implementation of national targets.

UNEP co-organized the first ever CBD COP trade day (26 October) to advance discussions among governments and key stakeholders on potential pathways, best practices and solutions for trade and trade-related policies to address biodiversity loss and implement the KMGBF, while promoting biodiversity protection and restoration, and sustainable and inclusive development. The day highlighted the interlinkages between international trade and the global biodiversity agenda, and discussed the role that trade could play to enable and support policies, solutions and practices that help deliver the GBF goals and targets.

Ahead of CBD COP16, UNEP launched the nature action video series spotlighting UNEP's work on community natural resource management and marine conservation. UNEP's engagement in CBD COP16 included, among others, the organization of and/or participation in eight events and 38 side events. Some highlights include:

- Co-organized two regional side events (25 & 29 October) on collaborative strategies for enhancing NBSAPs by integrating resilience approaches that address the interconnectedness of disaster risk reduction (DRR), food security, and the role of women and indigenous peoples.
- Co-organized a workshop during NBSAP day (22 October) that brought together policymakers and practitioners to address national challenges and opportunities for effective NBSAP implementation.
- Co-organized a side event (23 October) that provided insights on the submission of NBSAPs through the CBD online reporting tool (ORT) and on the support provided by Dart Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) and the rapid target similarity assessment tool in the NBSAP alignment process, and further discussed how DaRT, the target tracker and the new methodology for tracking the implementation of the CBD gender plan of action can support the preparation of CBD 7th national report.

Addressing land degradation

The 16th session of the conference of the parties (COP16) to the UN convention to combat desertification (UNCCD COP 16) (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2-13 December), with the theme of *Our Land, Our Future*, agreed to: create a caucus for indigenous peoples and a caucus for local communities to ensure that their unique perspectives and challenges are adequately represented; a continuation of the Convention's science-policy interface to strengthen science-based decision-making; and the mobilization of private sector engagement under the Business4Land initiative.

Participating countries committed to prioritize land restoration and drought resilience in national policies and international cooperation as an essential strategy for food security and climate adaptation. Countries also made significant progress in laying the groundwork for a future global drought regime, which they intend to complete at COP17 in Mongolia in 2026. Additionally, more than US$ 12 billion were pledged to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought around the world, especially in the most vulnerable countries. UNEP's engagement in UNCCD COP16 was multifaceted, some of which are highlighted below.

Sand and dust storms (SDS)

UNEP's presentation during the side event (4 December) focused on the need for integrated and political approaches to address SDS in the West Asia region. It proposed the development of a regional master plan to combat SDS that will serve as a roadmap to guide actions at the regional and national levels on policy, institutional and technical levels. The master plan calls for a comprehensive approach that encompasses coordinated actions on SDS measurement, monitoring, early warning and mitigation. Actions and impacts of SDS should be supported with evidence-based science.

Leveraging nature-based solutions (NbS) for peace

The UNEP launched (4 December) policy brief *NbS for peace - emerging practice and options for policy makers* draws upon examples from the newly available digital catalogue on NbS for peace, and aims to demonstrate the potential of NbS to contribute to peace, sustainable land management and climate resilience in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

Strengthening environmental dimension of food systems amid a polycrisis in Arab region

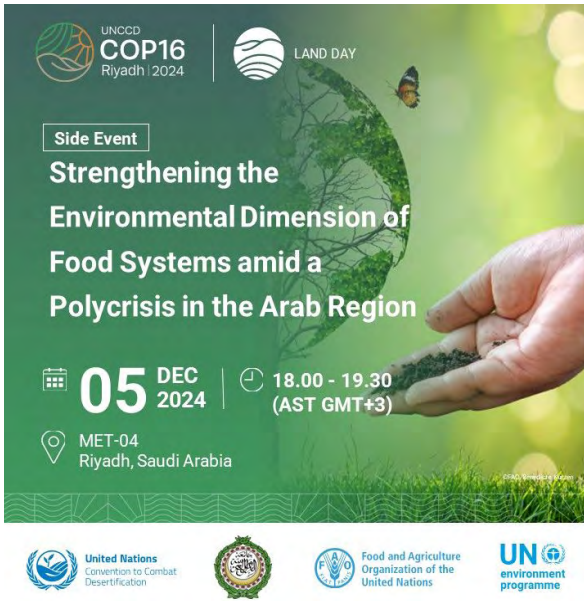
The UNEP co-convened side-event (5 December) stressed the importance of integrating environmental considerations, including climate change, land degradation and desertification, into national food system pathways and food security strategies.

Rethinking urban landscapes: equity, restoration, and resilience in arid regions

The UNEP co-hosted side-event (6 December) shared lessons from the UNEP-led generation restoration project, emphasizing the need to integrate equitable urban planning with restoration efforts to boost resilience in arid regions.



Land degradation in Yien Bai province, Vietnam
Photo credit: UNEP)



Policy coherence for agriculture-water-environment in Arab states

The UNEP co-organized side-event (6 December) highlighted a joint UNEP-FAO-UNDP position paper on exploring and operationalization policy coherence initiatives and best practices from the Arab region to address water stress, drought, food insecurity, and land degradation.

Knowledge transfer, best practices and collaboration to enhance restoration efforts

The UNEP co-organized event (7 December) highlighted the synergies between the UN decade on ecosystem restoration and Saudi vision 2030, and provided participants with insights into a range of restoration practices, the importance of integrating research-driven approaches into national and international restoration policies and knowledge-sharing regarding strengthening global networks.

Role of academic institutions in preventing land-degradation

UNEP co-organized a side event (5 December) to explore how academic institutions can drive efforts to prevent land degradation and promote societal resilience. Experts, researchers and university professors discussed practical solutions to environmental challenges and ways to advance the goals and programs of environmental sustainability in the Kingdom.

Rio Trio Initiative

One of the key developments at UNCCD COP16 was the launch of the Rio trio initiative, which bridges efforts among the UN convention to combat desertification (UNCCD), the UN framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC) and the convention on biological diversity (CBD). Starting at the New York climate week and culminating in the high-level opening ceremony of UNCCD COP16 land day, the three conventions began to align their goals of reversing land degradation, mitigating biodiversity loss and combating climate change. This initiative provides an opportunity for UNEP, as part of the new MTS 2026-2030, to plan for unified efforts toward reversing environmental degradation prioritizing cross-sector collaboration.



Side event on the role of academic institutions in preventing land degradation, 5 December, Riyadh
(Photo credit: UNEP)

Intergovernmental negotiating committee on plastic pollution (INC-5)

The 5th INC session to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5) (25 November - 1 December, Busan, Republic of Korea) adjourned with agreement on a chair's text that will serve as the starting point for negotiations at a resumed session in 2025. Through the Busan talks, negotiators reached a greater degree of convergence on the structure and elements of the treaty text, as well as a better understanding of country positions and shared challenges. INC-5 communications resulted in more than 9000 articles in 115 countries, pointing to the importance of ending plastic pollution in public perception.

4th global high-level ministerial conference on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

The UNEP co-organized conference (15–16 November, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia) held under the theme *from declaration to implementation – accelerating actions through multisectoral partnerships for the containment of AMR*, built on the UN general assembly's high-level meeting on AMR (26 September) and transformed the UN high-level declaration into actionable frameworks. The resulting Jeddah commitments outline concrete, multisectoral actions addressing human, animal, plant, and environmental health, emphasizing global coordination.

12th World Urban Forum (WUF12)

UNEP participated in WUF12 (4 - 8 November, Cairo, Egypt) where it organized 15 events on urban finance, climate-resilient and nature-positive cities, sustainable buildings and more. The events informed participants on achievements of UNEP-led global initiatives, including: GlobalABC, UrbanShift, Generation Restoration and Cool Coalition, and highlighted cities' crucial role in addressing the three planetary environmental crises and in implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Moreover, UNEP launched the 2024 State of Finance for Nature in Cities Report (26 October) and further strengthened partnerships.

UNEP co-organized a session (5 November) entitled *accelerating access to low carbon urban mobility solutions through digitalization*, which unpacked how leveraging digital technologies can support climate action, enhance efficiency, and advance gender equity goals in urban mobility. UNEP also participated as a panellist in a session (5 November) on *technology and digitalization as tools to accelerate a just transition*



to a sustainable future for cities, which showcased digital tools and technologies that have proven to foster gender equality and social inclusion in cities, such as the EcoZones app, the city labs guide, and the sustainable urban solutions catalogue.

Report of the sixth session of UNEA

UNEP introduced the report of the sixth session of UNEA to the Second Committee of the UNGA (14 October, New York) under agenda item 18: Sustainable Development. Following informal consultations, the Second Committee adopted (25 November) a draft resolution on the UNEA6 report, followed by the General Assembly via resolution 79/209 (19 December), welcoming the holding of UNEA6, taking note of its report and welcoming the resolutions and decisions contained therein, and calling for their full implementation. Other resolutions relevant to the work of UNEP, including on sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21, global climate, UNCBD and UNCCD were also adopted.

High-level committee on programmes (HLCP)

The UNEP Executive Director chaired the 48th HLCP meeting (7-8 October, Madrid) which approved the Systemwide Approach to Internal Displacement, a comprehensive framework to promote coherence and cross-pillar integration in the UN's efforts to address the issue and to unify efforts at both country and global levels. The HLCP further agreed to develop a common UN system approach to address transnational organized crime, and to consider an update of the UN system common messages for COP29 and COP30 after COP29 in Baku.

Shaping an environmentally sustainable and inclusive digital future

UNEP co-organized the side event (9 October, New York) on the margins of the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), to explore ways to maximize the benefits of digitalization while addressing environmental sustainability and inclusive development challenges, taking into account findings of the Digital Economy Report 2024 and how these can contribute to the implementation of the recently adopted Global Digital Compact.



UNEP shared its part in implementing the recommendations of the report, including through promoting collaborative efforts involving governments, civil society, and partnerships like the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES). A panel of experts discussed actions needed to reduce the environmental footprint of digitalization, including on biodiversity, as well as actions being implemented by stakeholders, including the private sector, to advance environmental sustainability.

Annual global UN resident coordinators meeting

UNEP's executive director participated in a high-level panel during the meeting (15 October, New York) of 120 resident coordinators (RCs) where she provided insights to the interlinkages between the Rio COPs, the Road to COP30 and how they can act as catalysts for accelerating much-needed progress across the SDGs, address systemic challenges and promote integrated policy approaches at the country level. Preceding the meeting, UNEP co-hosted a reception (14 October) for the RCs where UNEP's Deputy Executive Director reaffirmed UNEP's commitment to supporting RCs as they continue to advance environmental sustainability as a key component of the UN's broader development agenda.

Human rights and the environment

UNEP and OHCHR co-organized a briefing (17 October, New York) to enhance the visibility and understanding of the relationship between human rights and the



UNEP Deputy Executive Director at the Annual Global Resident Coordinator Retreat hosted at UNICEF headquarters, 15 October, New York.
(Photo credit: John Ofstedal)

environment and the application of human rights to environmental issues. The briefing provided an opportunity for Member States to engage with the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a healthy environment, and the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights.

UN federal credit union (UNFCU) sustainability summit 2024

UNEP participated in the summit (23-24 October, New York) entitled *united in sustainability* which gathered credit unions and industry thought leaders to share information, tools, and resources related to sustainability, diversity and corporate social responsibility. UNEP delivered opening remarks and attended one of the panel discussions, highlighting the crucial role of credit unions in influencing sustainable consumption and production patterns and supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

Second session of the preparatory committee for the fourth international conference on financing for development (FfD4)

UNEP delivered a statement during the session (3-6 December, New York) emphasizing its contributions to the elements paper and highlighting the urgent need for a reformed global financing framework to achieve the SDGs. UNEP outlined policy recommendations to integrate climate and nature-related risks into financial frameworks, promote sustainable debt management, enhance international financial cooperation and policy interoperability, and align private finance with the SDGs. These measures are critical for creating a resilient and inclusive global economy capable of addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic development challenges, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

G20 health working group and ministerial meetings

UNEP attended the meetings (29-31 October, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) where G20 leaders adopted the health ministerial declaration on climate change, health and equity, and on one health. The inclusion of one health and climate into the declaration represents an important step forward in acknowledging the interconnectedness of the health of the environment with the health of humans and animals. The role of quadripartite organizations, including UNEP, in advocating for the uptake of one health strategies to address health risks was reflected in the declaration, which emphasized the one health joint plan of action (OHJPA) (2022-2026) and the guide to implementing it, as important instruments for One Health implementation, and recognised contributions of the quadripartite advisory body, the one health high-level expert panel (OHHLEP) in providing scientific advice to support evidence-based policymaking.

Theme for 7th session of the UN environment assembly (UNEA-7)

The UNEA-7 bureau discussed (7 November) the president's streamlined proposal for the theme for UNEA-7, and subsequently (11 December) defined the theme as *advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient*



Champions of the Earth Award 2024 announced on 10 December
(Photo credit: UNEP)

planet at a joint meeting of the UNEA and CPR Bureaux. The joint Bureaux also provided preliminary comments on the draft roadmap for the ministerial declaration and the preparations for UNEA's contributions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development for 2025, 2026 and 2027.

2024 Champions of the Earth

The UN's highest annual environmental honour, recognizing individuals, groups and organizations whose actions have a transformative impact on the environment, were announced on 10 December. The award recognized six environmental leaders for working on innovative and sustainable solutions to restore land, enhance drought resilience and combat desertification. They include Amy Bowers Cordalis (inspiration and action), Gabriel Paun (inspiration and action), Lu Qi (science and innovation), Madhav Gadgil (lifetime achievement), Sekem (entrepreneurial vision) and Sonia Guajajara (policy leadership). A series of engaging videos were viewed 10.5 million times on YouTube and widespread media coverage included more than 600 articles in 64 countries.

Consultations on UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2026-2029

The fourth informal meeting of UNEP's Group of Friends consisting of Member States, and Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) for enhanced civil society participation in UNEP-led events (21 November) exchanged views on UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2026-2029, with stakeholders emphasizing the need for stronger youth inclusion, private sector engagement, and a cross-cutting approach to climate adaptation, resilience and inclusivity. Member States expressed support for aligning the MTS with regional goals and underscored the importance of science-policy interface and targeted indicators for women, youth and people with disabilities. UNEP also organized an informal dialogue (26 November) with MGS on the next MTS, providing them a valuable opportunity to share their insights, priorities and perspectives on UNEP's strategic direction.

Accreditation to UNEP

During the reporting period, 59 new organizations were accredited to UNEP and its governing bodies, representing Business and Industry (1), NGOs (47), Children and Youth (4), Indigenous People and their Communities (1), Scientific and technological community (4) and Women (2). The list of accredited organizations can be found here. As of 15 December 2024, there are 1,247 accredited organizations.

B. Regional developments

i . Africa

AMCEN consultations during COP29 on Africa's climate priorities

A consultative meeting of the African ministerial conference on the environment (AMCEN), for which UNEP serves as the secretariat, was held on the margins of COP29 (17 November, Baku),



Consultative meeting of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at the margins of the UNFCCC COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan/ 17 November 2024
(Photo credit: UNEP)

underscoring the importance of science in climate action and the role played by African scientists in the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) process. The meeting emphasized the need for a new collective quantified goal on climate finance, which aligns with the core principles of the climate change convention and avoids adding to Africa's debt burden, which erodes development gains.

The meeting further emphasized the necessity for African countries to mobilize their private sector, as well as their pension and sovereign funds, to invest within the continent, highlighting the crucial role the private sector can play in advancing Africa's climate transition. The meeting also called for strengthening private sector involvement in implementing the recommendations from the first global stocktake (GST) presented at COP29. The meeting urged governments and development partners to establish enabling environments and support mechanisms that integrate the private sector into national and regional climate strategies, guaranteeing tangible and measurable impacts on the ground.

Regional forum of Africa-based UN Resident Coordinators

UNEP co-hosted (5-6 November, Nairobi) a second series of UN Resident Coordinators' (RCs) dialogues, under the theme *harnessing innovative environmental solutions for sustainable development*, aimed to strengthen the collaboration between UNEP and the UN RC System in Africa. These included options for strengthening environmental policy coherence, capacity development, knowledge transfer, and data-driven solutions and investments aligned with African member states' priorities in enhancing economic growth, regional integration, and sustainable development.

Participants discussed national priorities, identified gaps where UNEP's support is needed, and explored ways to enhance collaboration on delivering these priorities. The meeting facilitated in-person connections between RCs and UNEP's UNCT focal points, with a focus on aligning global environmental priorities with national strategies to advance the SDGs.

The resident coordinators were encouraged to put UNEP on 'speed dial' for unique and value-added technical expertise to support responses to Africa's varied, complex, and urgent environmental challenges. UNEP's expertise in vital areas of environmental action, such as atmospheric physics, biodiversity conservation, pollution, and toxicology, among others, were highlighted as some of the options available for leveraging by the UN resident coordinators.

African forum of environment protection agencies (AFEPA)

UNEP co-convened the second roundtable meeting of AFEPA (3-5 December, Cairo, Egypt) where African environment watchdogs and diplomats rallied around digital tools and technologies to enhance data and information on environmental protection at regional, sub-regional, and national levels. The meeting sought to build synergies for enhancing the implementation of environmental policies across the continent while leveraging the science-policy-society interface.



Regional forum of Africa-based UN Resident Coordinators, 5 November, Nairobi
(Photo credit: UNEP)

8th Africa animal welfare conference

The UNEP co-hosted conference (30 September - 2 October, Nairobi) held under the theme *partnership actions to improve animal welfare and environmental sustainability,* discussed the role of animals in Africa's sustainable development, aiming to promote policy development that advances animal welfare alongside broader environmental and economic goals. The conference called for increased collaboration between governments, civil society, and international organizations to ensure that animal welfare is a central part of Africa's SDGs.

ii. Asia and the Pacific

8th session of the committee on environment and development of ESCAP

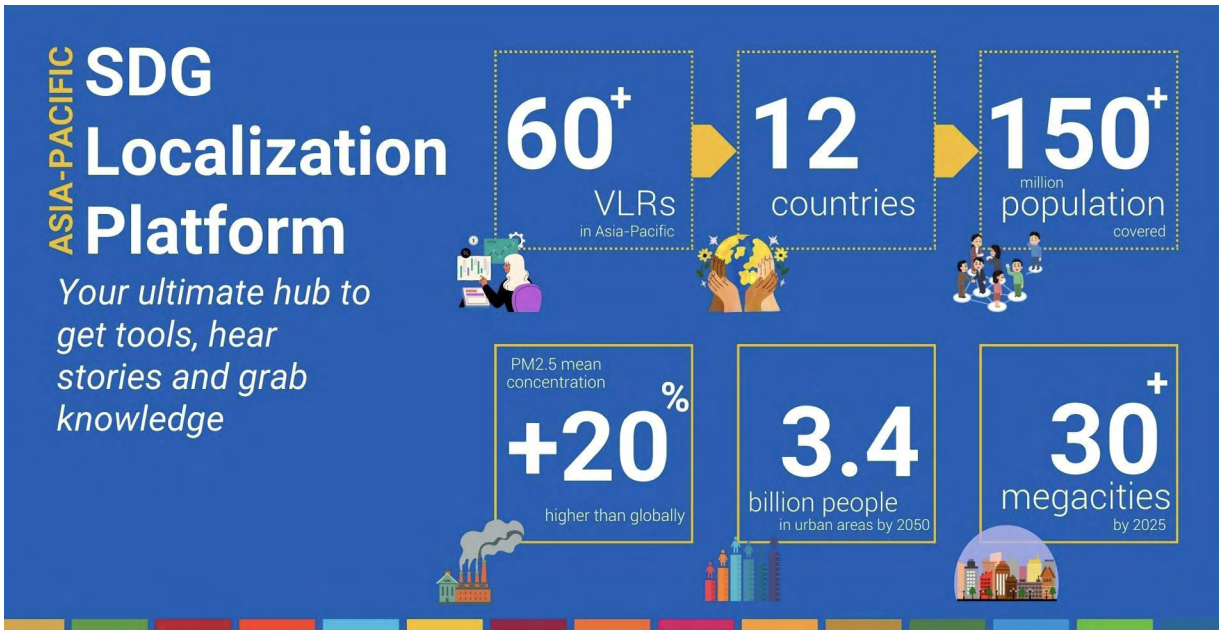
UNEP participated in the session (16 -18 October, Bangkok) where it highlighted challenges and opportunities for strengthening cooperation for localizing actions in five priority areas: air pollution; low-carbon transition and low-greenhouse-gas emission development strategies; ocean protection; sustainable urban development; and access to information in decision-making processes. The Asia-Pacific SDG localization platform was launched during the session to empowers local communities and their stakeholders to engage in efforts to promote sustainable urban development and climate action through collaborative initiatives, and to access innovative resources and best practices.

8th session of the committee on transport of ESCAP

UNEP participated in the session (5-7 November, Bangkok) where it highlighted relevant UNEA resolutions on sustainable mobility (4/3), enhancing circular economy (5/11), resilient infrastructure (5/9) and air quality (three resolutions), as well as its work on sustainable mobility. UNEP also participated in a side event on transition to e-mobility in public transport: collaborative frameworks and financing mechanisms.

14th association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN)-UN Summit

The summit (11 October, Vientiane, Lao PDR), held during the 44th ASEAN summit, reviewed progress under the ASEAN-UN plan of action 2021-2025. UNEP's cooperation with the ASEAN secretariat in areas of biodiversity, energy, one health, climate, peace and security, human right, and climate actions during the period 2023-2024 was recognized in the chairman's statement of the 14th ASEAN-UN summit. The ASEAN leaders also endorsed the strategic plans to implement the ASEAN community vision 2045, which will guide ASEAN's long-term goals for a resilient, innovative, and people-centered community.



iii. Europe

Balkan nature talks conference

The UNEP organised conference (10-11 October, Vienna, Austria) brought together participants from the western Balkans sub-region, including governments representatives and UN resident coordinator offices with the objective to exchange knowledge, foster collaboration on biodiversity conservation actions in the sub-region, explore progress towards the alignment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) with the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework (KMGBF), and discuss how biodiversity conservation can be best embedded into the new common country analysis (CCA) and the UN sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) cycles.

Second edition of the Caucasus environment outlook (CEO-2)

Co-published by UNEP (6 November) and developed using the global environment outlook methodology, CEO-2 provides the most comprehensive analysis of environmental and socio-ecological conditions across the six Caucasus ecoregion countries and stands as one of the few holistic assessments of the region. The publication serves as a critical resource for informing policy action, advancing scientific research, and fostering regional cooperation over the next decade in the Caucasus eco-region.



Executive officers meeting on governance and capacities for environment and health

UNEP co-developed the programme for the meeting (2-4 December, Bonn, Germany) which fostered discussions among participants, leveraging diverse national case studies and lessons learned to scale and adopt effective approaches to environment and health governance and capacity-building in countries of the European region, thereby reinforcing commitments made at the seventh ministerial conference on environment and health (2023).

Regional meeting on collaborative approaches to environmental pollution and one health in the western Balkans

UNEP organized the meeting (4-5 December, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) under the south-east Europe pollution platform, where experts shared experience and lessons learned in tackling chemicals and pollution challenges at national and regional level and discussed the complex linkages between environmental pollution and its adverse health impacts, through a one health lens. Participants discussed strategies for policy development, the reuse of materials, and financial tools, supporting the design of national action plans and pilot interventions in the region.

iv. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Latin American circular economy festival 2024

UNEP co-organized and facilitated the 5th edition of the festival (9 October, Bogotá) which brought together decision-makers, private sector representatives, academics, and civil society actors, to promote and celebrate the development of the circular economy in LAC by fostering knowledge exchange, highlighting regional initiatives, and facilitating strategic alliances. Key thematic areas included biodiversity, regenerative design, and the implementation of circular policies and practices.

The festival launched the *Bogota Declaration 2024: towards a circular, biodiverse, fair and inclusive economy in LAC*, which reaffirms the commitment to circular economy as a key solution to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Its objectives include promoting collaboration with regional actors to implement regenerative policies and practices, enhancing public-private financing for circular initiatives, and positioning LAC as a leading voice in global biodiversity and climate discussions such as COP16.



29th Ibero-American summit, 12-15 November, Cuenca, Ecuador
(Photo credit: Ibero-American General Secretariat)

UNEP played a crucial role in facilitating the declaration's development, providing technical expertise, and mobilizing stakeholders to ensure the document's alignment with regional and global priorities. The declaration represents a crucial step toward a resilient circular economy, advancing commitments to biodiversity conservation, leveraging bioeconomic opportunities, and strengthening the circular economy coalition for LAC's role as a facilitator of regional transitions to sustainable economic models.

29th Ibero-American summit

UNEP participated in the Summit (12-15 November, Cuenca, Ecuador) as an associate observer where it remarked on the importance of integrating and accelerating the implementation of the Ibero-American environmental charter, which reflects the common vision of the Ibero-American community in the face of challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and contamination, and establishes commitments to guide public policies and legislation on these matters.

v. West Asia

Council of Arab ministers responsible for the environment (CAMRE)

UNEP participated in CAMRE's 35th session and the technical environment committee's 25th session (13-17 October, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia) to discuss regional environmental challenges and solutions. UNEP briefed committee member states on its work in the Arab region and progress related to previous resolutions of the council. During the ministerial session, it highlighted its positive partnership with Arab countries and the League of Arab States that resulted in many achievements, including the regional dialogue on biodiversity and the air quality network, capacity building programmes, and the development of strategies and reports such as the state of environment. UNEP stressed the need for the political commitment and support of Arab states during INC-5 to reach a successful agreement to ensure the efficient management of single use plastic and ensure that plastic stays in the economy and not the environment.



35th Meeting of CAMRE, 13-17 October, Jeddah
(Photo credit: Saudi Press Agency)

CAMRE 35 resulted in 23 resolutions that addressed Arab actions towards climate change, desertification, biodiversity and chemicals, sustainable consumption and production, and preparations for the Arab forum for sustainable development (AFSD), Arab forum for environment (AFEN), and the high-level political forum (HLPF). Member states stressed the importance of active preparation for and participation in UNEA7 and committed their full support to Oman as UNEA7 president.

2. PROGRAMME OF WORK IMPLEMENTATION

A. Climate stability

Nationally determined contributions (NDC) 3.0 regional forum

UNEP co-organized a NDC 3.0 regional forum for Africa (7-9 October, Kigali, Rwanda) as part of a series across five regions. These fora were closed-door events, targeting government officials responsible for NDCs revisions from all countries in each region, and collectively brought together 800+ representatives from 140+ countries. The forum for Africa explored how COP28 outcomes, particularly the Global Stocktake (GST) decision, could guide national processes to strengthen ambition in future NDC and contribute to sustainable development by addressing climate mitigation and adaptation jointly.

At the country level, UNEP focal points in UN Country Teams (UNCTs) contributed to the UNCTs coordinated support to national mapping of NDC activities facilitated by their Resident Coordinators. To this end, a streamlined preliminary overview of tools, guidance and publications aimed at enhancing and integrating sectoral and thematic actions into NDCs has been curated.

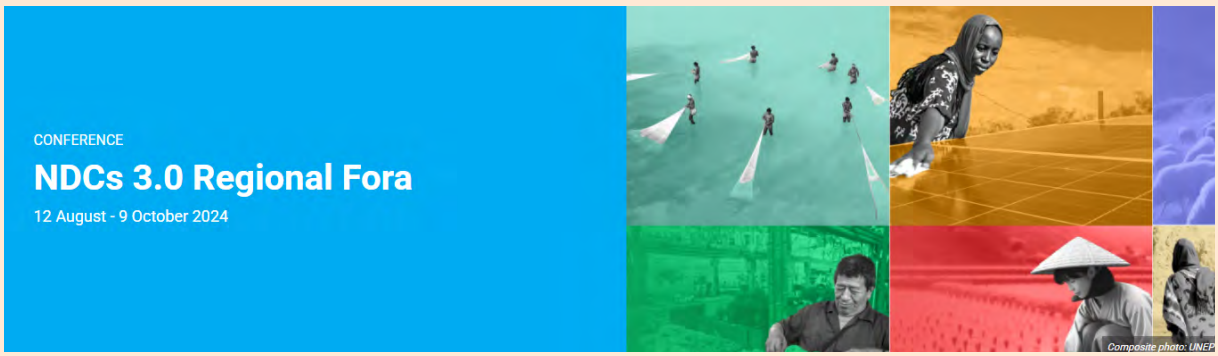
2024 LAC regional forum on artificial intelligence (AI)

The UNEP-hosted climate technology centre and network (CTCN) co-convened the forum (1-4 October, San José, Costa Rica) which brought together national designated entities from 20 LAC countries and foster collaboration and showcased innovative climate solutions, including AI and digitalization.

NDC action project on innovative crop insurance

UNEP co-collaborated in the launch (31 October) of an NDC Action project to facilitate an innovative crop insurance initiative which aims to give Uganda's banana farmers a measure of protection from increasingly extreme weather by expanding access to crop insurance. When there is a storm, farmers share photos of the damage and agricultural economists hired by the insurance company determine the value of the damage.

The initiative aims to enhance the resilience of Ugandan banana farmers to climate-induced extreme weather through innovative crop insurance, digital tools for damage assessment, and sustainable farming practices, ensuring financial security and boosting productivity. The initiative promises increased incomes and security of smallholder banana farmers (including at least 40% women) if scaled up to 5000 farmers from the initial demonstration of 900.





A pilot project allows farmers use mobile phones to submit images of damaged crops to their insurers, speeding up the claims process.
(Photo credit: UNEP)

On-line training course on adapting to impacts of climate change

UNEP co-launched (8 November) an online training course on how we can adapt to the impacts of climate change by integrating nature-based solutions (NbS) into national adaptation plans. The 60 to 90 minutes course not only looks at the opportunities, but crucially, the risks of failing to recognize and incorporate nature into these plans. NbS are among the most important ways a country can adapt to climate change. The new online course explores the advantages and strengths of combining the two approaches and ensuring that national adaptation plans harness the power of NbS. The online course was attended by over 200 participants, followed by a climate classroom event and a social media campaign, which were very successful in raising awareness about the training and getting participants enrolled in the e-course.

Climate adaptation podcast

UNEP published its new climate adaptation podcasts between 29 October and 19 December (Nairobi). The show covered key adaptation themes such as climate-resilient buildings, innovation, youth, restoring ecosystems, adaptation finance, and extreme heat through an eight-episode series. The series highlighted best practices in adaptation, success stories, and lessons learned, to popularize the importance of adaptation and increase UNEP's brand as an authority on adaptation topics.

Forest restoration support by UNEP and UN-REDD

During the reporting period, UNEP and UN-REDD continued to support Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam in their forest restoration efforts by providing technical expertise, facilitating stakeholder engagement and ensuring the integration of sustainable forest management practices. This collaboration has led to the development of country-specific implementation plans and site-specific community forest management plans. In addition, local capacity has been strengthened through targeted training and knowledge sharing initiatives. These efforts have also raised awareness among local communities and policy makers of the importance of sustainable forest management and climate change mitigation resulting in improved implementation of safeguards, increased stakeholder knowledge and strengthened environmental governance.

B. Living in harmony with nature

Regional seas convention and action plans (RSCAPs)

UNEP convened the RSCAPs coordination meeting (8-10 October, Piraeus, Greece), through the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) to prepare for the adoption of a G7 declaration on the role of RSCAPs in the implementation of global ocean related policies and targets.

Advancing disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Africa and beyond

UNEP participated in plenary and thematic sessions at the 9th Africa regional platform for DRR (21- 24 October, Windhoek, Namibia), and co-organized a joint working session on *nature as a secret weapon for Africa's resilience*. The session promoted the partnership for environment and DRR's policy brief on ecosystem-based approaches to align DRR, climate, land and biodiversity goals.

Forest and water day

UNEP co-hosted the day (25 October, Cali) which included distinct sessions focused on the interlinkages between forests and water-related ecosystems as key to implementing the Kunming-Montreal GBF. A session on *conservation and restoration of water-related ecosystems for peace with nature* showcased efforts to protect and maintain critical ecosystem functions led by member states and indigenous peoples.

Protected planet report 2024

UNEP co-launched the report (28 October, Cali) which is the first official evaluation of progress on all elements of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal GBF. The aim of Target 3 is to expand the global network of protected and conserved areas to 30% coverage by 2030 in a way that is equitable and that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. The aim is also to ensure that these areas are effective, well-connected and strategically located in the places that are most important for biodiversity and ecosystem services. The findings show that while some progress has been made, there is much more to be done to achieve the aim of target 3.

Key contributions to IPBES nexus report

UNEP served as lead author for two chapters of a new landmark report from the intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES) entitled assessment *report on the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health* (aka the nexus report) launched on 17 December (Windhoek, Namibia). The report represents the most comprehensive scientific assessment ever conducted into the complex interconnections between the 'nexus elements' of biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change, and puts forward more than 70 'response options' for decisionmakers to consider when tackling issues in these areas.

NBSAP matchmaking mechanism

UNEP, as co-host of the NBSAP accelerator partnership programme launched a match making mechanism (MMM) (30 October, Cali). With Accelerator Partnership centring on keeping countries in the driving seat by connecting them with tailored technical and financial support based on their biodiversity priorities and needs, the MMM offers a vehicle to accelerate country-led, demand-driven action for nature. With staff support and a curated digital platform, the mechanism matches country-identified requests for support with ready and collaborative suppliers to accelerate efficient and sustainable biodiversity action.





Global Partnership launch of the NBSAP MatchMaking Mechanism to strengthen collaboration for a nature-positive future, 30 October, Cali
(Photo credit: NBSAP)

Agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)

UNEP participated in a regional training workshop for states of the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Africa (16-19 December, Rabat, Morocco) to promote a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement, to increase knowledge and strengthen the capacity of developing countries in Africa to become parties to the agreement and prepare for its entry into force.

RESULT Asia-Pacific

The RESULT Asia-Pacific, a regional restoration programme framework co-led by UNEP and supported by 38 regional partners, was launched (11 December, Bangkok) to support 20 countries across Asia and the Pacific to restore and sustainably manage 100 million hectares of degraded forests, agricultural land, urban areas and other landscapes across the region.

First international mangrove conservation and restoration conference

UNEP supported the conference (10-12 December, Abu Dhabi, UAE) which aimed to bridge the gap between cutting-edge science on mangrove ecosystems and the implementation of best practices for mangrove conservation and restoration. UNEP organized a workshop which examined the benefits that local communities can accrue from blue carbon projects, and the importance of a human rights-based approach and benefit sharing.



Insights from the Bern III conference at COPs (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD)

UNEP organized the CBD COP16 cooperation day (31 October, Cali), and two side events on multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) synergies and cooperation at the UNFCCC COP29 (19 November, Baku) and UNCCD COP16 (6 December, Riyadh) and used the opportunity to deliver a common message highlighting the role of synergies and cooperation with different processes and MEAs for the efficient and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

C. Towards a pollution-free planet

Pollution and Health

Global Framework on Chemicals Fund: First round of applications

The global framework on chemicals fund, hosted by UNEP, launched its first call for applications from 1 October 2024 until 31 January 2025. The US$ 28 million trust fund aims to help countries implement the framework and drive transformative change to reduce harm from the unsound management of chemicals and waste.

Hamburg sustainability conference

The UNEP hosted global framework on chemicals secretariat organized an event on *chemical safety and innovation along the value chain* at the conference (8 October, Hamburg, Germany) focussed on approaches to safe and sustainable chemicals management, highlighting the need for collaboration among value chain actors to achieve the global framework.

OEWG on science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and prevention of pollution

The UNEP-hosted secretariat of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) facilitated a bureau retreat (12-14 November, Geneva) which focused on substantive preparations for OEWG 3.2 and developed strategies for a successful OEWG process conclusion.

Public-private regulatory cooperation on chemicals in Latin America

The 5th Latin American meeting on regulatory cooperation on chemicals, organized by the Latin American regulatory cooperation forum (LARCF) (5-6 November, São Paulo, Brazil) provided a platform for dialogue between governments and chemical industry associations. UNEP supported the participation of government representatives and shared insights on the global framework on chemicals, including its call for proposals.

Regional cooperation to improve air quality

UNEP is advancing the implementation of UNEA resolution 6/10 on promoting regional cooperation to improve global air quality. On 19 December, a letter was issued inviting Member States and specialized agencies to join the Global Air Quality Cooperation Network. UNEP continues to support regional air quality initiatives, with the following key developments:

a. **Africa.** In line with the report *Integrated assessment of air pollution and climate change for sustainable development in Africa*, an AMCEN decision, and UNEA Res 6/10, partners are developing an implementation plan for an African country-driven air pollution program.

b. **Asia-Pacific.** UNEP co-organized the *international conference on strengthening regional cooperation for clean air and public health* (25 October, Jeju Island, Republic of Korea) where participants presented insights on addressing air pollution and public health in the Asia-Pacific region by sharing research findings, country best practices in policy and interventions and regional collaboration efforts for clean air action.

   UNEP co-organized a national workshop in Cambodia (19-20 November, Phnom Penh) on financing clean air solutions. Key outcomes included identifying financial mechanisms, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and strategizing resource mobilization. The event launched the UNEP-European Union (EU) project on *strengthening air pollution action* to agricultural crop residue burning.

   UNEP co-hosted the 26th session of the intergovernmental meeting on the acid deposition monitoring network in East Asia (EANET) (27-28 November, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). Key outcomes included the approval of the 2025 work programme and budget, discussions on expanding EANET's scope to broader air quality issues, and renewed commitments to monitoring, data sharing, and capacity building.



Group photo from the Workshop on unlocking finance to support clean air solutions, 19 – 20 November, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
(Photo Credit: MoE Cambodia and Asian Institute of Technology)

UNEP organized a regional workshop on regional actions to address transboundary haze and plastic pollution in Southeast Asia (10-12 December, Vientiane), which gathered policymakers and stakeholders to strengthen regional collaboration. Outcomes included determining key actions, sharing best practices, and developing a coordinated action plan.

c. **Europe.** UNEP co-hosted the 3rd Central Asia air quality conference (19-20 September, Almaty, Kazakhstan) with air quality Central Asia platform (AQCA), focusing on dust storms and regional air quality cooperation. This multi-stakeholder event resulted in the development of recommendations to improve clean air actions.

d. **West Asia.** UNEP organized a workshop (18-19 December, Amman, Jordan), where participants agreed on a two-year workplan for the West Asia air quality network. Countries in West Asia discussed and agreed to advance the regional air quality network to achieve cleaner air.

Advancing sustainable wastewater management solutions globally

UNEP held inception meetings in South Africa (10 October) and Ethiopia (5 December) on the wastewater surveillance initiative for Africa, building capacity for wastewater surveillance across ecosystems and public health sectors.

Towards zero waste

Caribbean high-level forum on zero waste

As part of the zero waste Caribbean initiative, UNEP supported the organization of the 8th high-level forum for Caribbean ministers responsible for waste management (23-24 October, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago). During the forum, officials signed the Trinidad declaration on a zero waste Caribbean, committing to circular economy principles, enhanced waste management policies, and mobilizing financial resources to achieve national and regional goals.



8th High-Level Forum (HLF) for Caribbean Ministers and senior sector officials responsible for waste management, 23-24 October, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
(Photo credit: Q95 news)

Transitioning from assessments to actions in Gaza

UNEP co-launched the emergency debris management pilot project (21 November, Gaza) to address environmental impacts and support recovery. The project cleared 6,000 tonnes of debris from 21 critical access routes, facilitating humanitarian relief. UNEP also coordinated UN inputs for the environment sector chapter of the Gaza interim rapid damage needs assessment (RDNA), led by the World Bank (expected publication: 2025). The RDNA identifies recovery needs, with debris management accounting for 66% of the estimated US$ 1.9 billion recovery cost.

Supporting debris management in Lebanon

UNEP, as part of the Lebanon debris task force, is contributing to debris quantification, mapping, and planning. The debris management framework is focused on minimizing environmental harm and maximizing socio-economic recovery benefits. UNEP contributes expertise in debris quantification, planning, hazardous material disposal, and circular recovery, aiming to improve practices and establish adaptable, coordinated frameworks tailored to country needs.

Green recovery in Ukraine

UNEP hosted a stakeholder consultation (10 December) to review the draft report *sustainable wastewater management as a pillar for Ukraine's sustainable reconstruction*. Stakeholders endorsed the report as a key tool for post-war recovery and ecosystem protection from wastewater and nutrient pollution. UNEP also presented its green recovery platform at the *consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka hydropower plant and the green recovery of Ukraine* forum (28 November).

Circularity in Sectors

Strengthening capacity to reduce plastic pollution in Colombia and Panama

UNEP's hosted a hybrid workshop (4 October, Panama City, Panama) in relation to its project to reduce plastic pollution in LAC cities, bringing together national and local authorities from Colombia and Panama. UNEP experts shared best practices on policy development, reuse solutions, and financial tools to address plastic pollution, supporting the design of national action plans and pilot interventions in both countries.

GEF-8 integrated programme on eliminating hazardous chemicals in supply chains

UNEP hosted the 2024 launch and inception event of the programme (9-11 December, Siem Reap, Cambodia) comprised of a global coordination project and eight country projects across Latin America and the Caribbean (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago) and the Asia-Pacific region (Cambodia, India, Mongolia, and Pakistan) to promote policies and financing for low-chemical alternatives in fashion and construction.



Regional project to reduce plastic pollution, 4 October, Panama City, Panama
(Photo credit: Ministry of Environment, Panama)

Addressing marine plastic and litter - a systemic approach in the Caspian Sea

UNEP will jointly implement the Tehran Convention launched project (12 November) to improve the management of the land-based sources of pollution that are likely to affect the marine environment of the Caspian Sea. This will be achieved through amending the policy and regulatory frameworks on waste management, comprehensive promotion of a circular economy/life-cycle approach, carrying out investments in waste managements as well as strengthening sustainable consumption and productions patterns, in particular behavioural consumers' change.

D. Foundational subprogrammes

i. Science policy

Framework for development of environment statistics (FDES) in South Sudan

UNEP co-organized a national workshop (29-31 October, Juba) to align South Sudan's environmental statistics with global standards and best practices. The workshop introduced the national environmental information network (NEIN) members to the 2013 FDES and refined the current indicator framework by applying the environment statistics self-assessment tool (ESSAT) methodology.

National workshop on climate change and disaster-related statistics

UNEP co-provided technical support to Kenya (25-27 November), to address challenges in collecting and utilizing disaster loss data by strengthening national capacities and fostering collaboration between national disaster management authorities (NDMAs) and national statistics offices (NSOs). The workshop was carried as part of the 11th European development fund's (EDF11) programme titled *strengthening disaster risk governance and recovery capacities*.

Framework for the development of environment statistics (FDES) in Indonesia

UNEP co-organized a national workshop (18-19 December, Jakarta) on statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX), to complement the first workshop on FDES 2013 (12-14 August). The main objective was to introduce to national experts to SDMX standard and to build some structures used for reporting and dissemination of environmental statistics identified during the first national workshop. This activity was carried out as part of the statistics and data project *resilient and agile national statistical systems to meet post-COVID-19 data needs to recover better* under the 14th tranche of the UN development account.

ii. Environmental governance

UN system-wide contributions to conferences of parties of Rio conventions

The UN environment management group (EMG) organized high-level roundtables at CBD COP16 (28 October, Cali), UNFCCC COP29 (12 November, Baku) and UNCCD COP16 (4 December, Riyadh), to explore opportunities to enhance synergistic implementation of MEAs, maximize collective impact, generate actionable recommendations to improve cooperation across UN agencies, support member states, and align decisions under the Rio Conventions.

2024 annual greening the blue report

The UNEP launched report (21 November) provides information on the UN system's environmental footprint and the efforts to reduce it. The report points out that the annual UN system wide GHG emissions for the year 2023 was 1.54 million tons CO2eq, waste per capita decreased by 4% and that environmental management systems have been adopted by ten UN entities with 17 approaching full adoption.



African elephant fund (AEF) steering committee

The first formal meeting of the UNEP-hosted AEF steering committee (13 November) discussed strategic issues of the Fund, particularly the revision of the project proposal evaluation and selection criteria and the updating of the proposal submission templates. The Committee also approved issuing the next call for proposals for AEF funding in early 2025.

Core human rights principles for private conservation organizations and funders

UNEP served as the lead organization in conceptualizing, drafting, and developing the core principles that were launched (13 December) to foster a human rights-based approach to conservation, that supports the rights of indigenous peoples and communities while contributing to the targets and goals of the KMGBF.

Advancing MEA implementation in Uzbekistan and its UN country team

UNEP co-provided (between September and December) technical assistance to the government of Uzbekistan in relation to the Aarhus Convention, Espoo Convention and the Air Convention. UNEP prepared an assessment of the legal, policy and institutional landscape to support an effective alignment of the country's national context with the provisions of the three Conventions and promote their synergetic implementation contributing to the accession of the government to the Aarhus Convention.

Global goals and MEA strategic plans

UNEP made live (31 October) its new goals section on the UN information portal on multilateral environmental agreements (InforMEA) entitled global goals and MEA strategic plans - mapping linkages. UNEP developed the section to intuitively map and present the linkages between global goals and frameworks, MEA treaty articles and COP decisions.

Faith for earth coalition

UNEP co-organized during COP29 the global summit of religious leaders (5-6 November, Baku) culminating in the Baku declaration which emphasized the voices of religious leaders as vital for advancing climate change action and achieving climate justice.

Environmental rights

UNEP delivered a presentation (14 November, Bangkok) on children's right to a healthy environment during the *ASEAN committee on women and children strategic partnership collaborative plan of actions for protection and enhancing well-being of children*. Discussions focussed on ending violence against children, protecting children from all forms of online exploitation and abuse, safeguarding children in migration contexts, and safeguarding children's rights to a healthy environment.

The ASEAN intergovernmental commission on human rights (AICHR) convened *AICHR regional dialogue and consultation on advancing development of environmental rights in ASEAN* (7-8 November, Jakarta, Indonesia). UNEP provided support to the meeting to take stock of ASEAN environment cooperation and progress in promoting environmental right.

Environmental rule of law

UNEP co-organized webinars for lawyers in the Asia-Pacific region on key environmental law theories and trends. The webinars on addressing strategic litigation against public participation in Asia-Pacific (17 October) explored how lawsuits can be used to silence voices protecting the environment and human rights, while the webinar on the polluter pays principle (15 November) focussed on holding industries and individuals who pollute accountable for their actions and on encouraging them to protect the planet.

UNEP co-organized a national Chinese judicial training and a high-level international workshop on environment rule of law and green development (4–7 November, Chengdu, China) where over 300 Chinese environmental judges were trained on environmental law.

UNEP co-hosted the conference *achieving just societies: inclusive justice pathways for people and planet in Asia-Pacific* (11-13 November, Bangkok), which explored how justice systems can better respond to critical needs of individuals across the region on topics including land use and environmental harm. UNEP organized several sessions including a plenary session on *strengthening environmental rule of law and protection of environmental human rights defenders through people-centred approaches*. The session contributed to increased understanding among duty-bearers and other stakeholders of the role of environmental human rights defenders in ensuring and enabling environmental justice for current and future generations and a regional initiative for a regional alliance on environmental law.

UNEP supported the supreme court of the Philippines (28–29 November, Puerta Princesa City, Palawan) at the *national summit on sustainability and environmental law* through the provision of technical assistance on the preparation of rules of procedure for environmental cases. UNEP also supported the first-ever youth forum on climate protection (27 October, Bangkok) to contribute to increased youth capacity-building on the Montreal Protocol.





Environmental crime

UNEP provided thought leadership during discussions in the high-level debriefing and interim evaluation meeting of operation DEMETER (19-21 November, Xiamen, China) to consolidate partnerships, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and strengthen customs administrations' capacity to combat environmental crime, particularly the illegal trade in environmental commodities.

UNEP co-organized a cross-regional dialogue (3-4 December, Bangkok) on preventing zoonotic disease and wildlife spillover: leveraging SAFE (safety across Asia for the global environment) project insights for enhanced biosafety and biosecurity. The dialogue worked towards the alignment and complementarity of ongoing and planned initiatives in the European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the prevention of zoonotic diseases and public and animal health threats, based on shared learnings from countries in the implementation of the SAFE project.

E. Enabling subprogrammes

i. Finance and economic transformations

UNEP finance initiative (UNEP-FI) 18th global roundtable

The roundtable (10-11 December, Geneva) brought together members of the global sustainable finance community to drive action on financing for sustainable development. The conference included the launch of new guidance designed to assist UNEP FI's members and banks worldwide in implementing measures to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and a policy mapping that helps banks understand the latest regulatory developments on nature-related issues.

Accelerating climate transition and sustainability integration

UNEP-FI's leadership council met virtually (16 December) with 14 CEOs and chairpersons from UNEP-FI's member organizations to discuss strategies for accelerating climate transition and its implications on nature and pollution, as well as UNEP-FI's role in supporting financial institutions through regulatory frameworks and global coordination efforts.

Chile sustainability policy 2024-2030

The UNEP co-produced policy roadmap for sustainable infrastructure in Chile (2023) informed and provided technical assistance to the development and launch of Chile's sustainability policy 2024-2030 (22 October, Santiago, Chile) The roadmap is also a vehicle to support the *integration of international good practice principles for sustainable infrastructure* into Chile's national policies and plans as per UNEA resolution 5/9.

Revitalizing the eco-mark scheme for environmental sustainability in India

The UNEP co-led Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) supported the Government of India in revitalizing its eco-mark scheme, which led to the announcement (2 October) of new eco-mark certification rules. The scheme addresses barriers



UNEP-FI 18th Global roundtable, 10-11 December, Geneva and online
(Photo credit: UNEP)

to adoption through a comprehensive review and global best practices, thereby improving governance, certification, and product criteria for environmentally friendly products. PAGE supported a thorough review of the scheme's structure, encompassing institutional frameworks, product categories, and certification processes.

Collaborating with fashion trust Arabia to advance sustainable fashion

UNEP and its West Asia sustainable fashion accelerator (WASFA) participated in the fashion trust Arabia (FTA) competition (24 October, Marrakesh, Morocco), where 22 finalists competed for seven awards, including the inaugural fashion tech award celebrating innovation and sustainability. UNEP will sponsor a two-day mentorship for winners to transition towards circular business models and benchmark UNEP's sustainability in the textile value chain. This collaboration promotes UNEP's work on sustainability in textiles, raises awareness among key stakeholders, and supports emerging talent in sustainable production.

9th UN tourism world forum on gastronomy tourism

UNEP participated in the forum (18–19 November, Manama, Bahrain) where UNEP food waste reduction advocate, chef Leyla Fathallah, served as a panelist in the discussion *circular solutions for reducing food waste*, sharing advocacy insights and promoting the forthcoming recipe of change toolkit for the hospitality sector. The forum emphasized actionable strategies to curb food waste across the tourism value chain.

Brazilian sustainable taxonomy initiative

UNEP-FI supported the hybrid technical mission for the Brazilian sustainable taxonomy (7-11 October, Brasília) to establish technical parameters for key economic and social sectors. UNEP-FI coordinated workshop logistics, participant registration, and communication for 24 thematic workshops and 20 technical meetings, engaging representatives from federal institutions, the financial sector, and civil society. UNEP-FI also facilitated the launch of the taxonomy's public consultation at COP29 (16 November, Baku), further amplified in Brasília (28 November). These efforts advanced stakeholder collaboration, contributed to policy formulation, and heightened global awareness of Brazil's transition towards sustainable economic systems.

Inaugural Latin America and Caribbean finance and biodiversity day

UNEP-FI co-organized the day (26 October, Cali, Colombia) during CBD COP16 to discuss challenges and opportunities in biodiversity and sustainable finance. The event highlighted the critical role of nature and biodiversity in economic stability and sustainable development of the region. During the event, UNEP-FI launched key publications, including a Spanish translation of the document *From Kunming-Montreal to Cali: Is the financial system on track?* The day fostered collaboration, emphasized transparency, and set the stage for further discussions linking climate and nature ahead of COP30 in Brazil.



Fashion trust Arabia (FTA) competition
(Photo credit: Fashion Trust Arabia website)

Environmental and social risk analysis (ESRA) online course

The course took place from 14 October to 1 November (English edition) and 25 November to 13 December (Spanish edition), aiming to enhance participants' ability to recognize and manage environmental and social risks in banking. UNEP co-delivered the course, helping financial institutions integrate sustainability into their risk management practices. The course resulted in enhanced skills in ESRA and a strengthened network among Spanish-speaking professionals in sustainable finance.

Environment management group (EMG) nexus dialogue on harmful subsidies

UNEP moderated the third and final webinar of the dialogue (26 November) focused on assessing subsidy impacts to inform evidence-based policymaking and support sustainable economic growth. The webinar covered key lessons learned, case studies on subsidy repurposing, and strategic approaches for policy reform.

Climate change risks for the financial sector

UNEP-FI designed, tailored content for the local context and facilitated a training workshop on climate change, risks for the financial sector and trends (28 October, La Paz, Bolivia), to enhance understanding of climate-related risks and their financial sector implications. Key outcomes included improved knowledge of climate risks among participating bank board members and strengthened collaboration on sustainable finance initiatives.

Strengthening climate adaptation strategies for LAC banks

UNEP-FI conducted two online training sessions (3 December and 17 December), targeting principles for responsible banking (PRB) banks in the LAC region, to strengthen banks' integration of adaptation into their climate strategies. UNEP-FI delivered expert guidance on PRB adaptation, enabling participants to design adaptation action plans, client engagement strategies, and financial products. A total of 171 participants gained critical insights into strategic adaptation planning, fostering capacity for effective implementation.

ii. Digital transformations

DigiKen project

Kenya launched the UNEP co-implemented DigiKen joint SDG programme (7 October, Nairobi) a transformative initiative co-funded by the UN SDG Fund to advance sustainable digital development. The programme aims to empower 150 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), train 20,000 civil servants on digital skills, and support 15 digital innovation hubs, focusing on inclusivity and climate resilience. By 2027, it is projected to create 4,500 direct jobs, improve digital access for over two million Kenyans, and mobilize US$ 55 million in private investment. UNEP plays a critical role in advancing green digital platforms, supporting MSMEs in high-impact sectors, and integrating environmental sustainability into digital innovation. This initiative aligns with Kenya's vision 2030, driving inclusive growth and a sustainable digital future.





UN World Data Forum UNWDF 2024, 12-15 November, Medellín, Colombia
(Photo credit: CINU Bogota)

UN world data forum 2024

UNEP participated in the forum (12–15 November, Medellín, Colombia) to showcase its contributions to global and regional environmental data management, emphasizing innovative digital tools that advance the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs while promoting the role of environmental information in decision-making. UNEP provided curated data, thematic videos, and links to portals highlighting environmental issues, with a major focus on tools developed under the digital accelerator lab (DAL) to support advanced data analysis and visualization. UNEP's contributions were featured in interactive exhibitions at the UN pavilion, raising awareness of the critical role of environmental data in achieving SDGs, particularly for climate action and ecosystem conservation.

Digital day

UNEP organized a briefing (19 November, Nairobi) for the committee of permanent representatives (CPR) on UNEP's digital transformation workstreams, including capacity building, environmental impacts of AI, and the world environment situation room (WESR) use cases, as well as the global environmental data strategy (GEDS), and the UNCTAD digital economy report. The event resulted in enhanced prioritization of UNEP's digital transformation workstreams, new ideas such as organizing a hackathon, and opportunities for capacity-building collaborations and development of additional WESR UNEuse cases in partnership with member states.

Global environmental data strategy (GEDS) consultations

UNEP facilitated five regional consultations with UN regional groups (from October to December 2024), a major group session (24 October), and over 20 expert roundtables on enhancing data governance, accessibility, and sustainability, capturing diverse perspectives and actionable recommendations to inform the GEDS and address global data challenges.

F. Cross-cutting issues

i. Gender

Ecuador baseline report on gender and e-mobility

The UNEP co-published report (October 2024) recommends addressing gender-specific mobility issues, including the potential of women as agents of production and improvement, the need for collection of gender disaggregated data and focused analysis to reduce the gender gap, and improved safety for women in public spaces, as well as the inclusion of women in the technical and executive sectors of mobility.

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment: target setting guidance for banks

Designed to support the significant role banks have in closing the gender gap, UNEP-FI co-authored and launched the guidance (11 December, Geneva) which provides clear, actionable steps for banks to prioritise women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. This includes a holistic framework for action, metrics to track progress, checklists and indicators to review bank's current practices and case studies from financial institutions.

UNEP-FI also organized a global roundtable deep dive session (11 December, Geneva) to provide insight into actions banks are taking and/or can take to close the gender gap.

Women entrepreneurs finance code

UNEP-FI joined the code as a global signatory (6 December, Geneva) representing a commitment to work together to increase funding provided to women-led micro, small and medium enterprises around the world.

Gender and land use

UNEP developed guidance from November to December on environmental and social (E&S) frameworks for private land use investors with a focus on gender, to ensure robust monitoring systems for E&S risks and impacts, including gender empowerment, using the UNEP land use impact hub. UNEP also organized a knowledge exchange event (8 October, Cambridge, UK) to discuss how to capture gender positive benefits of private land use investments through updates to a gender KPI of the Land Use Impact Hub. It also led discussions on gender issues in land restoration finance (16 December, Burkina Faso) to build inclusive programs for people in temporary vulnerability and induce gender elements in the Restoration Explorer initiative.



Girls go green Asia-Pacific summit 2024

UNEP co-convened the summit (23-25 October, Bangkok) to understand and address the unique challenges faced by girls and young women in accessing green skills and jobs in the Asia-Pacific region, and to identify clear actions that promote gender equity, and women and girls' empowerment to proactively participate in the transition to a sustainable and climate-resilient future.

Regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on gender equality and climate action in Asia Pacific

UNEP co-organized and delivered technical sessions at the dialogue (17-18 October, Bangkok) to promote women and girls' potential in driving climate action, to acknowledge ways of engaging women and girls in climate action and just transition including upskilling, and to spotlight the intersection between women's key employment sectors and just transition. The result was a call to action with recommendations on promoting gender-climate intersectionality, gender data, meaningful participation, rights-based planning and financing at COP29 and Beijing+30.

Gender responsive renewable energy initiatives

UNEP co-mobilized US$ 19.45 million towards gender responsive renewable energy initiatives in October 2024. The funds were raised through partnership agreements with various financial institutions that will advance the deployment of renewable energy initiatives that are inclusive and gender responsive.

ii. Environmental and social safeguards (ESS)

Safeguards workshop

UNEP organized a virtual entity-wide safeguards dialogue (10 November and 11 December) focusing on the purpose, scope, key principles, application, and operational aspects of the environmental and social sustainability framework (ESSF) to whose guiding principles all UNEP projects must comply. Participants engaged in reflective discussions on addressing safeguard challenges during the preparation of the safeguard risk identification form (SRIF), risk assessment, and identification, and also highlighted topics for further exploration in future sessions.



UNAMnet and ESS meetings
UNEP, a founding member of the UN Accountability Mechanism Network (UNAMnet) established in 2023, participated in its first in-person meeting (19-22 November, Rome, Italy). Focal points from participating UN agencies exchanged updates on progress, challenges, and plans while learning from experts about international standards and trends. The ESS meeting focused on sharing tools, practices, operational insights, and challenges related to ESS policy implementation.

iii. UN reform

Capacity building workshop for UNEP UNCT focal points in the Africa region
To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of UNEP's support to and influence on UN country teams (UNCTs), UNEP hosted a technical workshop for its UNCT focal points from the regional office for Africa, sub-regional offices, and country offices (31 October - 1 November, Nairobi). The workshop aimed to strengthen the integration of environment and climate action into UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks (UNSDCFs) and improve UNEP's positioning within the UN development system to better support member states and UNCTs in achieving the 2030 agenda. Participants shared experiences, lessons learned, and reflected on emerging issues within UNCTs, fostering collaboration and collective problem-solving.

iv. South-south cooperation

Bamboo agroforestry for flood mitigation and sustainable development in Kenya
Between October and December, UNEP jointly built a ground demonstration on bamboo agroforestry at the Nzoia river basin in Kenya to cope with climate change. Mixed in this vegetation belt are two species of bamboo, a tree species (Grevillea robusta) and bananas. Crop seeds such as maize, cow peas, okra and common beans were widely distributed to local farmers for inter-cropping with trees, in order to enhance their livelihoods and food supply. During the reporting period, UNEP organized ten capacity building events, directly benefiting over 350 local community members and technical staff on ecosystem restoration approaches, agroforestry practices, bamboo propagation and nursery setup, sustainable bamboo forest management, and bamboo industry technology and opportunities.

UNEP jointly built (10-18 December) a first bamboo classroom at Rugunga Primary School in Busia, Kenya, with two building construction experts from China teaching local community members how to utilize local bamboo materials to build houses. The initiative demonstrates the potential of bamboo as a sustainable, cost-effective solution to address housing challenges in flood-affected regions. The hands-on



Bamboo propagation training in Busia, Kenya 2024
(Photo credit: Guoqin Wang)

training ensures that knowledge and techniques for bamboo construction are retained and expanded within the local community.

Burundi system of environmental-economic accounting (SEEA) workshop
UNEP co-delivered the national workshop (17-19 December, Bujumbura, Burundi) to increase the knowledge of the national statistical system and other key stakeholders on SEEA, with a view to identifying SEEA priority accounts at the national level. This activity was carried as part of the statistics and data project *resilient and agile national statistical systems to meet post-COVID-19 data needs to recover better* under the 14th tranche of the UN Development Account (DA14 project).

G. Opportunities and lessons learned

i. Opportunities

Gender and e-mobility
While women remain underrepresented in the transport sector, especially in areas such as planning, engineering, and operations, the transition to electric mobility presents an opportunity to enhance gender inclusivity. In this context, appropriate policies and training programs are needed to ensure that women are not excluded from new job opportunities in emerging transport technologies.

Debt-for-nature swaps
UN-REDD has been exploring innovative financial mechanisms, particularly debt-for-nature swaps, as a promising opportunity for environmental conservation in Colombia and Mexico. In this content, UNEP organized a webinar (12 November), as part of the innovative climate finance instruments series, to raise awareness among stakeholders about the potential benefits and implementation strategies for debt-for-nature swaps, which allow countries to reduce their debt in exchange for commitments to fund local conservation projects.

The meeting (3-4 October) of the UN-REDD working group on safeguards and integrity also played a crucial role, concentrating on the ART-TREES requirements and integrity efforts within the Integrity council for voluntary carbon market (IC-VCM), further reinforcing the framework necessary for successful debt-for-nature swaps. By facilitating these discussions and meetings, UNEP is taking significant action to explore and promote the potential of debt-for-nature swaps as a viable solution for financing conservation efforts while addressing national debt issues.

UNEP climate adaptation podcasts
As the climate crisis continues to worsen, there has been an explosion in the number of climate-related podcasts. Many have rightly focused on mitigation efforts, particularly on how greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced. Conversely, the question of how to adapt to the impacts of climate change often gets



overlooked. From UNEP's own work and experience, there are captivating solutions out there for building resilience and sharing best practices and this is being done successfully through knowledge dissemination platforms like the recently launched UNEP climate adaptation podcast.

Implementing environmental policies and strategies

While many UN agencies are adopting environmental policies and strategies in a more coherent manner significant challenges remain at the implementation level. These include gaps in effective collaboration on joint programming, resource mobilization, and implementation and reporting. Key barriers include the lack of incentives and obligations for joint implementation, independent operational structures, and insufficient governance mechanisms for policy and implementation alignment. Additionally, capacity and expertise gaps, fragmented funding mechanisms, and the absence of harmonized monitoring and evaluation systems further complicate joint efforts. Diverging political priorities, agency-specific mandates, and cultural barriers exacerbate these challenges. Through strengthening coordination structures like the Environment Management Group (EMG), fostering knowledge sharing, and creating incentives for collaboration, clear opportunities exist to help address these issues.

iii. Lessons learned

Land degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution

Land degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution are deeply interlinked, and they demand coordinated solutions that cut across the mandates of the Rio Conventions and related MEAs. UNEP is address this through providing technical support and promoting stronger cooperation and partnerships for land degradation neutrality (LDN), national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation plans (NAPs).

Lessons learned from evaluations

The sample of evaluations reviewed during the quarter show the technical breadth of UNEP's work and the complexity of the environments in which it aims to drive positive change. Operating effectively through partnerships and building effective networks emerge as a common need to reach ambitious targets and to deliver initiatives at scale. Strategic thinking and a clear focus on the expected benefits or intended changes are also highlighted as an important area of effort. The maturing of GEF-funded global coordinating projects and the programmes they aim to support will bring more opportunities for learning about the potential to achieve positive results at a large scale through collaboration and coordinated work.

3 RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

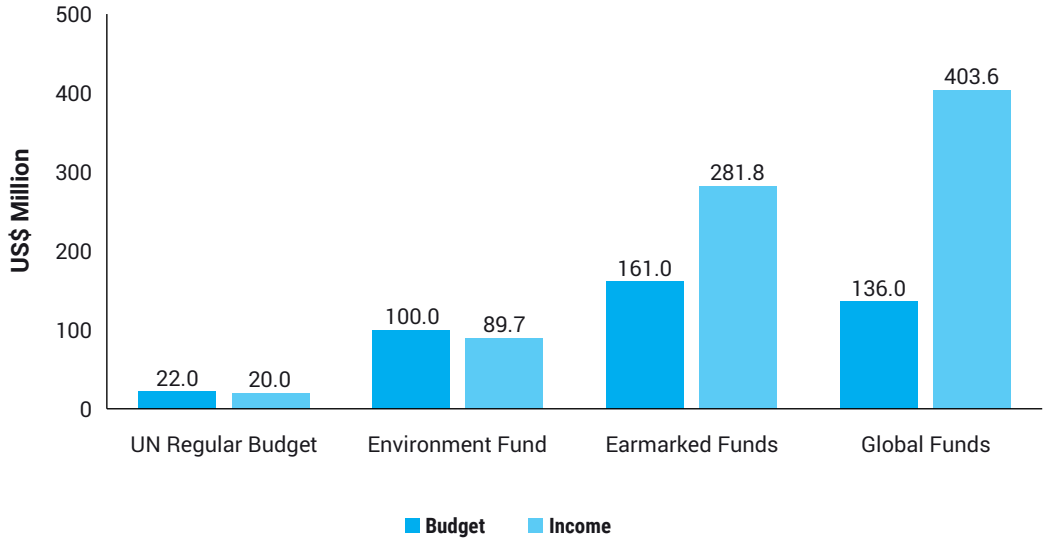
A. Financial resources

i. Financial update as at 31 December 2024

a. Overview of income[1]

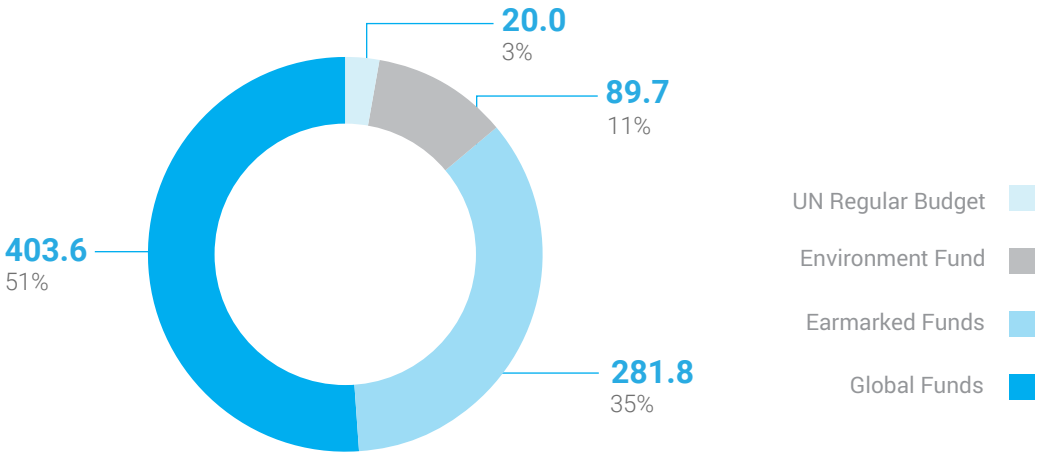
The UN regular budget and the environment fund provide the core funding for the organization which gives UNEP the flexibility to respond to the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, and implement the programme of work as approved by the member states. As at 31 December 2024, core funding accounted for 14% of total funding to UNEP, while earmarked and global funds account for 86%. For earmarked and global funds, income contains *multi-year* elements, including unspent balances from prior years and funds received for future years' spending.

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



1 The figures do not include conventions and protocols administered by UNEP. Per the United Nations secretariat interpretation and application of the international public service accounting standards (IPSAS), our financial and administrative management platform, Umoja, does not allow a breakdown of multi-year contributions into annual figures for income.

Income per source of funding (in million $) /January 2024 – December 2024



b. Core funding

(i) United Nations regular budget

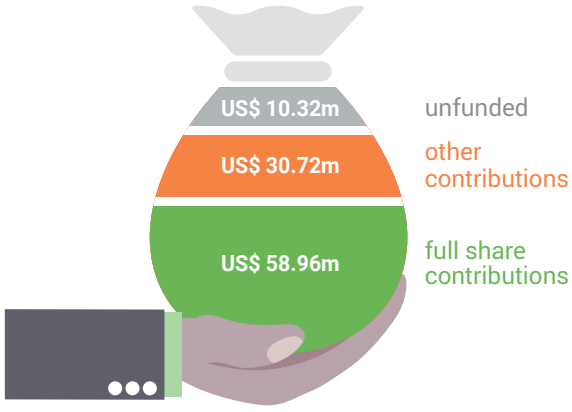
The United Nations regular budget provides core resources to UNEP to cover fundamental programme activities. Due to liquidity challenges, the 2024 allotment issued was restricted to US$ 20 million which is lower than the approved budget of US$ 22 million. The corporate services division, in consultation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

(ii) The environment fund

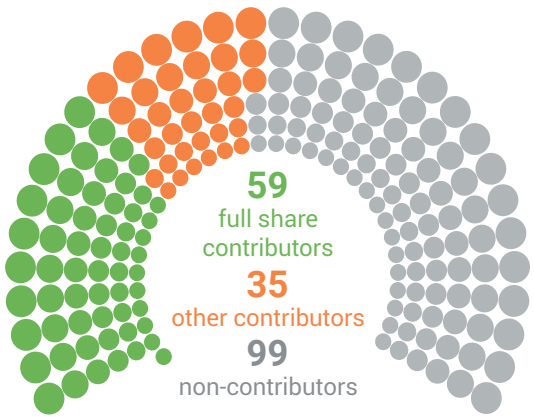
The environment fund provides UNEP with core resources that are essential for results-focused and balanced programme delivery with robust oversight. By 31 December 2024, the environment fund income amounted to US$ 89.68 million which is 90% of the approved 2024 budget of US$ 100 million. These contributions were received from 94 member states, which represents 49% of the 193 Member States. Out of the 94 member states, 59 (63%) contributed their full share as per the voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC). Ninety-one (91) member states have paid their pledges as at 31 December 2024.

Status of the environment fund in 2024 (as at 31 December 2024)

INCOME vs UNFUNDED BALANCE of US$ 100m budget



NUMBER AND CATEGORY OF MEMBER STATE CONTRIBUTORS out of 193



UNEP is grateful to all of these contributors with special thanks to the 59 member states that have provided their full share and to the top -15 member states who have provided 90% 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, Finland, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway and South Africa, which amounted to a total of US$ 35.14 million or 39% of the environment fund income as at 31 December 2024.

(iii) Comparison with previous years

UNEP is pleased to see the increasing trend of contributions both in amount received and in numbers of member states contributing, which reflects enhanced confidence by member states towards the environment fund. As at end December 2024 the total pledges are US$ 0.78 million or 1% higher compared to 2023 and the number of member states having pledged increased by 14 member states or 18% from December 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.

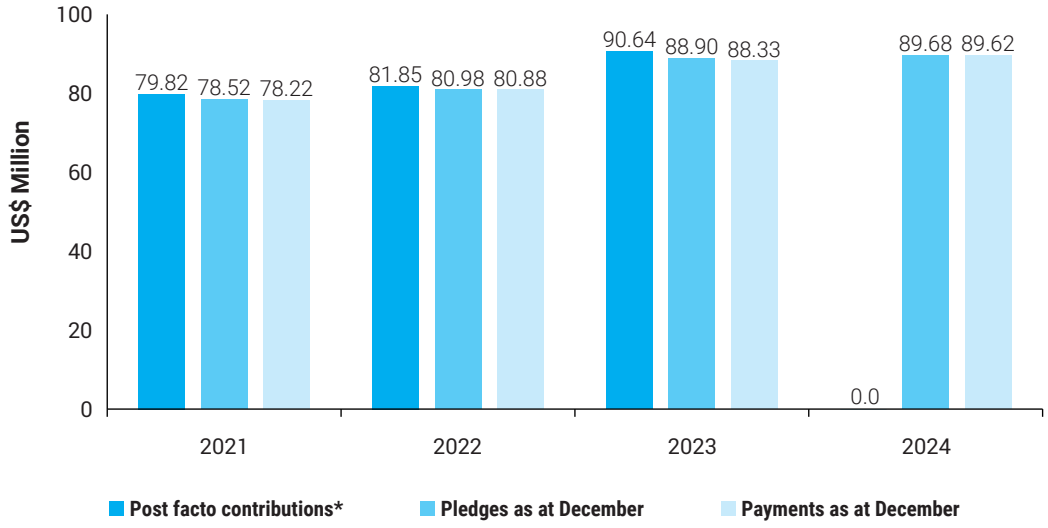
Top15 contributors to the environment fund in 2024 (as at 31 December 2024)

Member state	US$ (millions)	Member state	US$ (millions)
Norway	12.24	Belgium	4.33
Netherlands	10.28	Switzerland	3.78
Germany	7.99	Italy	3.31
France	7.55	Canada	2.28
Denmark	7.40	Finland	1.57
United States of America	7.22	Japan	1.41
Sweden	5.05	Spain	1.37
United Kingdom	4.73		

Full share contributors to the environment fund in 2024 (as at 31 December 2024)

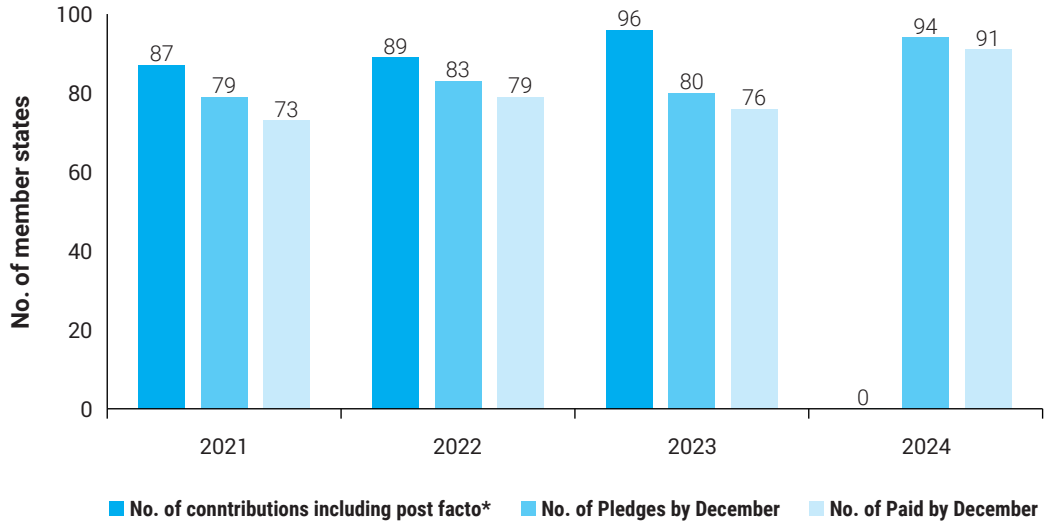
Paid					Pledged
Albania	Dominican Republic	Jamaica	Morocco	Saudi Arabia	Monaco
Armenia	Eswatini	Jordan	Nauru	Serbia	
Bahamas	Fiji	Kenya	Nepal	Slovenia	
Barbados	France	Latvia	Netherlands	Somalia	
Belgium	Gambia	Lithuania	New Zealand	Sri Lanka	
Belize	Georgia	Luxembourg	Norway	Sweden	
Bhutan	Grenada	Madagascar	Oman	Tajikistan	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Guyana	Maldives	Palau	United Kingdom	
Cabo Verde	Iceland	Malta	Peru	Uruguay	
Cyprus	Iraq	Mauritius	Philippines	Vanuatu	
Denmark	Ireland	Mongolia	Saint Kitts and Nevis		
Dominica	Italy	Montenegro	Saint Lucia		

Pledges and payments to the environment fund 2021-2024



* Post facto – Includes contributions received after the end of the respective financial year against pledges of that year.

Number of contributors to the environment fund 2021-2024



* Post facto – Includes contributions received after the end of the respective financial year against pledges of that year.

c. Earmarked contributions

(i) Earmarked funds

As at 31 December 2024, earmarked funds accounted for 175% of the annual budgeted income for the year 2024 including multi-year agreements. Out of the US$ 281.8 million received, 95% was tightly earmarked and 5% was softly earmarked funding. To provide greater flexibility and effectiveness in the use of funds, UNEP encourages member states to consider moving funds that would otherwise be tightly earmarked towards a softer earmarking which is an option available through the planetary funds.

(ii) Planetary funds

The funds closed 2024 on a positive note, with a contribution from the Czech Republic of US$ 167,000 to the pollution fund, bringing the total contributions for 2024 to the three funds to US$ 12.90 million for the climate fund, US$ 8.43 million to the nature fund and US$ 8.81 million to the pollution fund.

(iii) 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 December 2024, GEF had received US$ 320 million and GCF US$ 83.6 million bringing the total multi-year income from global funds to US$ 403.6 million. The income received was 297% of the annual budgeted income for the year 2024 including multi-year agreements.

ii. Status of allocations and expenditures as at 31 December 2024

a. Environment fund

The approved budget for the 2024–2025 biennium amounts to US$ 200 million. The initial approved 2024 allocation for the environment fund was US$ 115 million, however this was later adjusted to US$ 110 million due to the postponement of the UNCT engagement to 2025. As of 31 December 2024, UNEP's expenditure represented 87% of this allotment.

It is important to note that the 2024 financial year has not yet officially closed, as transactions continue to be recorded through February and March 2025, which may further adjust the expenditure figures. The final 2024 report will be presented at the annual sub-committee meeting.

Top-15 contributors of earmarked funds in 2024 (as at 31 December 2024)

Funding partner	US$ (millions)	Funding partner	US$ (millions)
UN Agencies*	95.21	Italy	5.88
Germany	47.81	Foundation/ Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)	5.17
European Commission	37.57		
UNEP Finance Initiative**	22.86	Switzerland	5.03
United States of America	10.57	United Kingdom	4.09
Denmark	9.05	Belgium	3.36
Japan	8.55	Norway	3.32
Sweden	7.60	Finland	2.98

*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.

Status of allocations and expenditures – environment fund

Environment Fund (US$)					
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 31 December 2024**	**%**
A	Policymaking organs	2,000,000	2,441,175	2,291,278	94%
B.1	Executive direction and management	4,000,000	4,045,848	4,208,646	104%
B.2	UNSCEAR				
	Subtotal (A+B)	**6,000,000**	**6,487,023**	**6,499,924**	**100.20%**
C	Programme of work				
1	Climate action	12,000,000	10,361,788	8,954,103	86%
2	Digital transformations	7,000,000	8,929,210	8,272,039	93%
3	Nature action	12,000,000	13,334,197	12,530,316	94%
4	Environmental governance	13,000,000	15,764,241	14,596,634	93%
5	Chemicals and pollution action	12,000,000	12,861,883	10,062,891	78%
6	Finance and economic transformations	13,000,000	13,545,959	10,871,772	80%
7	Science-policy	13,000,000	13,651,359	13,251,421	97%
	Subtotal C	**82,000,000**	**88,448,637**	**78,539,176**	**89%**
D	Fund Programme Reserve	5,000,000	4,700,000	1,200,264	26%
	Subtotal (C+D)	**87,000,000**	**93,148,637**	**79,739,440**	**86%**
E	Programme Management and Other				
	Programme Support	7,000,000	9,864,340	9,427,801	96%
	UNCT engagement		-		
	UNEA Implementation		500,000	143,905	29%
	Subtotal E	**7,000,000**	**10,364,340**	**9,571,705**	**92%**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**100,000,000**	**110,000,000**	**95,811,069**	**87%**

b. Overhead trust fund

Income in the overhead trust fund is generated from programme support costs earned through extrabudgetary project implementation and is used to cover essential administrative and operational expenses. The 2024 allotment is US$ 24.5 million, compared to the biennium budget of US$ 32 million. This reflects a high volume of extrabudgetary project implementation in 2023, which generated a higher amount of progamme support costs and enabled a larger allotment for 2024.

As of 31 December 2024, expenditure was 82% of the allotment. The transactions of 2024 expenditures will continue to be recorded through February and March 2025, and will impact the final 2024 expenditure figures accordingly.

Status of allocations and expenditures – overhead trust fund

Overhead Trust Fund (US$)					
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 31 December 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	1,576,362	68%
2	Digital transformations	650,000	-		
3	Nature action	1,200,000	1,585,540	1,607,425	101%
4	Environmental governance	650,000	1,974,967	1,626,086	82%
5	Chemicals and pollution action	1,550,000	1,882,381	1,152,782	61%
6	Finance and economic transformations	1,250,000	833,216	712,533	86%
7	Science-policy	350,000	348,975	318,196	91%
	Subtotal C	**7,900,000**	**8,950,579**	**6,993,385**	**78%**
D	Fund Programme Reserve			-	
	Subtotal (C+D)	**7,900,000**	**8,950,579**	**6,993,385**	**78%**
E	Programme Management and Other				
	Programme Support	8,100,000	15,549,999	13,160,719	85%
	UNCT engagement				
	UNEA Implementation				
	Subtotal E	**8,100,000**	**15,549,999**	**13,160,719**	**85%**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**16,010,000**	**24,500,578**	**20,154,104**	**82%**

c. Regular budget

The regular budget allotment by UNHQ for 2024 was set at US$ 20 million, US$ 2 million short from the General Assembly approved amount of US$ 22 million due to liquidity challenges. This decrease necessitated careful expenditure management. As of 31 December 2024, the expenditure rate reached 102% of the allotment, mainly attributable to the standard staffing costs increase and was covered by the UNHQ's re-costing exercise for 2024. Finalized 2024 expenditure will be presented at the annual sub-committee meeting.

Status of allocations and expenditures – regular budget

Regular Budget (US$)					
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 31 December 2024**	**%**
A	Policymaking organs	463,300	463,300	463,300	100%
B.1	Executive direction and management	2,859,600	3,256,327	3,255,823	100%
B.2	UNSCEAR	1,022,400	828,577	649,259	78%
	Subtotal (A+B)	**4,345,300**	**4,548,204**	**4,368,382**	**96%**
C	Programme of work				
1	Climate action	1,985,900	1,814,804	2,242,367	124%
2	Digital transformations	1,451,400	1,038,018	828,983	80%
3	Nature action	2,446,400	1,907,792	2,002,585	105%
4	Environmental governance	4,321,100	4,059,689	4,458,348	110%
5	Chemicals and pollution action	1,613,400	1,605,268	1,706,952	106%
6	Finance and economic transformations	1,856,200	1,528,190	1,475,117	97%
7	Science-policy	3,010,800	2,556,907	2,555,987	100%
	Subtotal C	**16,685,200**	**14,510,669**	**15,270,340**	**105%**
D	Fund Programme Reserve		-	-	
	Subtotal (C+D)	**16,685,200**	**14,510,669**	**15,270,340**	**105%**
E	Programme Management and Other				
	Programme Support	959,700	897,527	780,160	
	UNCT engagement				
	UNEA Implementation				
	Subtotal E	**959,700**	**897,527**	**780,160**	**87%**
Total A+B+C+D+E		**21,990,200**	**19,956,400**	**20,418,882**	**102%**

d. Earmarked funds

Expenditures comprise actual funds spent during the biennium, including commitments pertaining to future years and expenses against unspent balances of budgets for. The unspent budget balances of previous periods are not included in the current budget period.

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 an annual basis as it is shown in the table. The table does not include the annual allotments due to limitations in the ERP/Umoja system, which does not allow the division of multi-year budget for earmarked and global funds into annual figures.

Status of allocations and expenditures – earmarked funds

Earmarked Budgets and Global Funds (US$)				
	Functional Area Name	**Budget**	**Expenditure as at 31 December 2024**	**%**
A	Policymaking organs	250,000	229,796	92%
B.1	Executive direction and management	700,000	810,964	116%
B.2	UNSCEAR		-	
	Subtotal (A+B)	**950,000**	**1,040,761**	110%
C	Programme of work			
1	Climate action	97,200,000	217,380,857	224%
2	Digital transformations	13,400,000	1,022,413	8%
3	Nature action	86,600,000	102,208,362	118%
4	Environmental governance	13,550,000	40,341,088	298%
5	Chemicals and pollution action	47,200,000	88,192,562	187%
6	Finance and economic transformations	24,850,000	35,430,192	143%
7	Science-policy	8,350,000	14,948,714	179%
	Subtotal C	**291,150,000**	**499,524,188**	
D	Fund Programme Reserve	-	-	
	Subtotal (C+D)	**291,150,000**	**499,524,188**	
E	Programme Management and Other			
	Programme Support	4,800,000	6,767,197	
	UNCT engagement			
	UNEA Implementation			
	Subtotal E	**4,800,000**	**6,767,197**	
Total A+B+C+D+E		**296,900,000**	**507,332,146**	

e. Planetary funds

As single-agency pooled-funds, the planetary funds are allotted on rolling basis in accordance with a pre-approved formula, which ensures strategic alignment with the MTS and other funding sources. Implementation rates are carefully monitored and adjusted to ensure that disbursements are utilized within a maximum expenditure period of 24 months.

Status of allocations and expenditures – planetary funds

Level	**Authorized Budget**	**Allotments**	**Expenditure as at 31 December 2024**
A Climate	12,749,155	9,271,351	6,806,082
B Nature	8,035,581	7,995,342	6,715,960
C Pollution	7,216,422	6,128,705	4,269,710
Total A + B + C	**28,001,158**	**23,395,398**	**17,791,752**

iii. Report on management of trust funds and earmarked contributions

The organization has continued with the implementation of UNEA decision 3/3, adopted on 6 December 2017, regarding the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions. UNEA decision 3/3 among other things requested the executive director, in consultation with relevant parties and/or donors to manage the balances of inactive trust funds and, where appropriate, reassign them to support the implementation of UNEP subprogrammes in line with the agreed programme of work. Since UNEA-6, significant progress has been made in this regard. Specifically, UNEP has successfully closed several inactive trust funds, with an additional six trust funds scheduled for closure in the first quarter of year 2025.

This will bring the total number of closed trust funds to 39 since the adoption of the Umoja enterprise resource planning system in 2015. The implementation of Umoja has been instrumental in reducing the administrative burden associated with managing numerous trust funds, a challenge highlighted in both governing council decision 27/14 and UNEA decision 2/23. The streamlined process has enabled UNEP to more efficiently allocate resources to active initiatives that align with the UNEP programme of work.

In line with the United Nations financial regulations and rules, UNEP continues to administer trust funds on the principle of full cost recovery for administrative costs. This ensures that the management of trust funds is both financially sustainable and transparent, with trust funds and grants for voluntary contributions covering their appropriate share of administrative costs, thus avoiding undue burden on the core resources of the organization.

New trust funds are created only when it is fully confirmed that they are necessary, and when the operational and substantive requirements of the organization and its donors cannot be met through the existing modalities in Umoja. This decision is made with careful consideration of the need to maintain full transparency and ensure separate accountability for donor funds. In this context, the executive director is in the process of establishing a new trust fund—the global biodiversity framework fund (GBFF). The GBFF was approved by the global environment facility (GEF) council during its 64th meeting held in Brazil in June 2023.

This trust fund will support UNEP's activities related to the global biodiversity framework and will be managed in accordance with the financial procedures agreement, which is expected to be signed between UNEP and the international bank for reconstruction and development (IBRD), the trustee of the global biodiversity framework fund. These ongoing efforts enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of UNEP's trust fund management, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work.

List of trust funds for which closure has been initiated

#	Fund	Name
1	GPP	Trust Fund to assist delegates from developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States in attending the sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group.
2	GPS	Trust fund for the activities and functions of the secretariat and the organization of meetings and consultations in respect of the global pact for the environment.
3	GRL	Technical cooperation trust fund for the implementation of greening economies in the eastern neighbourhood and Central Asia (EaP-GREEN) programme.
4	FRL	Trust Fund for operational purposes to support the UNEP economy division's imprest account.
5	UTL	Technical cooperation trust fund for the implementation of UNEP-UNCTAD capacity building task force on activities on trade, environment and development.
6	MDL	Technical cooperation trust fund for UNEP's implementation of the millennium development goals achievement fund.

iv. Resource mobilization strategy

In line with the recommendations by the Member States, UNEP has strengthened its outreach related to resource mobilization. For example, all 2024 full share and top 15 contributors to the environment fund were appreciated through social media. The narrative to better explain the VISC (voluntary indicative scale of contributions), or the full share, and its importance as a tool for attracting more core funding, is shared through infographics and speeches by UNEP's senior management. UNEP's booklet, which was also distributed at the 168th CPR meeting and is available in 5 languages, explains UNEP's value and why UNEP is the partner of choice in tackling the three planetary environmental crises.

These efforts together with the funding dialogues on global, regional and bilateral basis have played a big part in the strengthening of the funding base of the environment fund. The share of full share contributors, as determined by the voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC), has doubled from 32% in 2019 to 63% in 2024. For the first time ever, the annual contributions passed the US$ 90 million mark in 2023.

Looking ahead, the planetary funds will continue building this innovative flexible funding mechanism, with the objective for 2025 to complement funding from member states with increased contributions from philanthropic sources, further broadening the financial base for sustainable impact.

B. Human Resources

General overview

As of 31 December 2024, UNEP employed 1,383 staff members, reflecting an increase of 18 positions compared to the previous year. The workforce is comprised of: 840 staff (61%) in the professional and higher categories; 12 staff (<1%) in the national professional officer (NPO) category; and 531 staff (38%) in the general service category.

A clear distinction exists between the UNEP secretariat and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The secretariat employs 1,087 staff members (79% of UNEP's total workforce), while MEAs account for 296 staff members (21%). This structure highlights UNEP's dual administrative and programmatic framework, where the secretariat manages core operational and policy functions, while MEA secretariats serve as entities supporting international environmental agreements under the authority of the respective conference of parties.

i. Senior level staff (UNEP secretariat and MEAs)

At the P-5 level and above, the number of staff increased slightly from 184 in 2023 to 186 in 2024 due to vacancies being filled.

A further breakdown highlights that the secretariat holds 145 of these positions, while MEAs account for 41 senior roles as of 31 December.

Level	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	Total
Number of Staff (2024)	1	3	10	50	122	**186**
Number of Staff (2023)	1	2	10	48	123	**184**

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

	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	Total
Secretariat	1	2	6	42	94	**145**
MEAs		1	4	8	28	**41**

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

ii. Appointments – P5 and above

In the fourth quarter of 2024, UNEP filled eight senior-level positions across its divisions and offices, strengthening its leadership capacity and operational effectiveness. These appointments included two directors at the D-2 level, one from the Western European and other group (WEOG) and one from the Asia-Pacific group (APG), both recruited externally to lead the climate change division and the policy and programme division, respectively.

At the D-1 level, an internal candidate from the Asia-Pacific group was appointed as principal programme management officer within the secretariat for the convention on biological diversity. Additionally, five P-5 positions were filled across various functional areas: public information, law, gender affairs, coordination, and programme management. Of these, three candidates were from the Eastern European group (EEG), one from WEOG, and one from APG. Four of these P-5 appointments were externally recruited, while one was an internal candidate.

iii. Gender distribution

a. Gender distribution: UNEP status (October to December 2024)

As of December 31, 2024, UNEP employed 1,383 staff members, with 62% (861) female and 38% (522) male representation across all categories. This overall distribution has remained stable compared to previous years. At the professional and higher levels (P+), women account for 57% (477) of staff, while men represent 43% (363). In the general service category, female staff make up 71% (379), while male staff account for 29% (152).

b. UNEP Secretariat

Within the UNEP Secretariat, women occupy 58% (381) of professional and higher-level positions (P+), while men make up 42% (280). The gender distribution in the general service category is composed of 70% (289) female and 30% (125) male representation.

Position Title	Grade	Geographical Group	Internal/External
Director, Programme Management	D-2	WEOG	External
Director, Programme Management	D-2	APG	External
Principal Programme Management Officer	D-1	APG	Internal
Chief Of Section, Public Information	P-5	EEG	External
Senior Programme Management Officer	P-5	EEG	External
Senior Gender Affairs Officer	P-5	EEG	External
Senior Coordination Officer	P-5	WEOG	Internal
Senior Programme Management Officer	P5	APG	External

UNEP												
Gender	**USG**	**ASG**	**D2**	**D1**	**P5**	**P4**	**P3**	**P2**	**Total P+**	**Total NO**	**Total GS**	**Total Staff**
Female	1	3	8	28	61	152	153	71	477	5	379	**861**
Male	0	0	2	22	61	132	107	39	363	7	152	**522**
Totals	**1**	**3**	**10**	**50**	**122**	**284**	**260**	**110**	**840**	**12**	**531**	**1383**

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

UNEP Secretariat												
Gender	**USG**	**ASG**	**D2**	**D1**	**P5**	**P4**	**P3**	**P2**	**Total P+**	**Total NPO**	**Total GS**	**Total**
Female	1	2	5	22	46	124	127	54	381	5	289	**675**
Male			1	20	48	110	78	23	280	7	125	**412**
Total	**1**	**2**	**6**	**42**	**94**	**234**	**205**	**77**	**661**	**12**	**414**	**1087**

c. Multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)

Within the MEAs, women make up 54% (96) of staff at the professional and higher levels (P+), while men account for 46% (83). At the general service level, 77% (90) of GS staff are female and 23% (27) are male.

iv. Geographical representation

a. Geographical representation: progression over the years

As of 31 December 2024, UNEP staff members represent a range of nationalities, reflecting the organization's commitment to geographical balance and global representation. The total number of staff increased by 18 compared to 2023.

UNEP MEAs												
Gender	**USG**	**ASG**	**D2**	**D1**	**P5**	**P4**	**P3**	**P2**	**Total P+**	**Total NPO**	**Total GS**	**Total**
Female		1	3	6	15	28	26	17	96	-	90	**186**
Male			1	2	13	22	29	16	83	-	27	**110**
Total		**1**	**4**	**8**	**28**	**50**	**55**	**33**	**179**		**117**	**296**

Region	UNEP secretariat	MEA	Total UNEP
African group	418	48	466
Asia Pacific group	208	47	255
Eastern European group	45	10	55
Latin American and Caribbean group	107	27	134
Western European and Others group	309	163	472

b. Geographical representation of UNEP staff

A breakdown of staff by region within the UNEP Secretariat and MEAs provides further insights into representation trends.

c. Geographical representation at Professional Levels

The table below provides an overview of the regional representation of UNEP staff at the professional level and above as of December 31, 2024. The Western European and Others group (WEOG) accounts for 42% of staff and 26% of selections at the professional and higher levels in 2024, making it the second-largest region in terms of selections. Meanwhile, other regions have shown growth as shown further below.

Region	UNEP secretariat	MEA	Total UNEP
African group	418	48	466
Asia Pacific group	208	47	255
Eastern European group	45	10	55
Latin American and Caribbean group	107	27	134
Western European and Others group	309	163	472

UNEP regional representation of staff – Professional level

Regional distribution	Professional level and above								Total Dec 2023	Total Dec 2024	Variation
	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2			
African group		1	3	4	30	57	54	16	156	165	+9
Asia Pacific group		1	3	11	21	57	63	31	177	187	+10
Eastern European group				4	7	15	10	12	38	48	+10
Latin American & Caribbean group			2	5	15	24	32	9	82	87	+5
Stateless								1	0	1	+1
Western European & Others group	1	1	2	26	49	131	101	41	379	352	-27
Total	**1**	**3**	**10**	**50**	**122**	**284**	**260**	**110**	**832**	**840**	**+8**

Data overview by UNEP Secretariat and MEAs.

d. Junior Professional Officers (JPO's) in UNEP

UNEP's JPO programme currently engages 34 JPOs.

v. Funding of staff positions

UNEP's staffing structure as of 31 December 2024 reflects a strategic approach to resource management and operational efficiency, with 1,383 staff members funded through four primary sources: the environment fund, earmarked contributions, programme support cost (PSC), and the regular budget. This funding distribution highlights UNEP's ability to balance flexibility and targeted resource allocation to deliver on its mandate effectively.

The environment fund, UNEP's core flexible resource, supports 418 staff members (30%), ensuring critical operational capacity. Earmarked contributions, which account for 744 staff members (54%), provide targeted funding for specific projects and programs, demonstrating UNEP's success in mobilizing donor-restricted resources. The PSC mechanism funds 127 staff members (9%), while the regular budget supports 94 staff members (7%).

A closer look shows that the UNEP secretariat employs 1,087 staff (79% of UNEP's total workforce), while multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) account for 296 staff (21%). Within the secretariat, funding is distributed across earmarked contributions (483 staff), the environment fund (418 staff), and the regular budget (94 staff). MEAs rely heavily on voluntary funding, with nearly 90% of their workforce financed through trust funds.

Region	P5 and above - UNEP secretariat	P5 and above - MEAs
Africa group	28	10
Asia Pacific group	26	10
Eastern European group	9	2
Latin American & Caribbean group	16	6
Western European & others	66	13

Country of sponsorship	Female	Male	Grand total
Belgium		1	1
China	7		7
Finland	1		1
France	2		2
Germany	8	1	9
Italy	1	1	2
Japan	2	3	5
Korea	1	1	2
Netherlands	1		1
Norway	1		1
Sweden	1		1
Switzerland		1	1
United Kingdom	1		1
Total	**26**	**8**	**34**

Secretariat/ MEA & fund	USG	ASG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Total P+	Total NO	Total GS	Grand Total
Secretariat	1	2	8	43	107	227	197	81	666	12	409	**1087**
Environment fund	-	1	2	26	55	85	54	12	235	3	180	**418**
Earmarked contributions	-	-	2	7	26	95	118	68	316	8	159	**483**
Programme support costs	-	-	-	1	6	13	14	1	35	1	56	**92**
Regular budget	1	1	4	9	20	34	11		80	-	14	**94**
MEA	-	1	4	8	30	50	54	32	179	-	117	**296**
Trust funds	-	1	4	8	27	46	52	31	169	-	92	**261**
Programme support costs	-	-	-	-	3	4	2	1	10	-	25	**35**
Grand total	**1**	**3**	**12**	**51**	**137**	**277**	**251**	**113**	**845**	**12**	**526**	**1383**

vi. UNEP talent management strategy

To strengthen its strategic talent acquisition and retention strategy and reaffirm its commitment to recruiting high-performing candidates who reflect the values enshrined in Article 101 of the UN Charter, UNEP continued with the implementation of a results-driven approach to identifying and developing top talent globally. In 2024, UNEP implemented one of the most extensive talent outreach programs within the UN Secretariat, conducting 31 initiatives that engaged over 15,900 participants worldwide. In the fourth quarter alone, UNEP conducted nine talent outreach activities, engaging over 6,000 participants. These efforts are designed to position UNEP as an employer of choice for highly qualified and motivated professionals that reflect the United Nations, ensuring a workforce equipped to deliver on UNEP's mission with efficiency and effectiveness.

The outreach activities included a mix of in-person, hybrid, and online events that effectively showcased UNEP's work and career opportunities while engaging directly with potential candidates. By connecting with top-tier talent through these initiatives, UNEP not only strengthens its recruitment pipeline but also enhances organizational efficiency by ensuring that the right talent is in place to meet operational needs.

Additionally, UNEP emphasizes leadership development and staff capacity building as integral components of its strategy. In the last quarter of 2024, UNEP hosted six leadership sessions for over 192 senior and mid-level managers, focusing on actionable strategies for managing workplace dynamics and fostering constructive feedback. These sessions equip managers with essential tools to lead high-performing teams effectively, thereby directly contributing to organizational effectiveness.

Moreover, UNEP provided tailored career coaching sessions for personnel across various categories to support their professional growth and align their aspirations with organizational goals. By investing in workforce development, UNEP enhances employee engagement and satisfaction—key drivers of organizational performance. Engaged employees are more likely to perform at their best, resulting in reduced inefficiencies and optimal resource utilization.

Looking ahead to 2025, UNEP is committed to continue its outreach efforts and strengthening its workforce to address the global environmental agenda. By expanding engagement with a broader range of stakeholders and leveraging innovative partnerships, UNEP aims to ensure that its workforce reflects the highest levels of expertise and performance while reflecting the full membership of the United Nations. To support this vision, UNEP will continue to focus on staff development through targeted capacity-building sessions and career advancement opportunities, equipping staff with the skills needed to tackle complex environmental challenges. This strategic approach fosters a results-oriented culture that drives organizational effectiveness and reinforces UNEP's capacity to deliver impactful solutions in collaboration with Member States.

C. Audits

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

a Audits in progress and planned

OIOS is currently finalizing its audit of the climate action subprogramme at UNEP, which is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2025. 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.

b. Planned audits

The initial OIOS annual schedule indicates the following audits to be completed in 2025: Early Warning and Assessment Division and the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

c. Implemented audits

The audit of the Ecosystems Division is now considered closed-as-implemented.

ii. United Nations board of auditors (BoA)

a. Completed audits

The BoA carried 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.

b. Audits in progress and planned

The BoA will conclude the final YE2024 audit of UNEP in April and May 2025.

iii. Challenges

The official results of the interim YE2024 audit are yet to be issued, but no recommendations for the (regional) offices and convention are expected. Preliminary results include recommendations for UNEP headquarters to enhance various levels of project data in IPMR, complete closure procedures of grants, restore inactive websites, reinforce the management of property, strengthen coordination of environmental management system (EMS) within the UN-system, and prioritize the evaluation of phased projects and enhance oversight of terminal evaluations.

During the last interim audit, the BoA emphasized again the importance of complete project data in the integrated planning, management and reporting (IPRM) system. Although UNEP welcomes the application, and UNEP management has reiterated the importance of prioritizing the work, it must be noted that transition and enhancement activities require extensive resources and time, especially for larger portfolios.

iv. Opportunities

UNEP has accepted the recommendations and welcomes the findings from the auditors, especially in relation to the missing and incomplete data fields in IPMR and the closure of grants, which raises the opportunity to further enhance ongoing efforts. Implementation plans for all of the preliminary audit results have been drafted and implementation has been prioritized.

v. Lessons learned and actions taken

Some of the actions UNEP has taken to successfully close recommendations are: procurement training to requisitioners on preparing source selection plans was conducted, procurement guidance on reporting requirements for payments to vendors was enhanced, the UNEP secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions improved its public awareness and advocacy programme, UNEP strengthened its regular review of Umoja access roles to promptly identify and address segregation of duties/conflicts, and in collaboration with UNON long outstanding balances for various account categories were closed through intensified follow-up with relevant stakeholders.

D. Evaluations

i. UNEP evaluations

During the reporting period: four independent project evaluations were completed, one of which was a mid-term evaluation; four management-led project terminal reviews were independently validated by the evaluation office; one strategic evaluation of the chemicals & pollution action subprogramme was ongoing; and 25 project evaluations ongoing and a further 11 were in the consultant hiring stage.

a. Completed independent evaluations

Terminal evaluation of the UNEP project 'environmental education and youth' (PIMS ID: 2007)

Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Key findings: The burgeoning youth demographic, poised to hit 1.3 billion by 2030, underscores the critical nature of the youth education and advocacy

(YEA) initiative. The project targeted an ambitious reach of 1% of global youth, translating to over 1.3 million beneficiaries, a goal the evaluation suggests is within grasp given the projected enrolment of 262 million in higher education by 2025, predominantly in developing nations.

Despite UNEP's extensive engagement with youth through diverse global platforms, the absence of a dedicated strategy and sufficiently funded coordination undermines potential scalability. This is poignant under the secretary general's 2030 youth strategy which anticipates enhanced, systemic youth engagement. The YEA project itself has demonstrated robust management and team cohesion, successfully achieving its expected outcomes of significantly advancing partnerships, and embedding sustainable development within educational structures as well as exceeding its output targets.

However, YEA's potential is limited by its funding and resource mobilization capabilities. Recommendations for strategic investment in youth initiatives, through structured funding from entities like the environment fund or SIDA, are essential for sustaining momentum and expanding impact. The evaluation suggests that the upcoming UNEA-6 offers a pivotal juncture to refine youth engagement strategies, ensuring the YEA's role is both transformative and integrated within the broader UNEP mandate.

No. of recommendations issued: 9

Terminal evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project 'promoting sustainable cities in Brazil through integrated urban planning and innovative technologies investment' (GEF ID 9142)

Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Key findings: The project, known as the CITinova Project, was focused on addressing the problems faced by large and mid-sized Brazilian cities today. These problems include unsustainable patterns of urbanization that have produced social and economic disparities and environmental vulnerabilities that shape the spatial configuration of Brazilian cities. The project aimed to develop innovative technical solutions and offer methodologies and tools for integrated urban planning to support public managers, foster citizen participation and promote more just and sustainable cities. The project comprised three components: (i) integrated urban planning; (ii) investments in innovative technologies; and (iii) platform for sustainable cities.

The evaluation found that the project contributed to evidence-based, integrated, and sustainable planning in two Brazilian cities of Brasilia and Recife and enabled the mobilization of resources and expertise that usually are not available within local governments. On the other hand, project effectiveness was affected by





Figures 1 and 2 - Agroforestry Pilot investments in Brasilia
(Photo credit: UNEP)

a complex operating environment characterized by political transitions, institutional changes, COVID-19 impacts, high turnover among partners and "excessive" decentralization.

One of the key recommendations is that UNEP and its partners adopt a more focused approach in the design of future sustainable city projects, targeting specific territorial or sectoral levels rather than overly decentralized and sectoral dispersed interventions.

No. of recommendations issued: 8

Terminal evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project 'Demonstration of effectiveness of diversified, environmentally sound and sustainable interventions and strengthening national capacity for innovative implementation of integrated vector management (IVM) for disease prevention and control in the WHO AFRO region' (GEF ID 4668)

Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Key findings: The project was highly relevant in the context of reducing DDT reliance in vector control and promoting sustainable alternatives. The specific malaria control needs of participating countries were addressed by introducing evidence-based integrated vector management (IVM) strategies. The project, working in 15 African countries, achieved its objective of strengthening national capabilities for implementing evidence-based, innovative, diversified and environmentally sound disease vector control interventions alternative to DDT.

The three outcomes of the project were met in terms of countries implementing integrated policies and complying with the terms of the Stockholm convention; demonstrating effective alternative IVM approaches in six countries and using guidelines on IVM and social impact assessment to guide policies on any DDT use. In some areas the project exceeded expectations, contributing substantial immediate benefits and promising sustainable impacts, although levels of success varied across participating countries.

The sustainability of the project's outcomes is promising, particularly in terms of the institutional and technical capacity built throughout the project. The active involvement and positive feedback from all stakeholders, including local communities, governmental entities and project partners, were instrumental in the project's success. The project's innovative approaches and outcomes provided valuable lessons for future health and environmental initiatives. The evaluation found that UNEP and WHO demonstrated exemplary financial and operational management, utilized resources efficiently and strictly to established financial protocols.

No. of recommendations issued: 8

Mid-term evaluation of the UNEP/GEF global coordinating project 'sustainable cities impact programme – global platform' (GEF ID 10452)

Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Key findings: The global platform (GP) is one of the first GEF-funded 'global coordinating projects' to be evaluated by UNEP. Coordinating projects aim to support shared knowledge management, exchange and overall coordination of a GEF-funded programme. They also have results around advocacy, awareness raising and partnerships and intend, broadly, to enhance the effects of a programme.

The GP project unites a network of GEF child projects spread across three regions and nine countries, to address the pressing need for integrated urban planning and implementation. It aims to steer cities towards achieving sustainability goals that not only benefit the local communities but also the global environment.

The project has been successful in making a strong mark among the global urban community and is also promoting transit development, access to climate finance, use of nature-based solutions, zero emission, green recovery and energy saving, while guiding urban development processes in selected countries and cities.

The project has been well-executed so far. However, challenges include the time required to build relationships/trust with the national and local governments of countries and cities; confusion regarding the boundaries and roles of the GP project, national child projects and the programme and the misalignment of the timelines of the elements of the programme. There is a need to refine impact indicators to better reflect learning and outcomes.

No. of recommendations issued: 13

b. Completed management-led terminal reviews validated by the evaluation office

Validated terminal review of the UNEP/GEF project:

Zero carbon buildings for all: from energy efficiency to decarbonization (GEF ID 10321)
Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP/GEF project:

Building the foundation for forest landscape restoration at scale project (GEF ID 5775)
Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP/GEF project:

Developing capacities of Togolese stakeholders to set up and run a national information system for climate transparency (GEF ID 10026)
Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

Validated terminal review of the UNEP project:

UN peace operations rapid environment and climate technical assistance facility (PIMS ID 01954)
Overall project performance rating: Satisfactory

UN environment programme

QUARTERLY REPORT

to the 169th Meeting of the

COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

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

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