



**UNITED
NATIONS**

UNEP/CPR/ASC/12/5



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.: General

24 June 2025

English only

**Annual subcommittee meeting of
the Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme
Twelfth meeting**

Nairobi, 1 – 5 September 2025

10:00 – 13:00 and 15:00 – 18:00

Conference Room 2 (in person) and

Microsoft Teams (online)

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and
environment authorities to the UNEP Mid-term Strategy and Programme of Work**

This background document is prepared to support the presentation and discussions on the role and viability of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities as catalytic platforms for international cooperation in tackling prevalent environmental challenges, during the 12th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP to be held from 1-5 September 2025.

The Sixth Session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) adopted Resolution 6/3 entitled, enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of environment ministers and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges.

Paragraph 5 of the resolution requested the Executive Director of UNEP, subject to the availability of resources, to produce a report on the role and viability of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities as catalytic platforms for international cooperation in tackling prevalent environmental challenges; to consult key partners and stakeholders, where relevant, in the preparation of the report; and to prepare a summary of the findings for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its seventh session.

The Secretariat will present a summary of the above report that responds to this request. The presentation will be followed by an exchange of views with Member States and Stakeholders.

The Committee is invited to take note of the update from the Secretariat and provide guidance on further action needed by the Secretariat and Member States towards increased contribution of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities to UNEP Medium-term Strategy and Programme of Work.

1. Background

The background document is prepared to support the presentation and discussions on the role and viability of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities as catalytic platforms for international cooperation in tackling prevalent environmental challenges, during the 12th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP to be held from 1-5 September 2025.

2. About the Forums

Currently, UNEP convenes three regional forums as their Secretariat. These are the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (AP Forum), and the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Forum).

In addition to these three regional forums, UNEP also supports sessions of the Arab Forum for the Environment. A similar structure exists for Europe, known as Environment for Europe, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The regional forums consider environmental priorities and challenges and adopt decisions on environmental sustainability specific to their regions and/or contributing to the global environmental agenda, including the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). These forums also serve as platforms for Member States to engage partners, UN agencies, private sector representatives, scientists, academia, and major groups and stakeholders to share their perspectives on regional and global environmental interests. More specifically, regional forums play a crucial role in addressing environmental issues by facilitating collaboration among neighboring countries. They provide a platform for sharing information, coordinating policies, and jointly addressing challenges like pollution, nature and biodiversity loss, resource management, and climate change at regional levels. This collaboration enhances the effectiveness of environmental protection measures and promotes sustainable development within specific geographical contexts. The regional forums also serve as a regional preparatory process and provide regional inputs to UNEA and its intersessions.

3. Contents of the report

The report provides an overview of the mandates, history, governance structure, types of contributions, formal outcomes from sessions, existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms, modes of engagement of major groups and stakeholders, and current resource mobilization approaches for each of the three forums.

The report provides a comparative analysis of the three Forums based on information above and lists some key success stories illustrating how the Regional Forums have contributed to tackling environmental challenges, as well as contributing to UNEP's Medium Term Strategy and Program of Work. The report finally provides an account of the challenges and opportunities to enhance the role and viability of the regional forums.

4. Summary of the report

This report provides a concise overview of the role and viability of Regional Forums of Ministers of the Environment and Environment Authorities as pivotal platforms for advancing international environmental cooperation. As the world grapples with increasingly complex and interconnected environmental challenges, the regional forums have emerged as vital mechanisms for fostering dialogue, aligning national and regional priorities, sharing best practices, and driving collective action. The report explores how these platforms catalyze policy coherence, strengthen multilateralism, and enable more effective implementation of global environmental commitments at the regional level.

4.1 Success Stories

The following is a selection of concrete examples of contributions that the regional forums have made to enhance environmental management.

LAC Forum

- Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies for LAC
- Establishment of 13 working groups addressing concrete environmental issues
- Training of 5,000 participants in pollution and waste management
- 100 scholarships for chemical risk assessment training
- Supporting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) implementation in 11 countries
- Advancing climate transparency in line with the Paris Agreement
- Guidelines for gender integration
- Regional action plan for ecosystem restoration
- Support for the adoption and implementation of the Escazú Agreement.
- Regional Environmental Information System.
- Capacity building for carbon markets under the Paris Agreement.

AMCEN

- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Environment Action Plan
- Revitalization of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions
- African Green Stimulus Program (AGSP)
- Africa Environment Outlook
- Capacity-building initiatives and knowledge-sharing networks.

AP Forum

- The biennial regional ministerial forum has become a key regional platform to discuss current and emerging environmental challenges including transboundary issues, opportunities, partnerships and share success stories.
- The forum consistently reviewing progress on implementation of UNEA resolutions and aligns regional priorities with the UNEA themes.
- Countries across Asia-Pacific reaffirmed their commitment to multilateral environmental agreements, especially those related to biodiversity and climate change.
- The forum helped in strengthening environmental governance.
Facilitate dialogue and contribute to preparation of UNEP's next Medium-term Strategy 2026-2029 and Programme of Work 2026-2027.
- Provide regional inputs to the draft UNEA-7 outcome documents, including ministerial declaration and draft resolutions, and prepare regional stakeholders to engage at the UNEA-7 and its intersessions.

4.2 Contribution to UNEP's UNEP Programme of Work and Medium-Term Strategy

The report assesses how these forums contribute to strengthening multilateral environmental governance through contributions to the UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) and Medium-Term Strategy (MTS). The list below is not exhaustive and provides concrete examples of contributions that the regional forums have made to help implement UNEP's MTS and PoW. Some of the activities listed below contribute to several of the pillars, but they are listed where they have a stronger focus. To this end, the report underscores the Regional Forums' unique value in contextualizing global priorities within regional realities, aligning national actions with global commitments, as well as promoting coordinated responses to shared environmental threats.

LAC Forum

Climate Action: support for NDC implementation, participation in carbon markets, and alignment with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework.

Nature Action: Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Cities project, Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration in LAC.

Chemicals and Pollution Action: training in pollution and waste management, chemical risk assessment, and sustainable public procurement, Regional Programme for Methane Reduction and Closure of Dumpsites in LAC.

Science-Policy: Policy briefs on the role of biodiversity in ensuring sustainable development and bioeconomy, policy briefs on marine pollution, Regional Integrated Environmental Information System.

Environmental Governance: support for the adoption and implementation of the Escazú Agreement, guidelines for gender integration in environmental initiatives.

Finance and Economic Transformations: Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies, capacity-building activities on sustainable consumption and production.

Digital Transformations: Regional Integrated Environmental Information System.

AMCEN

- NEPAD environment action plan: aligns with addressing the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution). By focusing on desertification, climate change, and coastal ecosystem management, the plan supports the goal of promoting sustainable development and resilience in vulnerable regions. This aligns with the three main pillars of climate, nature, and pollution action.
- Revitalization of regional conventions (Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions): supports the thematic subprogram on Nature Action. The conventions focus on marine and coastal environments, which are critical for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.
- AEO reports: align with the Science-Policy subprogram, which emphasizes the importance of credible scientific data and assessments to inform policy decisions.
- Global advocacy for Africa's environmental priorities: align with UNEP's strategic objective of raising global ambition for environmental action, by advocating Africa's unique challenges in global forums.

AP Forum

- Enhancing regional cooperation: facilitation of regional cooperation on emerging and transboundary environmental issues, such as air pollution, chemical and plastic pollution, and biodiversity loss, aligns with UNEP's emphasis on inclusive multilateralism and strengthening environmental governance.
- Advancing the green economy: aligns with the Finance and Economic Transformations subprogram. The forum's initiatives to realign financial systems to support renewable energy and energy efficiency resonate with the goal of promoting inclusive green economies and sustainable finance.
- Promoting resilience and disaster preparedness: the focus on ecosystem-based adaptation and early warning systems aligns with the Climate Action subprogram.
- Addressing environment and health linkages: efforts to tackle air, water, and soil pollution, as well as harmful chemicals and e-waste management, align with the Chemicals and Pollution Action subprogram, for example through the promotion of the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) approach.
- Ocean Initiatives aligned to the Samoa Pathway and 2050 Blue Pacific Continent also resonates with the Nature Action subprogram.
- Strengthening environmental governance: advocacy for robust national legislative measures under the Montevideo Programme and promoting environmental rights alignment with the SDGs aligns with the Environmental Governance subprogram.
- Improving systems for monitoring, data generation, and analysis and UNINFO aligns with the Science-Policy subprogram.

4.3 Contribution to global environmental agendas

The report provides some explicit examples for the contribution of the LAC Forum to some global and one regional environmental processes:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement: support for NDC implementation, participation in carbon markets, and the Enhanced Transparency Framework.
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration seeks to align with the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Escazú Agreement: advancing environmental democracy and governance, contributing to global efforts to protect environmental defenders and promote public participation in environmental decision-making.

In addition, the three forums have organized multiple interactions with high-level representatives of many MEAs to help ensure that their regions are prepared for the corresponding negotiations and make a valuable contribution to global decision-making.

4.4 Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- Funding constraints for implementation of decisions and support for working groups.
- Implementation gaps, disconnect often existing between ministerial decisions and their execution on the ground.
- Limited capacity of Secretariats, as small teams, often without dedicated staff, struggle to discharge Secretariat functions and coordinate activities.
- Weak linkages with the UNEA planning process, especially resource mobilization for the Regional Forums.
- Need for stronger stakeholders engagement.
- Alignment of timing of MTS preparation, UNEA and its associated process with the AP Ministerial Forum remains a key challenge. This makes the development of background materials for the AP Ministerial Forum difficult and limit to ensure stronger linkages with UNEA.

Opportunities:

- Strengthen links and synergies between regional forums and UNEAs.
- Strengthen regional preparations and voices at UNEA such as the synergies resolution proposed by Japan and supported by Fiji at UNEA-6.
- Strengthen translation of political decisions into concrete actions and impactful projects.
- Enhance resource mobilization through strategic partnerships.
- Strengthen dedicated secretariats.
- Increased engagement of major groups and other stakeholders including youths at regional forums and UNEAs.
- Strengthen cross-regional collaboration including experience sharing.
- Hold more regular focal points meetings.
- The Forum plays an important role in political advocacy, helping raise visibility on key and emerging policy issues (e.g. the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the One Health approach, etc.)

4.5 Overall assessment

- Vital platforms for regional environmental governance, each contributing uniquely to environmental dimensions of the sustainable development goals and global environmental agendas, including UNEP's MTS and PoW, as well as UNEA.
- They face common challenges but there are opportunities to enhance their role and viability.
- Implementing the recommendations will require political will, sustained funding, and inclusive engagement with all stakeholders.

5. Discussions

The Secretariat invites the CPR to discuss modalities of enhancing the substantive contribution of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to UNEP's Medium-term Strategy and Programme of Work.

The Secretariat welcomes further guidance from the Committee on the proposals contained in this report, including any other recommendations the Committee may have for further action on financial resource mobilization to strengthen UNEP's support to the regional forums.