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International environmental policy and governance issues

Information on the implementation of resolution 6/3 Enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of environment ministers and United Nations Environment Programme regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges

Note by the secretariat

In paragraph 5 of resolution 6/3, the Environment Assembly 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.

* UNEP/EA.7/1.

Annex I:

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

A. Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the invaluable support and contributions of numerous individuals and organizations. We extend our deepest gratitude to the **United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)**, particularly the **Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)**, the **Regional Office for Africa (ROA)**, and the **Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)**, for their guidance, expertise, and collaboration throughout this process.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who generously shared their insights and expertise, including the **current and former chairs of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities, their dedicated staff, country focal points, representatives of major groups and stakeholders**, and **UNEP staff members** who provided critical input and support.

This report stands as a testament to the collaborative spirit and unwavering dedication of all those involved in advancing regional and global environmental cooperation. We are truly grateful for their commitment, contributions, and shared vision for a sustainable future.

B. Abbreviations and acronyms

AEO: Africa Environment Outlook

AEIN: Africa Environmental Information Network

AfDB: The African Development Bank

AGNs: African Group of Negotiators

AGSP: African Green Stimulus Program

Algiers Convention: 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

AMCEN: African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

AOGS: Africa Ocean Governance Strategy

APAN: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network

APCAP: The Asia-Pacific Clean Air Partnership

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU: African Union

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

CC: Climate Change

CCD: Convention to Combat Desertification

CLEAA: Capacity Development and Linkages for Environmental Assessment in Africa

CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

COBSEA: The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia

COP: Conference of the Parties

CPR: Committee of Permanent Representatives

CTCN: Climate Technology Centre and Network

EANET: Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia

EbA: Ecosystem-based adaptation

ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

EEA: European Environment Agency

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment

ESCAP: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GGGI: Global Green Growth Institute

GPA: Global Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities

HLPF: High-Level Political Forum

IDB: Inter-American Development Bank

INC: Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

ITC: Interagency Technical Committee

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

LAC Forum: Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

MEA: Multilateral Environmental Agreements

MGS: Major Groups and Stakeholders

MRV: Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification

MTS: Medium-Term Strategy (UNEP)

NCS: National Capacity Self-Assessment

NDCs: Nationally Determined Contributions

NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

NOWPAP: Northwest Pacific Action Plan

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAHO: Pan American Health Organization

PIF: Pacific Islands Forum

PoW: Program of Work (UNEP)

PPD: Policy and Programme Division

RAMSAR: Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (plus conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)

REIN: Regional Environmental Information Network

RIO+20: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012)

ROAf: Regional Office for Africa

ROAP: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP)

ROLAC: Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

SACEP: South Asia Cooperative Environment Program

SCP: Sustainable Consumption and Production

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

STC: Specialized Technical Committee

TWGs: Thematic Working Groups

UNCCD: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNEA: United Nations Environment Assembly

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNEP: United Nations Environment Program

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNSDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

WSSD: World Summit on Sustainable Development

C. Executive summary

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities (Regional Forums) — specifically the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Forum), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), and the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (AP Forum), in addressing environmental challenges and fostering international cooperation. The report evaluates the contributions of these forums to global environmental processes — while acknowledging the United Nations Environment Program's (UNEP) broader engagement with ministerial forums in other regions, which are not analyzed here — identifies commonalities and differences, and assesses their contributions to UNEP´s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Program of Work (PoW). Additionally, the report highlights success stories, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing the regional forums' role and viability in global environmental governance.

Background

The LAC Forum, established in 1982, is the longest-standing regional environmental cooperation platform of its kind, serving 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It facilitates political dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint activities through 13 working groups. It has held 23 ordinary sessions to date.

The AMCEN, founded in 1985, had at its inception a mandate to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa; to ensure that basic human needs were met adequately and in a sustainable manner; to ensure that social and economic development was realized at all levels; and to ensure that agricultural activities and practices met the food security needs of the region. However, at the 5th Ordinary AMCEN Session, the policy orientation of the conference was revisited. Consequently, AMCEN decided that its primary objective was to contribute positively to Africa's transition to sustainable development. As a result, its mandate was re-focused to providing continent-wide political and technical leadership on sustainable development and agreed African positions on environment and development; and actively supporting the efforts of African States' issues pertaining to environment and sustainable development.[1]

[1] Refer to operative paragraph 1(a) and (b) of AMCEN decision 5/3.

The AP Forum, launched in 2015, is a multistakeholder platform to foster dialogue and strengthen environmental cooperation in Asia and the Pacific region, aligning national efforts with global commitments. The forum reviews implementation of UNEA resolutions in the region, including challenges, opportunities and solutions, as well as functioning of thematic platforms and networks to address environmental challenges, thus contributing to delivery of UNEP's MTS and POW.

Success stories

Notable successes of the LAC Forum include the development of the Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies for LAC, which harmonizes environmental and economic objectives and drives sustainable finance across the region and beyond. The LAC Forum has established 13 working groups addressing critical environmental issues like pollution, biodiversity, and gender equality, fostering regional collaboration. It has trained 5,000 participants in pollution and waste management and awarded 100 scholarships for chemical risk assessment, strengthening regional capacity. Additionally, the Forum supported NDC implementation in 11 countries and advanced climate transparency under the Paris Agreement. Gender integration, a regional action plan for ecosystem restoration, and support for the adoption of the Escazú Agreement further highlight its contributions to environmental governance and sustainability.

The AMCEN has played a pivotal role in advancing Africa's environmental agenda, serving as a catalytic platform for international cooperation. Key successes include the development of the NEPAD Environment Action Plan, which has guided African nations on climate change and biodiversity, and the revitalization of regional conventions like the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions. The African Green Stimulus Program (AGSP), adopted in 2020 and endorsed by African Heads of State in 2022, exemplifies AMCEN's leadership in promoting green recovery and sustainable growth. Its Africa Environment Outlook (AEO) reports offer vital policy insights, while capacity-building initiatives and knowledge-sharing networks strengthen regional cooperation and technical expertise. Through global advocacy, AMCEN ensures Africa's environmental priorities are embedded in international agreements, showcasing its effectiveness as a platform for collaborative environmental action.

The AP Forum has advanced the green economy by promoting renewable energy and sustainable finance. It has helped to bolster resilience and disaster preparedness through ecosystem-based adaptation initiatives and early warning systems. Cross-sectoral efforts tackled pollution and health linkages, while regional cooperation improved transboundary e-waste and ocean governance. The

Forum also strengthened environmental governance by aligning policies with SDGs and enhanced knowledge-sharing through data-driven decision-making. These efforts align with UNEP's goals on climate action, pollution reduction, and inclusive multilateralism.

Common challenges

Funding constraints are a major issue for the three regional forums, with limited financial resources restricting the implementation of decisions and support for working groups. For example, the LAC Forum discontinued initiatives like the network for environmental emergencies due to lack of funds, while AMCEN relies on contributions that are often unpaid. Implementation gaps are another challenge, with a disconnect often existing between ministerial decisions and their execution on the ground. Limited capacity of Secretariats further limits efforts, as small teams, often without dedicated staff, struggle to discharge Secretariat functions and coordinate activities. Additionally, weak linkages with the UNEA planning process, especially regarding resource mobilization for the Regional Forums, hinder effective alignment and progress.

Though the regional forums contribute to defining and implementing UNEA outcomes and its intersessional meetings, it is important to reinforce the linkages between the regional forums and the UNEA planning process, as well as regional political groups of UNEP. Closer preparation of the regional forums' agendas, engagement of the regional groups, and alignment of timing of the regional forums with the UNEA process would increase impact. A particular challenge remains the alignment of timing of the Ministerial Technical Support (MTS) preparation, UNEA, and its associated processes with the Asia-Pacific (AP) Ministerial Forum. This misalignment complicates the development of background materials for the AP Ministerial Forum and limits opportunities to ensure stronger linkages with UNEA. Improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms would enhance accountability and progress tracking, as the current mechanisms for reporting are not systematized. While the regional forums actively engage major groups and stakeholders through dedicated events prior to their ordinary sessions, broader stakeholder engagement — particularly with indigenous peoples and the private sector — remains limited and needs strengthening.

Opportunities for improvement and recommendations

Strengthening implementation and achieving tangible outcomes remain essential priorities for regional forums, which play a critical role in translating high-level political decisions into concrete actions and impactful projects. Enhancing political support and ownership will further increase their

effectiveness, enabling meaningful contributions to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Program of Work (POW). Strengthening links and synergies between regional forums and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), as well as amplifying regional preparations and voices at UNEA—illustrated by initiatives like the synergies resolution proposed by Japan and supported by Fiji at UNEA 6—are key to aligning regional priorities with global environmental agendas and elevating regional influence in international processes.

There are important opportunities to enhance resource mobilization through innovative financing models and strategic partnerships with international donors, multilateral development banks, and the private sector. Dedicated secretariats require strengthening with sufficient capacity and resources to coordinate activities effectively and ensure consistent follow-through. Inclusivity must be further promoted through greater engagement of major groups and other stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, youth, and the private sector, at both regional forums and UNEAs. Cross-regional collaboration should be expanded to facilitate the exchange of best practices and joint responses to common challenges, while regular focal point meetings are necessary to maintain institutional continuity and ensure ongoing implementation of agreed actions.

Additionally, engaging finance ministries to integrate environmental objectives into national budgets and policies will mainstream sustainability into broader economic frameworks. Reinforcing the science-policy interface by involving scientific institutions and experts in decision-making is crucial to grounding policies in robust evidence. Beyond these technical improvements, regional forums play an indispensable role in political advocacy, raising the visibility of emerging policy issues such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the One Health approach. This advocacy strengthens the forums' position as vital platforms for advancing global environmental agendas and achieving impactful, lasting outcomes.

Conclusion

In summary, the Regional Forums—the LAC Forum, AMCEN, and the AP Forum—serve as vital platforms for fostering regional cooperation and aligning environmental priorities with global agendas. Each forum has made significant contributions to advancing sustainable development, from shaping regional policies and frameworks to building technical capacities and promoting inclusive dialogue. Their successes underscore their critical role in driving environmental governance and supporting UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and Program of Work.

However, these forums face common challenges that hinder their full potential, including persistent funding shortages, limited Secretariat capacities, implementation gaps between political decisions and on-the-ground actions, and suboptimal integration with UNEA planning processes. Enhancing coordination, improving monitoring and reporting systems, and broadening stakeholder engagement—especially with indigenous peoples, youth, and the private sector—are essential steps to address these limitations.

Looking ahead, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen the political support and operational capacity of these forums through innovative financing, stronger synergies with UNEA, and deeper cross-regional collaboration. Engaging finance ministries and reinforcing the science-policy interface will further mainstream environmental objectives into national development agendas. Ultimately, by amplifying their advocacy role and fostering inclusive, evidence-based policymaking, the Regional Forums can enhance their influence in international environmental governance and ensure the translation of high-level commitments into concrete, impactful outcomes worldwide.

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E. Background of the Regional Forums

1. Mandates

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has consistently acknowledged the critical role of regional forums of environment ministers and environment authorities in fostering country engagement in global environmental governance. The regional forums operate under a series of foundational mandates that guide their activities and priorities:

Governing Council Resolution V (1982): This resolution recommended that governments in the region periodically convene intergovernmental meetings to establish regional environmental policies and strategies. It also requested the Executive Director of UNEP to provide support through the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, acting as the permanent secretariat for these meetings.[2]

Governing Council Decision 11/7 (1983): This decision invited Governments of the Africa region to convene, in co-operation with regional organizations and institutions, an African environmental conference to discuss national environmental priorities and identify common problems worthy of a regional program of action to deal with serious environmental problems in Africa. The decision also requested the Executive Director of UNEP to instruct the Regional Office for Africa to provide secretariat services for the conference.[3]

UNEA Resolution 2/2 (2016): This resolution formally recognized the importance of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities in strengthening country engagement in UNEA processes. It specifically requested the UNEP Executive Director, within the mandate of the program and in accordance with the program of work and budget, to support and facilitate the convening and strengthening of existing regional forums.[4]

UNEA Resolution 6/3 (2024): Building on previous mandates, this resolution calls for enhanced collaboration between regional forums and UNEP regional offices to address environmental

[2] Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean | UNEP - UN Environment Programme

[3] UN General Assembly 1983 A_38_702_Add.7-EN.pdf P18/19

[4] The UNEA resolution 6/3 reference

challenges through multilateral cooperation. It requests the UNEP Executive Director to enhance the role and viability of regional forums by providing technical support, promoting their contributions to UNEP's medium-term strategy, and fostering collaboration with regional organizations and institutions.[4]

These mandates collectively underscore the importance of regional forums in promoting dialogue, cooperation, and multilateral action to tackle environmental challenges at both regional and global levels.

2. History of the Regional Forums

2.1. History of the LAC Forum

The LAC Forum has been a pivotal platform for regional environmental cooperation since its establishment in 1982. As the longest-standing and most important cooperation space for environmental authorities in the region, the Forum has supported the shaping of environmental policies and strategies across 33 countries (16 Caribbean and 17 Latin American nations). Over the years, it has convened 23 ordinary meetings, and a number of special sessions.[2]

The Forum was established following the Governing Council resolution 10/V in 1982, which recommended the periodic convocation of intergovernmental regional meetings to set environmental policies and strategies for LAC. UNEP serves as the Secretariat, providing support through its Latin America and the Caribbean Office (LACO).[2]

The Forum's work is implemented by the 13 working groups, networks, and coalitions it has established, which address a wide range of environmental issues, including environmental training, biodiversity, climate change, oceans, and pollution, to mention a few.[2] This structure, based on the work with multiple experts in the countries, ensures that the work being implemented is consistent with national and regional priorities and adapts to the changes in processes and goals as time advances.

In addition to its regional focus, the Forum contributes to global environmental agendas by preparing consolidated views and inputs for the UNEA, and providing a space for discussions and collaborations that support implementation of multiple multilateral environmental agreements

(MEAs). It also facilitates the mobilization of international cooperation and financing for environmental initiatives in the region, through collaboration with other international and donor organizations.[2]

The Forum has achieved significant milestones, including the design and implementation of the Regional Integrated Environmental Information System, the development of the Common Framework for Sustainable Finance Taxonomies of LAC, support for the development and adoption of the Escazú Agreement (the first regional environmental agreement of its kind), and the development of the Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean, to mention a few. (UNEP. (n.d.). *Success Stories of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean*).[2]

In summary, the LAC Forum has been a cornerstone of regional environmental governance for over four decades, fostering collaboration, policy development, and the integration of inclusive practices to address the region's environmental challenges.

2.2. History of the AMCEN

The AMCEN was established in December 1985 during a conference of African environment ministers held in Cairo, Egypt. Its primary mandate was to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa, ensure that basic human needs were met sustainably, and promote social and economic development at all levels. AMCEN was created to address the severe environmental degradation facing the continent and to foster regional cooperation in tackling these challenges.[5]

Historical overview of the AMCEN

2.2.1. Establishment and early years (1985–1993)

AMCEN was established following a request by a decision of the UNEP´s Governing Council in 1983. The first session of AMCEN, held in Cairo in December 1985, adopted the Cairo Program for African Cooperation, which aimed to halt environmental degradation, enhance food production,

[5] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). Retrieved from https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/african-ministerial-conference-environment

achieve energy self-sufficiency, and address population-resource imbalances. The Program emphasized African-led solutions and the need for regional cooperation through pilot projects and subregional activities (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 1-5).[6]

During this period, AMCEN focused on grassroots development, with local communities playing a key role in eco-development projects. However, the ambitious scope of the Cairo Program, coupled with complex organizational structures and limited funding, led to slow progress. Despite these challenges, AMCEN succeeded in raising awareness about environmental issues and fostering technical cooperation among African countries (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 12-21).[6]

2.2.2. New policy orientation (1993–2000)

In response to the outcomes of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, AMCEN adopted a new policy orientation and shifted its focus to providing continentwide political and technical leadership on sustainable development and agreed African positions on environment and development; and, actively supporting the efforts of African States' issues pertaining to environment and sustainable development.

During this period, AMCEN facilitated the ratification and implementation of key environmental conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention to Combat Desertification. It also played a crucial role in harmonizing Africa's positions in international environmental negotiations. However, financial constraints and structural challenges continued to hinder AMCEN's effectiveness (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 38-42).[6]

2.2.3. Revitalization and modern era (2000–2005)

The early 2000s marked a period of revitalization for AMCEN. At its eighth session in 2000, AMCEN adopted the Abuja Declaration, which outlined a new strategic direction for the Conference. This period coincided with the launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which included an environmental initiative developed under AMCEN's leadership (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 43-50).[6]

[6] AMCEN Secretariat. (2005). History of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1985-2005)

AMCEN played a pivotal role in preparing Africa for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and in developing the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD. The Conference also facilitated the revision of the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention check abbreviation) and supported the revitalization of regional marine conventions, such as the Nairobi Convention and the Abidjan Convention (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 50-60).[6]

During this period, AMCEN streamlined its institutional structures, established the Africa Environment Outlook (AEO) as a monitoring and reporting mechanism, and strengthened its role as the primary forum for African environmental ministers. Despite these achievements, financial constraints remained a significant challenge (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 60-62).[6]

In conclusion, over its four-decade history, the AMCEN has become a cornerstone of environmental governance on the continent. From its initial focus on grassroots development and regional cooperation in the mid-1980s to its current role in shaping both continental and global environmental policy, AMCEN has consistently championed sustainable development and environmental protection across Africa. It has facilitated the implementation of major multilateral environmental agreements, driven the development of regional environmental frameworks, and served as a unified platform for articulating Africa's position in global negotiations.

Importantly, AMCEN operates within the broader institutional framework of the African Union (AU), aligning its priorities with AU objectives on sustainable development. Decisions of the AU Summit have repeatedly reinforced AMCEN's role as the lead policy body on environmental matters. Notably, the AU Assembly has endorsed AMCEN's initiatives, such as the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD and the Africa Environment Outlook (AEO), underscoring AMCEN's strategic importance in achieving the AU's Agenda 2063 goals. This integration ensures that AMCEN's efforts complement broader continental development agendas, promoting coherence between environmental governance and socio-economic transformation.

Despite these accomplishments, AMCEN continues to face challenges, particularly regarding sustained political commitment and financial resources from Member States. Strengthening its institutional capacity and securing predictable funding remain critical for the Conference to fully realize its mandate. Nevertheless, AMCEN's contributions to regional collaboration, environmental advocacy, and policy harmonization position it as an indispensable vehicle for advancing Africa's environmental sustainability and resilience in the years ahead.

2.3. History of the AP Forum

The AP Forum is a regional platform established to address environmental challenges and promote environmental dimensions of sustainable development goals in the AP region. The Forum brings together environment ministers and high-level government representatives, intergovernmental organizations, UN, donors and major groups and stakeholders from countries served by the UNEP ROAP.

2.3.1. First AP Forum (2015)

The inaugural AP Forum was held on 19-20 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, co-organized by the Royal Thai Government and UNEP. The Forum was attended by 33 out of 41 countries in the region, including high-level representatives such as ministers, vice-ministers, parliamentarians, intergovernmental organizations, UN, and major groups and stakeholders. The primary objectives were to discuss the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, pressing environmental challenges like air pollution and waste management, and regional priorities for the UNEA. The Forum emphasized the need for a green economy, resilience-building, and regional cooperation to address environmental issues. It also highlighted the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into national development strategies and aligning financial systems with sustainable development goals (SDGs).[7]

2.3.2. Second AP Forum (2017)

The second AP Forum took place from 5-8 September 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand, co-organized by UNEP and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The theme was "Towards a Resource-Efficient and Pollution-Free Asia-Pacific." The Forum focused on resource efficiency, pollution reduction, and sustainable consumption and production (SCP). Key outcomes included the identification of regional priorities for UNEA-3, such as marine litter, chemicals and waste management, and transboundary pollution. The Forum also discussed institutional arrangements for future meetings and emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships and citizen engagement in addressing environmental challenges.7

2.3.3. Third AP Forum (2019)

The third AP Forum was held from 23-25 January 2019 in Singapore, hosted by Singapore's Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and UNEP. The theme was "Innovative Solutions

[7] Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production." The Forum focused on circular economy models, waste management, and financing for sustainable development. Key outcomes included the adoption of innovative policies and technologies to promote SCP, the importance of green finance, and the need for regional cooperation to address issues like marine plastic litter and air pollution. The Forum also reviewed progress on UNEA resolutions and identified regional priorities for UNEA-4.[7]

2.3.4. Fourth AP Forum (2021)

The fourth AP Forum was held from 5-7 October 2021 in Suwon City, Republic of Korea, in a hybrid format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme was "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." The Forum focused on nature-based solutions, green recovery, and carbon neutrality. Key outcomes included discussions on marine litter, plastic pollution, and sustainable infrastructure. The Forum also emphasized the need for regional cooperation to address transboundary environmental issues and highlighted the importance of youth engagement and science-policy linkages. The Forum reviewed progress on UNEA resolutions and identified regional priorities for UNEA-5.[7]

2.3.5. Fifth AP Forum (2023)

The fifth AP Forum took place from October 3 to 6, 2023, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, continuing the tradition of bringing together environment ministers and high-level representatives, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups and stakeholders to discuss pressing environmental issues and regional priorities. The Forum focused on UNEA-6 themes on sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in the region, aligning to national commitments with the global environmental agenda and the 2030 SDGs.7

2.3.6. Key themes and outcomes across the AF Forums [7]

- Regional cooperation: Thematic forums and networks have emphasized the importance of regional collaboration to address transboundary environmental issues such as marine litter, air pollution, and chemicals and waste management, and environmental rights.
- SDGs: The Forums have consistently aligned their discussions with environmental dimensions of the SDGs, particularly focusing on SCP, climate action, and life below water, capacity building and partnership.
- UNEA Resolutions: AP Forums contribute to reviewing implementation of UNEA resolutions in the region and discuss challenges, opportunities and success stories for the implementation.

- Innovation and green economy: The Forums have promoted innovative solutions, including circular economy models, green finance, and nature-based solutions, to drive sustainable development in the region.
- Youth and major groups and stakeholders engagement: AP Forums have increasingly highlighted the role of youth, civil society, and other stakeholders in driving environmental action and achieving the SDGs and contributing Major Groups and stakeholders inputs on regional priorities to the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and UNEA outcome
- Science, policy, business engagement: The Asia Pacific science, policy and business Forums held during the AP Forums to discuss innovative solutions and partnership in the region and provides regional inputs to global science, policy, business forum and UNEA outcome.

In brief, the AP Forum has evolved into a critical platform for addressing environmental challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. By fostering regional cooperation, promoting innovative solutions, and aligning with global environmental agendas, the Forum has contributed to advancing sustainable development and environmental governance in the region.

3. Types of contributions

3.1. The contributions of the LAC Forum

3.1.1. Global environmental governance and advocacy

The Forum helps to prepare consolidated views and inputs from the LAC region for UNEA sessions, including promoting the provision of contributions to the Ministerial Declaration and support for preparation of draft resolutions. This helps align regional environmental strategies with global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, the LAC Forum supports countries in preparing for the sessions of diverse MEAs, such as the UNFCCC, CBD, BRS, and UNCCD, facilitating the exchange of views and the identification of areas of common interest and convergence at regional level, which can be brought to the global processes.

3.1.2. Regional cooperation and financing

The Forum provides a space for ministers to set regional environmental priorities and to define avenues for their countries to collaborate on their implementation. The Forum and its working groups provide a space for the countries of the LAC region to exchange knowledge and experience,

to share good practices, and to implement joint collaborations. It also facilitates, in some instances, the mobilization of resources for implementing regional environmental agendas, including projects related to climate change, biodiversity, and pollution.

3.1.3. Capacity building and training

The Forum has supported capacity-building initiatives, including training over 5,000 participants in regional cooperation and information exchange on pollution and waste. It has also provided scholarships for officials to receive training in chemical risk assessment and classification. Other examples include support for the development of NAPs and NBSAPs, the management of chemicals and waste, circular economy and sustainable production and consumption approaches, integration of gender and environmental education considerations in environmental projects, or existing sustainable mobility technologies.

3.1.4. Technical support for the implementation of agreements

The Forum offers technical support for the implementation of international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the Escazú Agreement, to mention only two of them. For the Paris Agreement, for example, it has assisted countries in developing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and enhancing transparency frameworks under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

3.1.5. Regional projects and initiatives

The Forum has facilitated several successful regional projects, including and to name a few:

- The Integrated Environmental Information System (in progress).
- The development of the Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies for LAC, a collaboration that has become a best practice with global recognition.
- A project in five countries focused on planting and harvesting water with women's organizations.
- The development of checklists for gender and environmental education integration in environmental initiatives, and a list of 48 indicators to measure the situation of women in relation to natural resources and pollution.
- The design of the Regional Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is being aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- The Regional Program for Methane Emissions Reduction and Dumpsite Closure in LAC.

3.1.6. Networks and working groups

The Forum has established 13 working groups, networks, and coalitions that provide unique spaces for collaboration and exchange among countries in the region in concrete areas of the environmental agenda, involving the technical experts in the Ministries of Environment, and, in some cases, experts from other organizations.

3.1.7. Guidance for policy development

Through its working groups and networks, as well as through different projects and initiatives, the LAC Forum supports the countries of the region to develop or update a wide range of environmental policies, in line with their commitments under the MEAs.

3.1.8. Engagement of major groups and stakeholders

To support an inclusive decision-making process, and to take advantage of the views, knowledge, and experience of a wide range of stakeholders, the LAC Forum engages major groups and stakeholders through regular interactions that include capacity building sessions and a Regional Consultative Meeting prior to the ordinary meetings of the Forum.

These contributions highlight the Forum's role as a vital platform for regional environmental governance, capacity building, and the implementation of global environmental agreements in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.2. The contributions of the AMCEN

The outcomes of AMCEN forums typically include policy decisions, ministerial declarations, action plans, and initiatives that guide environmental management and sustainable development across the continent:

3.2.1. Policy guidance and advocacy

AMCEN provides a platform for African ministers to develop and harmonize policies on environmental issues. The forum has been instrumental in shaping Africa's position on global environmental negotiations, such as climate change, biodiversity, and desertification. For example, AMCEN has played a key role in advocating for the implementation of MEAs like the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).5

3.2.2. Action plans and programs

AMCEN has developed several action plans and programs to address specific environmental challenges. One of the most significant outcomes is the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the NEPAD, which focuses on areas such as combating desertification, managing coastal and marine environments, and addressing climate change.[8] This action plan was endorsed by AMCEN and later adopted by the African Union(AU), highlighting its importance in guiding regional environmental efforts.

3.2.3. Regional environmental assessments

AMCEN has facilitated the production of the AEO, a comprehensive report that assesses the state of the environment in Africa. The AEO process involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including governments, experts, and international organizations, to provide data-driven insights and recommendations for sustainable environmental management.[9] The AEO serves as a monitoring and reporting mechanism for environmental trends and challenges in Africa.

3.2.4. Strengthening regional conventions

AMCEN has supported the revitalization of regional environmental conventions, such as the Nairobi Convention for the protection of the marine and coastal environment in Eastern Africa and the Abidjan Convention for the West and Central African region. These conventions aim to enhance regional cooperation in managing shared marine and coastal resources.5

3.2.5. Capacity building and technical cooperation

AMCEN promotes technical cooperation among African countries through networks and committees focused on various environmental themes. The forum has also emphasized capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the ability of African nations to implement environmental policies and programs effectively. For instance, AMCEN has organized workshops and training sessions on environmental impact assessments, sustainable forest management, and integrated water resources management.5

3.2.6. Partnerships and resource mobilization

AMCEN has consistently worked to strengthen partnerships with international organizations, donor

[8] NEP, Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD, 2003. NEPAD Action Plan for Environment Initiative | AUDA-NEPAD

[9] UNEP (2002), Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-1)

countries, and the private sector to mobilize financial and technical resources for environmental initiatives in Africa. These efforts support the implementation of regional and national environmental priorities, and contribute to enhancing Africa's capacity to respond to environmental challenges.5

3.2.7. Common African positions

AMCEN has been pivotal in developing common African positions on global environmental issues. For example, the forum has coordinated Africa's participation in international negotiations, such as the WSSD and the Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings under various environmental conventions. These common positions ensure that Africa's interests are represented and prioritized in global environmental governance.5

3.3. The contributions of the AP forum

3.3.1. Policy recommendations and regional priorities

The Forum identifies pressing environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region and provides policy recommendations to address them. These recommendations often feed into the discussions and resolutions of the UNEA. For example, the Fourth Forum in 2021 focused on strengthening actions for nature to achieve the SDGs and highlighted regional priorities such as marine litter, air pollution, and sustainable consumption and production.[10]

3.3.2. UNEA Resolutions

The Forum provides a platform to discuss draft resolutions from the region to be submitted at CPR and UNEA process.[11]

3.3.3. Review of UNEA resolutions

The Forum also reviews the implementation of resolutions adopted by the UNEA and assesses progress in the region. This includes identifying gaps and challenges in implementation, sharing success stories, and proposing ways to enhance regional cooperation and capacity building. The Fifth Forum reviewed the implementation of UNEA resolutions related to climate change, nature

[10] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (2021). *Chair's Summary of the Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. UNEP/APEnvForum(4)/7. Retrieved from UNEP Website.

[11] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (2019). *Chair's Summary of the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. UNEP/APEnvForum(3)/7. Retrieved from UNEP Website.

actions and pollution as well as science-policy and sustainable financing, among others.10

3.3.4. Regional input to UNEA

The Forum provides regional input to the UNEA, ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of the Asia-Pacific region are reflected in global environmental governance. This includes submitting draft resolutions and inputs to draft UNEA ministerial declarations for consideration at the UNEA. For example, the Fourth Forum provided input on the draft ministerial declaration for UNEA-5.2, focusing on strengthening actions for nature and achieving the SDGs.10

3.3.5. Strengthening regional cooperation

The Forum emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation in addressing transboundary environmental cooperation such as air pollution, marine litter, and climate change. It calls for enhanced collaboration among Member States, intergovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders. The Second Forum in 2017 highlighted the need for stronger regional cooperation to combat pollution and promote resource efficiency.[12]

3.3.6. Capacity building and knowledge sharing

The Forum promotes capacity building and knowledge sharing among Member States to enhance their ability to implement environmental policies and programs. This includes sharing best practices, technical expertise, and innovative solutions. The Third Forum emphasized the importance of capacity building for sustainable consumption and production and the need for technology transfer.11

3.3.7. Engagement of major groups and stakeholders

The Forum engages a wide range of major groups and stakeholders, including civil society, youth, and the private sector, in the discussions and decision-making processes. This ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and that there is broad support for the outcomes. The Fourth Forum included a multi-stakeholders' dialogue on the 50th anniversary of the UNEP@50, highlighting the role of youth and civil society in environmental governance.10

3.3.8. Strengthening regional collaboration through platforms and stakeholder engagement

The UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) covers 41 Member States across four

[12] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (2017). *Chair's Summary of the Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. UNEP/APEnvForum(2)/7. Retrieved from UNEP Website

subregional political groups: South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and the Pacific. ROAP works closely with subregional organizations and bodies including ASEAN, GMS, SAARC, SACEP, ICIMOD, SPREP, and SPC to support UNEP's mandate and delivery in the region.

ROAP has also served as the secretariat to multiple thematic platforms, such as APAN (Asia Pacific Adaptation Network), EANET (Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia), APCAP (Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership), COBSEA (Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia), and NOWPAP (Northwest Pacific Action Plan), as well as the Health and Environment initiative. The outcomes and progress of these platforms are regularly reported to the AP Forum and reflected in Chair's Summaries of the Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Segment. [13]

The Asia Pacific Forum also promotes stakeholder engagement through the AP Youth Environment Forum, the AP Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) Forum, and the Asia Pacific Science-Policy-Business Forum. These platforms connect to global processes such as the Global Youth Forum, Global MGS Forum, Global SPB Forum, and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), ensuring that regional voices contribute to global environmental governance.

At the Fifth AP Forum (2023), strong emphasis was placed on sustainable multilateral actions to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, aligned with UNEA-6 themes and the 2030 Agenda. [14]

The AP Forum also reviews implementation of UNEA resolutions in the region. Member States and stakeholders are invited to share national and subregional experiences, which are documented in the Chair's Summary and submitted to UNEP's Policy and Programme Division (PPD), strengthening transparency and accountability for environmental actions in Asia Pacific.

• 4. Governance structure

4.1. Governance structure of the LAC Forum

4.1.1. Composition of the Forum

The Forum is composed of 33 countries, divided into two broad subregions:

- 16 Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent

[13] links https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V37u6IcjxEgbFyhkRcywZnKtS5KB_VEH/view

[14] Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V4591-o4U7WnVpf0wEICbHHg3vTs454V/view

and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago).

- 17 Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela).

4.1.2. Presidency

The Forum has a rotating Presidency, which changes among the four sub-regional groups:

- Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay).
- Caribbean (see above).
- Andes (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela).
- Mesoamerica (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Mexico).

4.1.3. Bureau

- The Forum has a Bureau composed of two representatives from each of the four sub-regional groups, for a total of eight members.
- The Bureau guides the work of the Forum and ensures subregional representation in decision making during the intersessional periods.

4.1.4. Working groups

The Working Groups of the LAC Forum play a crucial role in addressing specific environmental challenges and fostering regional collaboration, by developing work plans that respond to the decisions made by the ministers. These groups focus on various thematic areas, providing a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the development of regional strategies. They are composed of nominated technical focal points from the Ministries of Environment and, in some cases, representatives from other organizations. This ensures that the work of the Forum is communicated to the technical levels of the ministries, ensuring a continuous exchange between the political level led by the Ministers and their teams in the countries.

The Forum has 13 working groups that focus on specific environmental issues. These are

1) Environment and Emergency Preparedness Network for LAC: Focuses on enhancing regional preparedness and response to environmental emergencies, such as natural disasters and industrial accidents.
2) Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production: Promotes sustainable consumption and production patterns across the region, aligning with global sustainability goals.
3) Gender and Environment: Addresses the integration of gender perspectives into environmental

policies and initiatives, ensuring that women and girls are actively involved in environmental decision-making.

4) Regional Environmental Information Network (REIN): Aims to improve the collection, sharing, and use of environmental data across the region to support informed decision-making.
5) Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Working Group: Focuses on the unique environmental challenges faced by SIDS in the Caribbean, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and marine pollution.
6) Oceans: Works on marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, and the reduction of marine pollution, including plastic and microplastic waste.
7) Biodiversity: Focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, aligning with global frameworks such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
8) Intergovernmental Network on Chemicals and Waste for LAC: Addresses the management of hazardous chemicals and waste, aiming to reduce their impact on human health and the environment.
9) Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution of LAC: Focuses on reducing air pollution and improving air quality across the region.
10) Plastic and Microplastic Pollution, including the marine environment: Works on reducing plastic pollution, particularly in marine ecosystems, through regional cooperation and policy development.
11) Voluntary coalition for the closure of dumpsites in LAC: Aims to promote the closure of unsafe dumpsites and improve waste management practices in the region.
12) Environmental Training Network: Provides training and capacity-building opportunities for environmental professionals and policymakers in the region.
13) Regional Climate Change Platform: Focuses on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, supporting countries in implementing their NDCs under the Paris Agreement.

These working groups also seek to coordinate with and collaborate in their work with various regional and global organizations, including United Nations programs and organizations, multilateral development banks, foundations, and donors, among others.

4.1.5. Interagency Technical Committee

The Forum also includes an Interagency Technical Committee (ITC), which provides technical and operational advice and facilitates the mobilization of financing for the implementation of the regional agenda. The current members of this committee are:

- World Bank Group (WB)
- Interamerican Development Bank (IDB)

- Economic Commission for LAC (ECLAC)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO).

4.1.6. Major groups and stakeholders

The Forum engages with 9 major groups and stakeholders recognized at the global level, with a more active participation from groups on women and girls, children and youth, indigenous peoples, and environmental NGOs.

Two regional facilitators, elected by civil society representatives themselves, are responsible for consultations prior to the meetings of the Forum and UNEA sessions, as well as for general coordination of activities with the UNEP Secretariat.

4.1.7. UNEP secretariat

UNEP acts as the secretariat for the Forum through its Latin America and the Caribbean Office. UNEP supports the Forum by facilitating meetings, providing technical assistance, and ensuring follow-up on decisions made during the Forum.

4.1.8. High-Level Officers

The Forum also includes High-Level Officers who are the national focal points for communications related to the LAC Forum. They also provide follow-up to the activities included in the work plan of the Forum and prepare the outcomes for the meetings of the Forum, such as the Ministerial Declaration and the decisions.

4.1.9. Frequency and timing of meetings

For the LAC Forum, the ordinary sessions happen every two years, comprising a High-Level Officers Segment and a Ministerial Segment. Special Sessions may also be organized between regular sessions.

In addition, the Bureau, the High-Level Officers, and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of the LAC Forum meet at least twice a year. The Working Groups of the Forum have their own individual dynamics, meeting a different number of times depending on the nature of the work that they are implementing.

Summary of the governance structure of the LAC Forum

- 33 member countries (16 Caribbean, 17 Latin American)

- Rotating presidency
- High-Level Officers as main focal points for activities and communications of the Forum
- Bureau with representatives from four sub-regional groups
- 13 working groups focusing on various environmental issues
- Interagency Technical Committee for technical and financial support
- UNEP secretariat providing administrative and technical support
- Major groups and stakeholders engagement.

4.2. Governance Structure of the AMCEN

4.2.1. Composition of AMCEN

AMCEN is composed of 54 African countries, representing all regions of the continent. These countries collaborate to address environmental issues through policy dialogue, joint initiatives, and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

4.2.2. President/chair

AMCEN is led by a president, who is elected during the ordinary sessions of the conference. The president serves as the head of the conference and is responsible for guiding its activities between sessions. The presidency rotates among the Member States, ensuring equitable geographical representation. For example, in 2016-2017, Egypt held the presidency, while Ethiopia held it from 2023-2024.[15]

4.2.3. Bureau

The Bureau is a key governance body of AMCEN, responsible for implementing the decisions of the conference and maintaining relations with Member States and observers between sessions. The Bureau is composed of:

- Five members, including the president, vice-presidents, and a rapporteur.
- Members are elected based on equitable geographical representation from the five subregions of Africa: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp.25-26).[6]

The Bureau meets annually and provides strategic direction to the conference's work, including overseeing the implementation of decisions and coordinating with other regional and international

[15] AMCEN Presidents from 2016.pdf, pp. 1-3.

bodies.

4.2.4. Secretariat

The AMCEN Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the conference. It is hosted by the UNEP through its regional office for Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. The secretariat provides administrative and technical support, organizes meetings, and facilitates the implementation of AMCEN's decisions. A senior program officer from UNEP serves as the secretary to the conference (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp.47).[6]

4.2.5. Inter-sessional committee

To support the Bureau, AMCEN established an Inter-Sessional Committee, which includes:

- Five members from the Bureau.
- One representative from each of the five African subregions.

This committee was meant to review progress on AMCEN's decisions, develops common strategies for international negotiations, and addresses emerging environmental issues.[6]

4.2.6. Inter-agency technical committee

The Inter-Agency Technical Committee is another key structure within AMCEN. It comprises representatives from:

- African Union (AU).
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).
- The African Development Bank (AfDB).
- United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEP).
- Subregional economic communities.
- Other specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

This committee ensures coordination and integration of environmental activities across the continent, providing technical advice and facilitating partnerships (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 47).[6]

4.2.7. Working groups and networks

AMCEN has historically relied on working groups and networks to address specific environmental issues. These include:

- Ecosystem Committees: Focused on specific ecosystems such as forests, deserts, and marine environments.
- Technical Cooperation Networks: Facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among African countries on issues like water resources, biodiversity, and climate change

(AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 29-30).[6]

In addition to these structures, AMCEN has established thematic working groups, known as the African Group of Negotiators (AGNs), to represent the continent's interests in international environmental negotiations. These groups ensure that African countries speak with a unified voice and share expertise on key environmental challenges. Currently, there are six AGNs:

1) AGNs on Biodiversity: Focuses on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
2) AGNs on Plastic Pollution: Addresses international agreements to reduce plastic waste and its environmental impact.
3) AGNs on Chemicals and Waste Management: Deals with hazardous chemicals and waste under the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions.
4) AGNs on Wildlife: Focuses on wildlife conservation, including combating illegal wildlife trade.
5) AGNs on Climate: Engages in climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.
6) AGNs on Desertification: Addresses land degradation and drought under the UNCCD.

4.2.8. Relationship with the African Union

AMCEN maintains a close relationship with the African Union (AU) and has, at times, been considered for possible integration as a Specialized Technical Committee (STC) within the AU framework. Such a development would aim to better align AMCEN’s work with the AU’s broader environmental and sustainable development agenda. While this potential institutional relationship has been discussed in the past, no formal decision has been finalized. Any future arrangement would need to ensure that AMCEN continues to retain its distinct mandate and voice, while engaging constructively within AU structures (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 48–49).[6] AMCEN decisions and report is presented at the Africa Union STC sessions and is endorsed and taken also adopted at the Africa Union Heads of States Summit.

In conclusion, AMCEN's governance structure is designed to ensure broad participation, equitable representation, and effective coordination among African countries. Its leadership, supported by the Bureau, Secretariat, and various committees, plays a crucial role in advancing the continent's environmental agenda. The forum's integration with the African Union and its focus on multilateral environmental agreements underscore its importance in addressing Africa's environmental challenges.

4.2.9. Frequency and timing of meetings

The AMCEN holds its main sessions every two years, as established during its first session in 1985. These biennial sessions serve as the primary forum for African ministers responsible for the environment to discuss and address environmental issues relevant to the continent.

In addition to the regular biennial sessions, AMCEN also convenes special sessions and meetings of its Bureau as needed. The Bureau, which consists of the president, vice-presidents, and a rapporteur, meets annually and at other times as circumstances require to guide the implementation of the conference's decisions between sessions.

For example, the AMCEN Bureau has held numerous meetings over the years, including extraordinary meetings to address urgent issues. The Bureau's role is to provide strategic direction, follow up on decisions, and assess progress in implementing the conference's recommendations.[6]

The frequency and timing of these meetings ensure that AMCEN remains an active and responsive forum for addressing Africa's environmental challenges, fostering cooperation among African countries, and coordinating positions on global environmental issues.[6]

4.3. Governance Structure of the AP Forum

4.3.1. Composition of the Forum

- The Forum covers 41 Member States from the Asia-Pacific region, as listed in the UNEP ROAP. These countries span from Iran to DPR Korea, including major economies like China, India, Republic of Korea, Japan, and Singapore, as well as Pacific Island Countries such as Fiji, Samoa Palau, and Tuvalu.10

- The Forum is open to participation from high-level government representatives, including ministers, vice-ministers, and senior officials responsible for environmental policies. Additionally, representatives from intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, key donors, major groups and civil society groups including youth are invited to participate.11

4.3.2. Leadership structure

4.3.2.1. Chair and vice-chairs

- The AP Forums would have two Bureaus: Bureau for the Senior Officials Meeting and the Bureau for the Ministerial Segment. Each Bureau will comprise of a chair and two vice chairs.
- At the Ministerial Segment, the Forum is chaired by a chairperson, who is typically a minister from the host country of the Forum. For example, during the Fourth Forum (2021), the Chair was H.E. Han Jeoung-ae, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea.10
- The Chair is supported by vice-chairs, who are elected from among the participating countries. For instance, during the Fourth Forum, the vice-chairs were H.E. Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera (Sri Lanka) and H.E. Mr. Demetrio do Amaral de Carvalho (Timor-Leste).10
- The chair and vice-chairs form the Bureau, which oversees the proceedings of the Forum and ensures the smooth implementation of its agenda.10

4.3.2.2. Bureau

- The AP Bureaus are responsible for guiding the discussions, facilitating decision-making, and ensuring the outcomes of the Forum align with regional priorities and global environmental goals.10
- The Bureau also plays a key role in preparing the chair's summary of the Senior Officials Meeting and the Ministerial Segment, which captures the key discussions, recommendations, and outcomes of the Forum. This summary is then communicated to the UNEA and other relevant global forums.10

4.3.2.3. Cooperation with sub-regional bodies

- The Forum also collaborates with sub-regional organizations such as the South Asia Cooperative Environment Program (SACEP), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These organizations play a crucial role in implementing regional environmental initiatives and ensuring that the Forum's outcomes are aligned with sub-regional and national priorities.12

- The AP Forum does not operate thematic working groups (TWGs), but instead maintains and reports on various thematic forums and networks in the region. The AP Forum regularly provides updates on the progress of these initiatives to the Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum and reports the progress on the thematic platforms and sub-regional forums to address specific environmental issues.

Thematic platforms and forums serve as collaborative spaces for member states to share experiences, develop joint initiatives, and strengthen regional environmental governance. For example:

- The Asia-Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP): Focuses on improving air quality through regional cooperation and knowledge sharing.
- The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA): Addresses marine and coastal environmental issues, including marine litter and pollution.
- The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET): Monitors and addresses acid rain and its impacts on ecosystems and human health.
- The Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN): Provides platform to adaptation practitioners to discuss adaptation issues and challenges, and come up with actors specific recommendations to advance adaptation actions.

These mechanisms ensure that the region's diverse environmental challenges are addressed through coordinated and inclusive approaches, leveraging the expertise and resources of Member States and stakeholders.

4.3.2.4. Frequency and timing of meetings

- The Forum is typically held every two years, in the years when the UNEA is not convened. This timing allows the Forum to contribute to the preparatory process for UNEA by identifying regional priorities and drafting resolutions for consideration at the global level.10
- The Forum consists of two main segments:
  1) Senior Officials Segment: This segment focuses on technical discussions, reviewing the implementation of UNEA resolutions, discussion on new resolutions and other draft UNEA outcome, and identifying regional priorities. Senior officials from member states, along with representatives from UNEP and other organizations, participate in this segment. 10
  2) Ministerial Segment: This segment involves high-level discussions among ministers and other high-ranking officials including leadership dialogues and multi-stakeholders dialogues, under the UNEA themes,. The outcomes of the Senior Officials Segment are presented, and ministers provide political guidance and endorse the final outcomes of the Forum to submit it to the annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR and the UNEA outcome. 10

5. Types of outcomes

5.1. Types of outcomes of the LAC Forum

The usual outcomes of the ordinary sessions of the LAC Forum are a ministerial declaration and one or more decisions.

5.1.1. Ministerial declaration:

- The ministerial declaration is a key document that reflects the consensus and commitments made by the ministers of environment during the Forum. It outlines the region's environmental priorities and strategies, aligning them with global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNEA resolutions, and the MEAs.
- The declaration serves as a political statement, emphasizing the integration of the environmental dimension into sustainable development efforts, particularly in relation to poverty eradication and other regional challenges.
- For example, during the 20th session in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (2016), the Forum reaffirmed its role as a platform for regional dialogue and the exchange of good practices. It also committed to providing leadership on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, particularly in monitoring its implementation in the region.

5.1.2. Decisions:

- The Forum also produces decisions, which are more specific and actionable than the declaration. These decisions often address particular environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, pollution, and sustainable consumption and production.
- For example, during its latest meeting in September 2023, the Forum adopted six decisions on the themes of pollution, climate change, biodiversity, sustainable consumption and production and circular economy, environmental education, and gender and environment, which guided the development of the work plan of the working groups for the period 2024-2025.

5.2. Types of outcomes of the AMCEN

The outcomes of the AMCEN are a ministerial declaration and decisions.

5.2.1. Ministerial declaration

The ministerial declaration is a formal statement issued at the conclusion of each AMCEN session. It reflects the consensus among African ministers on key environmental challenges and priorities. The declaration often emphasizes the need for sustainable development, environmental protection, and the integration of environmental considerations into national and regional development plans. It also highlights the importance of international cooperation and the implementation of MEAs.

For example, the 15th AMCEN session, held in March 2015 in Cairo, saw the adoption of the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, which emphasized natural-capital management and Africa's unified role in global environmental negotiations . In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a special session (the Eighth Special Session) convened virtually in December 2020, calling for enhanced green recovery, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation as part of Africa's recovery strategy . Meanwhile, the 17th regular session held in November 2019 in Durban reaffirmed commitments to sustainable development, climate action, the circular economy, and biodiversity protection.[5]

5.2.2. Decisions

The decisions are specific resolutions or action points agreed upon by the ministers during the AMCEN sessions. These decisions often address a wide range of environmental issues, including climate change, biodiversity, desertification, marine and coastal management, and environmental governance. They provide a framework for implementing the priorities outlined in the ministerial declaration.

For instance, during the 18th AMCEN session held in September 2022 in Dakar, Senegal, several important decisions were adopted:

- Decision on climate change: Ministers called for the establishment of a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance of at least USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2030. They also emphasized the need for accessible and predictable financing for Africa's climate adaptation and mitigation priorities, and for full implementation of the Paris Agreement.5

- Decision on biodiversity: Ministers urged strengthened implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and emphasized Africa's unified position ahead of the CBD COP15. They also reaffirmed the need to protect the continent's biodiversity and ecosystems through nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration.5

- Decision on chemicals and pollution: AMCEN supported the development of a legally

binding international instrument on plastic pollution, including marine litter, and committed to ensuring Africa's active participation in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process.5

- Decision on land degradation and ecosystem restoration: Ministers endorsed the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Resilience, encouraging implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Great Green Wall Initiative to combat land degradation and desertification.5

- Decision on marine and coastal management: Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the implementation of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions to protect Africa's marine and coastal ecosystems. They also called for the development of an Africa Ocean Governance Strategy (AOGS) to ensure coordinated, sustainable, and inclusive ocean governance across the continent. The AOGS is expected to be formally adopted at the upcoming 20th Ordinary Session of AMCEN.[5]

5.2.3. Implementation and follow-up

The ministerial declaration and decisions are not merely symbolic; they are intended to guide national and regional actions. AMCEN works closely with the UNEP and other partners to ensure that the outcomes of its sessions are implemented. This includes capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance, and the mobilization of financial resources to support environmental projects in Africa.

For example, the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the NEPAD, developed under the guidance of AMCEN, has been a key framework for addressing environmental challenges in Africa. The action plan focuses on areas such as combating desertification, managing coastal and marine resources, and addressing climate change.5

AMCEN decisions have also influenced UNEA themes - Innovative environmental solutions themes and AMCEN decisions that let to UNEA resolutions sponsored by Africa and later adopted by UNEA.

5.3. Types of outcomes of the AP Forum

The AP Forum does not adopt formal declarations. Instead, it issues two Chair's Summaries—one from the Senior Officials Meeting and another from the Ministerial Segment. These summaries

highlight sustainable multilateral actions aimed at addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, in support of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). They emphasize the importance of regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and resource mobilization to tackle both national and transboundary environmental challenges.

6. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms

6.1. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the LAC Forum

The monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the LAC Forum are designed to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of decisions made by the Ministers. Here is a summary of how the LAC Forum monitors and reports its activities to Member States:

6.1.1. Two-year work and monitoring plan

The LAC Forum develops a two-year work and monitoring plan based on the decisions made by Ministers during the ordinary meetings. This plan also takes into account the outcomes of UNEA. The plan encompasses all activities and outputs of the 13 working groups and networks under the LAC Forum.

6.1.2. Progress reporting to Member States

The status of progress in implementing the two-year plan is reported at least twice a year to high-level officials and the Bureau of the Forum. These reports are presented during in-person or virtual meetings, ensuring that Member States are regularly updated on the progress of activities and outputs.

6.1.3. Reporting to UNEA

Activities and outputs that are relevant to specific UNEA resolutions are reported through the appropriate channels established in UNEP. This ensures that the LAC Forum's activities are aligned with the global environmental assembly.

6.1.4. Regional and global integration

The LAC Forum also contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing inputs on the environmental dimension to regional mechanisms such as the Forum of the Countries

of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by the ECLAC, which in turn reports to the High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development. This integration ensures that the Forum's work is aligned with global sustainability goals.

6.1.5. Documentation and webpage

The LAC Forum maintains a webpage where documentation from previous meetings, links to working groups, networks, and other stakeholders are available. This serves as a resource for Member States and other stakeholders to access all available information.

6.2. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the AMCEN

The AMCEN has established several mechanisms for monitoring and reporting its activities and decisions to Member States. These mechanisms ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of its programs and decisions. Below is a summary of how AMCEN monitors and reports its activities:

6.2.1. Biennial work programs and monitoring plans

AMCEN develops biennial work programs based on the decisions made by ministers during its regular sessions. These programs outline the key activities and outputs that AMCEN and its subsidiary bodies will undertake over the next two years. The work programs are designed to address the environmental priorities of the African continent and align with global environmental agendas, such as the outcomes of the UNEA.5

6.2.2. Reporting to the Bureau and Member States

The progress in implementing the biennial work programs is regularly monitored and reported to the AMCEN Bureau and Member States. The Bureau, which consists of representatives from each of the five African subregions, plays a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of AMCEN's decisions. The Bureau meets at least once a year to review progress and provide guidance on the next steps.5

- Inter-sessional committee: The inter-sessional committee, composed of the Bureau members and representatives from each subregion, reviews the progress of AMCEN's activities and prepares reports for the Bureau and the conference. This committee ensures that the decisions taken during AMCEN sessions are being implemented effectively.5
- Inter-agency technical committee: This committee, which includes representatives from the African Union, UNEP, and other regional and international organizations, provides technical

support and coordination for AMCEN's activities. It also assists in monitoring the implementation of AMCEN's work programs and reports back to the Bureau and Member States.5

6.2.3. AEO

The AEO is a key monitoring and reporting tool for AMCEN. The AEO provides a comprehensive assessment of the state of the environment in Africa and tracks progress in addressing environmental challenges. The AEO process involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including national and subregional institutions, to produce regular reports that inform policy-making and decision-making at all levels (*Africa Environment Outlook (AEO)*. Retrieved from (UNEP AMCEN Website).5

The AEO reports are presented to AMCEN sessions, where ministers review the findings and provide guidance on future actions. The AEO process also serves as a mechanism for tracking the implementation of AMCEN's decisions and the progress of its work programs.8

6.2.4. Reporting on MEAs

AMCEN plays a significant role in facilitating the implementation of MEAs in Africa. The Conference monitors the progress of African countries in ratifying and implementing these agreements, such as the CBD, the UNFCCC, and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) (United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).5

AMCEN organizes preparatory meetings for African countries before major international environmental negotiations, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) to these conventions. During these meetings, African countries develop common positions and strategies, which are then reported back to AMCEN and its Member States.5

6.2.5. Partnerships and donor reporting

AMCEN also engages with development partners and donors to secure funding and technical support for its activities. The conference reports on the progress of its programs to these partners, ensuring that they are kept informed of the outcomes and impacts of their contributions (African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). Partnerships and Donor Reporting).5

For example, the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD is a key program that AMCEN monitors and reports on. The implementation of this action plan is reviewed during

AMCEN sessions, and progress is reported to the African Union and other stakeholders (United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). *Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)*.[5]

6.2.6. Regular sessions and special meetings

AMCEN holds regular sessions every two years, where ministers review the progress of the biennial work programs and make decisions on future priorities. In addition to these regular sessions, AMCEN may convene special meetings or extraordinary sessions to address urgent environmental issues or to prepare for major international events, such as the WSSD (United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). (n.d.). *AMCEN Regular Sessions and Special Meetings*).5

During these sessions, the Bureau and the inter-sessional committee present progress reports on the implementation of AMCEN's decisions. These reports are discussed by the ministers, who then provide guidance on the next steps (African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). (n.d.). Partnerships and Donor Reporting). 5

6.2.7. Integration with the African Union

Although AMCEN is not itself a Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of the African Union, its decisions and reports are currently endorsed by the AU STC on Environment at its ordinary sessions. Rather than becoming an STC, AMCEN may eventually be further integrated into the AU structures and organs. This integration will further strengthen AMCEN's monitoring and reporting mechanisms, as it will align its activities with the AU's broader development agenda. The AU Commission will play a key role in coordinating AMCEN's activities and ensuring that its decisions are implemented effectively across the continent.[16]

6.3. Monitoring and reporting mechanism of the AP Forum

The AP Forum discussed the implementation of UNEA resolutions in the region. The AP Forum ensures that member states and other stakeholders are informed about progress and that the outcomes of the Forum are effectively communicated and integrated into broader environmental governance frameworks, including the UNEA.

6.3.1. Reporting to Member States and the Bureau

[16] African Union (AU), Integration of AMCEN with the African Union. Retrieved from African Union Website.

The outcomes the Chair's Summary of the Senior Officials' Meeting and the Ministerial segment are officially submitted to the Asia Pacific Group of the CPR and the Annual Subcommittee Meeting of the CPR. These documents are shared with member states and the Bureau of the Forum. The Chair's Summary provides a high-level overview of the discussions, and regional priorities identified during the Forum, while the Senior Officials' Report offers a more detailed account of the progress made in implementing UNEA resolutions and regional initiatives.

For example, in the Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (2021), the chair's summary and the senior officials' report were endorsed by the Forum and communicated to the fifth session of UNEA and its preparatory processes, as well as other relevant forums such as the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. This ensures that the outcomes of the AP Forum are integrated into global environmental governance processes.10

6.3.2. Regional input to UNEA

The AP Forum plays a critical role in providing regional input to UNEA. During the senior officials' segment of the Forum, Member States review the implementation of UNEA resolutions and identify regional priorities for the upcoming UNEA session. These priorities are then reflected in the draft resolutions and declarations submitted to UNEA. For instance, during the Fourth Forum (2021), Member States discussed regional priorities such as marine litter, air pollution, and sustainable consumption and production, which were subsequently included in the draft resolutions for UNEA-5.2.10 At the Fifth AP Forum (2023), Member States and other stakeholders discussed the UNEA-6 theme "Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution" in the region, with focus on achieving the MEAs and SDGs.

6.3.3. Monitoring progress on UNEA resolutions

The AP Forum monitors the progress of Member States in implementing UNEA resolutions through regular reporting during the senior officials' segment. Member states provide updates on their national efforts to implement UNEA resolutions, and these updates are compiled into a report that is presented to the Forum. For example, during the Fifth Forum (2023), Member States reported on their progress in implementing resolutions related to marine litter, air pollution, and sustainable consumption and production. These reports are then shared with UNEA and other relevant bodies.[17]

6.3.4. Reporting through UNEP channels

[17] United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) (2023). Chair's Summary of the Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

In addition to reporting to the Forum and UNEA, the AP Forum also reports on its activities through UNEP's established channels. For example, the outcomes of the Forum are communicated to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in Nairobi, which oversees the implementation of UNEA resolutions. This ensures that the AP Forum's activities are aligned with UNEP's broader strategic goals and that the region's priorities are reflected in UNEP's work.10

6.3.5. Major groups and stakeholders engagement

The AP Forum also engages civil society and stakeholders in its monitoring and reporting processes. For example, during the Fifth Forum (2023), the Asia Pacific Science, Policy, Business Forum, Asia Pacific Youth Environment Forum and the Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum provided inputs on regional priorities and the implementation of UNEA resolutions to Senior Officials Meeting and the Ministerial Segment as well as global processes, including UNEA, HLPF, and MEAs. These inputs were incorporated into the Chair's Summary and the Senior Officials' Report, ensuring that the perspectives of non-state actors are reflected in the Forum's outcomes.

7. Major groups and stakeholders engagement

7.1. Major groups and stakeholders engagement of the LAC Forum

The LAC Forum actively engages with MGS to ensure inclusive and participatory processes. The engagement process is structured to incorporate the views and inputs of civil society into the decision-making processes of the Forum. Below is a summary of engagement mechanisms and how the LAC Forum involves major groups and stakeholders in its work:

7.1.1. Regional Consultative Meeting for MGS

- Prior to each ordinary meeting of the LAC Forum, UNEP organizes a regional consultative meeting for MGS. This meeting is designed to gather the perspectives and recommendations of civil society, ensuring that their voices are heard and considered in the Forum's deliberations.[2]
- The outcomes of these consultations are presented by MGS representatives during the ordinary meetings of the Forum, usually by the two regional facilitators (see below), allowing for direct input from major groups and stakeholders into the decision-making process at ministerial level.[2]

7.1.2. Regional facilitators for civil society

- UNEP supports the LAC regional facilitators for civil society, who are responsible for leading the regional consultative meetings and organizing additional consultation meetings. These meetings are often held virtually and focus on various issues related to global environmental agendas, including the UNEA.[2]

- The Regional Facilitators develop a yearly work plan in coordination with UNEP, to develop an engagement process that is systematic and aligned with the Forum's processes.[2]

7.1.3. Participation in working groups and networks

The LAC Forum has established 13 working groups, networks, and coalitions that provide a collaborative space for countries in the region. These groups are constituted, in their majority, by nominated government representatives. However, they may invite representatives from MGS, facilitating direct participation in discussions, where relevant.[2]

7.1.4. Thematic workshops and consultations

The LAC Forum also organizes thematic workshops and consultation sessions that involve major groups and stakeholders. These events focus on specific environmental issues where inputs are being sought as part of the process.

7.1.5. Capacity building and awareness raising

The LAC Forum supports major groups and stakeholders through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. These efforts aim to enhance civil society participation in environmental governance. For example, sessions have been organized on the Escazú Agreement, preparations for UNEA sessions, plastic pollution, or issues such as effective communication on environmental issues, to mention a few.

7.1.6. Support for implementation of the Escazú agreement

The LAC Forum supports capacity building for effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement, the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through regular virtual and in-person meetings, civil society representatives receive training and support.

7.2. Major groups and stakeholders engagement of the AMCEN

The AMCEN engages major groups and stakeholders, including civil society, in its work through various mechanisms aimed at fostering collaboration and ensuring inclusive participation in environmental decision-making processes. Below is a summary of how AMCEN involves and works with these groups:

7.2.1. Institutional framework for stakeholder engagement

AMCEN has established institutional structures that facilitate the involvement of major groups and stakeholders. For instance, the inter-agency technical committee includes representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, women's groups, and the private sector. This committee plays a crucial role in coordinating activities and ensuring that the voices of these groups are heard in AMCEN's decision-making processes (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 47).[6]

7.2.2. Participation in AMCEN sessions

Major groups and stakeholders participate in AMCEN through dedicated Regional Consultative Meetings (RCMs) held prior to each session. These RCMs provide a structured platform for civil society and other stakeholder groups to present their priorities and concerns. The official Statement from the Major Groups and Stakeholders RCM is considered during AMCEN deliberations and is incorporated into the final AMCEN declarations. For instance, during the WSSD preparatory process, AMCEN engaged civil society in regional consultations to ensure their perspectives were reflected in the African Common Position. (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 56).[6]

7.2.3. Thematic workshops and consultations

AMCEN organizes thematic workshops and consultations that involve major groups and stakeholders. These workshops focus on specific environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, and desertification. For instance, during the development of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD, AMCEN held thematic workshops that included participation from civil society groups. These workshops allowed stakeholders to provide input on key environmental challenges and solutions (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 58).[6]

7.2.4. Partnerships with civil society organizations

AMCEN collaborates with civil society organizations to implement its programs and initiatives. For example, the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN), established by AMCEN, works with NGOs and other stakeholders to collect and disseminate environmental data. This collaboration ensures that civil society organizations are actively involved in monitoring and reporting on

environmental issues. (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 51).[6]

7.2.5. Capacity building and awareness raising

AMCEN engages major groups and stakeholders through capacity-building initiatives and awareness-raising activities. These efforts aim to enhance the ability of civil society organizations to participate effectively in environmental governance. For example, AMCEN has supported the development of environmental impact assessment (EIA) capacity in Africa through the Capacity Development and Linkages for Environmental Assessment in Africa (CLEAA) network, which involves NGOs and other stakeholders (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 59).[6]

7.2.6. Involvement in MEAs

AMCEN facilitates the participation of major groups and stakeholders in the negotiation and implementation of MEAs. Civil society organizations are often included in African preparatory meetings for MEAs, such as the CBD and the UNFCCC. This ensures that their perspectives are considered in the development of common African positions (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 52).[6]

7.2.7. Strategic partnerships

AMCEN has emphasized the importance of building strategic partnerships with major groups and stakeholders, including NGOs, women's groups, community-based organizations, and the private sector. These partnerships are crucial for mobilizing resources and expertise to address environmental challenges. For example, AMCEN has worked with the private sector to promote sustainable consumption and production practices in Africa (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 60).[6]

7.3. Major groups and stakeholders engagement of the AP Forum

The AP Forum has consistently emphasized the importance of engaging major groups and stakeholders in its work. This engagement is seen as crucial for achieving sustainable development goals and addressing environmental challenges in the region. Below is a summary of how the AP Forum involves major groups and stakeholders:

7.3.1. Inclusion in forum activities

- The AP Forum actively includes major groups and stakeholders including youth participation in its meetings and discussions. For example, the MGS Forum was held on 4 October 2021 during the Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. This session provided a platform for civil society groups to voice their concerns and

contribute to the discussions on environmental priorities and policies (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 2, paragraph 2).10

- Similarly, during the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in January 2019, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was held on 23 January, with 90 major groups and stakeholders represented. This session allowed civil society to engage directly with policymakers and contribute to the formulation of regional environmental strategies (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 2, paragraph 2).11

7.3.2. Participation in policy discussions

- Major groups and stakeholders are involved in policy discussions and decision-making processes. For instance, during the Fourth Forum, civil society groups raised issues such as the need for stronger legislation on marine pollution, the importance of urban-rural connectivity, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food systems (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 6, paragraph 16).10

- In the Third Forum, stakeholders highlighted the importance of public-private cooperation, innovative financing solutions, and the need for behavioral change to promote sustainable consumption and production. They also emphasized the role of governments in driving demand for sustainable products and services (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 5, paragraph 13).11

7.3.3. Youth engagement

- The AP Forum places a strong emphasis on engaging youth in environmental discussions. The Asia Pacific Regional Youth Environment Forum was held on 2-3 October 2021, prior to the Fourth Forum. This forum brought together youth groups from across the region to discuss environmental challenges and propose solutions. The youth representatives called for ambitious climate action, stronger legislation on marine pollution, and increased support for green jobs and entrepreneurship (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 3, paragraph 12).10

- During the Third Forum, youth representatives also participated in discussions, emphasizing the need for innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production practices. They called for greater involvement of young people in environmental decision-making processes (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 5, paragraph 13).11

7.3.4. Inputs to draft UNEA Resolutions and draft UNEA Ministerial Declarations

- Major groups and stakeholders provide inputs into the draft resolutions and draft UNEA Ministerial Declarations of the AP Forum. For example, during the Fourth Forum, civil society groups contributed to the discussions on the draft ministerial declaration for the UNEA-5.2. They emphasized the need for stronger environmental governance, the inclusion of marginalized communities, and the importance of science-based decision-making (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 17, paragraph 22).10

- In the Third Forum, stakeholders provided feedback on the draft resolutions, including those on marine litter, sustainable consumption and production, and the protection of marine environments. Their inputs were considered in the finalization of the resolutions (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 11, paragraph 18).11

7.3.5. Advocacy and awareness raising

- Major groups and stakeholders play a key role in advocacy and awareness-raising efforts. During the Fourth Forum, civil society groups called for increased public awareness of environmental issues, particularly in relation to marine pollution and climate change. They also advocated for the inclusion of environmental education in national curricula (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 6, paragraph 16).10

- In the Third Forum, stakeholders highlighted the importance of campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives to change behaviors and lifestyles. They also emphasized the need for governments to lead by example in promoting sustainable consumption and production (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 5, paragraph 13).11

7.3.6. Examples of engagement

- The AP Forum ensures meaningful engagement of major groups and stakeholders. For example, during the Fourth Forum, UNEP facilitated the participation of civil society groups in the discussions and provided a platform for them to share their perspectives (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7), page 17, paragraph 22).10
- In the Third Forum, UNEP worked with stakeholders to develop innovative solutions for environmental challenges, including through the SWITCH-Asia program, which supports sustainable consumption and production practices in the region (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7), page 5, paragraph 13).11

8. Resource mobilization

8.1. Resource mobilization of the LAC Forum

Resource mobilization for the LAC Forum involves strategies to secure financial support for its operations and activities, rather than directly funding projects in individual countries. Below is a summary of the resource mobilization strategies:

8.1.1. Environment Fund

Member States of UNEP are responsible for financing its operations through the Environment Fund. This fund supports the operational activities of UNEP, including its regional offices and forums like the LAC Forum.

8.1.2. Regional partnerships and collaboration

The LAC Forum collaborates with various regional and international organizations, such as the IDB, the WB Group, ECLAC, PAHO, FAO, UNDP, and others, some of which are part of the Interagency Technical Committee of the Forum. These partnerships help mobilize financial and technical resources to support the activities that have been defined as part of the Forum's agenda.

8.1.3. Capacity building and technical assistance through working groups

The individual working groups of the Forum implement capacity building and technical assistance activities, as agreed by Member States, which in many cases involve the mobilization of financial contributions from partners such as foundations and, in the case of one of the groups, through voluntary contributions from Member States.

In summary, the resource mobilization strategies for the LAC Forum of Ministers of Environment involve a combination of funding from the Environment Fund, strategic partnerships with international organizations, and limited funding from Member States.

8.2. Resource mobilization of the AMCEN

The AMCEN has employed several resource mobilization strategies to secure funding for its operations and activities. These strategies are primarily aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the

forum and its ability to address environmental challenges in Africa. Below is a summary of the key resource mobilization strategies used by AMCEN:

8.2.1. Establishment of a trust fund

AMCEN established a trust fund to provide a sustainable financial basis for its operations. The trust fund relies on voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors. However, the fund has faced challenges due to limited contributions from Member States. As of 2000, only eight out of 53 Member States had contributed to the fund, highlighting the need for more consistent financial support from African governments (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 25).[6]

8.2.2. Partnerships with international organizations and donors

AMCEN has sought to build strategic partnerships with international organizations, donor countries, and multilateral funding agencies. These partnerships are intended to supplement the resources available for AMCEN's activities. For example, AMCEN has collaborated with the UNEP, AfDB, and other UN agencies to mobilize resources and support for its initiatives (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 22).[6]

8.2.3. Engagement with the private sector and civil society

AMCEN has recognized the importance of engaging with the private sector, NGOs, and civil society groups to mobilize resources. These stakeholders are seen as potential contributors to the financial sustainability of AMCEN's activities (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 58).[6]

8.2.4. Integration with the African Union and NEPAD

AMCEN has worked to align its activities with the AU and the NEPAD. By integrating its work with these broader continental initiatives, AMCEN aims to leverage additional funding and support from AU Member States and international partners. The establishment of an African Environment Facility, proposed during the NEPAD process, is an example of this strategy (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 58).[6]

8.2.5. Advocacy for increased Member State contributions

AMCEN has consistently advocated for increased financial contributions from its Member States. The forum has emphasized the importance of Member States taking ownership of its activities and providing the necessary financial resources to ensure its effectiveness (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 25).[6]

8.2.6. Utilization of UNEP's Support

Since its inception, AMCEN has relied heavily on UNEP for financial and technical support. UNEP has provided the secretariat services for AMCEN and has supported its activities through its regional office for Africa. However, UNEP's own financial constraints have sometimes limited the level of support it can provide to AMCEN (AMCEN Secretariat, 2005, pp. 25).[6]

8.3. Resource mobilization of the AP Forum

The AP Forum serves as a platform for regional collaboration on environmental issues, and resource mobilization is a critical aspect of its operations. Several key points can be inferred from the discussions and outcomes of the Forums:

8.3.1. Environment fund

The UNEP plays a central role in facilitating resource mobilization for the AP Forum. UNEP's Environment Fund is highlighted as a core fund that provides flexibility to implement the Medium-Term Strategy and respond to emerging challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund is crucial for supporting the Forum's activities and ensuring that it can address regional environmental priorities effectively (UNEP/APEnvForum (4)/7, page 3).10

8.3.2. Host Country Contribution

AP Forum is hosted by a Member State as announced at the preceding forum. The host country contributes significantly to the Forum, covering the venue and other logistical arrangements in the country. The Forum is jointly organized by the Member State and the UNEP.

8.3.3. Member States Contribution

Participation of government delegations, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders are also contributed by Member States and donors.

F. Comparative analysis of the Forums

1. General commonalities and differences

1.1. General commonalities

1.1.1. Regional cooperation and policy development

All three forums emphasize regional cooperation as a cornerstone of their mandates, aiming to foster dialogue, share best practices and knowledge, and seek alignment of regional environmental policies and strategies.

The LAC Forum, established in 1982, focuses on setting regional environmental policies and strategies through periodic intergovernmental meetings. The AMCEN, founded in 1985, advocates for environmental protection and sustainable development in Africa, with a strong emphasis on regional cooperation. The AP Forum, established in 2015, promotes regional collaboration to address transboundary environmental issues such as marine litter and air pollution.

The three Regional Forums also have a similarity in their focus on technical support and capacity building. Through their regular activities, they support Member States in building capacity and responding to challenges through specific, concrete initiatives that involve national technical personnel. Many of the activities seek to take advantage of the successful cases already developed within the regions to explore replication in similar countries and contexts, while also bringing experiences from other regions to explore additional approaches.

Support for policy development is another area where the three Forums coincide. Based on requests made by Member States, the Forums mobilize support and experience exchange to develop or update policy frameworks in line with global and regional agendas, such as the Escazú Agreement in the case of LAC.

Together, these forums highlight the importance of collective action in tackling environmental challenges across their respective regions.

1.1.2. Alignment with global agendas

All forums align their work with global environmental agendas, including Agenda 2030 and the

SDGs, MEAs, and the UNEA.

Specifically, the LAC Forum helps prepare consolidated regional views for UNEA and supports action on multiple MEAs, and regional agreements such as the Escazú Agreement. A concrete example of this is the Special Session of the LAC Forum held in September 2024 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where the focus was on the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was attended by high-level officials of the secretariats of the three conventions and which resulted in concrete action points to accelerate their implementation in the region, as well as advancing discussions toward UNFCCC COP 29, UNCCD COP 16, and CBD COP 16.

The AMCEN facilitates the implementation of MEAs across the continent. Meanwhile, the AP Forum aligns its discussions with the SDGs, with a particular focus on SCP and climate action. Together, these forums contribute to advancing global and regional environmental priorities.

At a more practical level, the Regional Forums support concrete processes that respond to commitments made under MEAs, such as the development and updating of NDCs, NAPs, or NBSAPs and their implementation, the development of carbon market regulations and projects, the evaluation and design of payments of ecosystem services as a tool to protect and restore ecosystems, or the development of strategies to facilitate the closure of dumpsites, to mention a few examples.

1.1.3. Integration of inclusive practices

The Regional Forums emphasize inclusivity by integrating gender perspectives and promoting stakeholder participation in their initiatives, as adequate. The LAC Forum has tools such as a gender integration checklist and indicators which have been developed to measure and enhance women's roles in environmental projects. A new checklist and indicators for integration of environmental education into environmental initiatives is now being developed to complement the one on gender, which looks at the capacity building needs of different groups of stakeholders. It is expected that these checklists will be applied not only within the framework of the LAC Forum, but also beyond, as tools used at national level.

The AMCEN prioritizes grassroots development and community involvement in eco-development projects, ensuring local ownership and impact. Meanwhile, the AP Forum underscores the importance of youth, civil society, and public-private partnerships as key drivers of environmental action, fostering collaborative and multi-stakeholder approaches to sustainability. Together, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to inclusive and participatory environmental strategies.

1.1.4. Support from UNEP

All three Regional Forums receive technical and institutional support from UNEP and its regional offices. Specifically, UNEP's LACO acts as the permanent secretariat for LAC Forum, while UNEP´s ROA provides advocacy and technical support for AMCEN's initiatives. Furthermore, UNEP's ROAP co-organizes and supports the AP Forum.

In addition, all three Regional Forums coordinate their activities with UNEP Headquarters, mainly through the Governance Affairs Office (GAO) to align their roadmaps and work plans with the global process of UNEA and other relevant agendas, ensuring coordinated efforts across regions.

1.2. General differences

1.2.1. Historical context and establishment

The LAC Forum, established in 1982 as the oldest of the three forums, has a long history of shaping regional environmental policies, while the AMCEN, founded in 1985 in response to severe environmental degradation in Africa, evolved from grassroots development to policy guidance, and the AP Forum, established in 2015 as the newest forum, focuses on innovative solutions and green economy models.

In this sense, each Regional Forum was born at different moments, due to different motivations and in different contexts, although they align in their general objective of supporting regional dialogue and cooperation.

1.2.2. Regional priorities

The LAC Forum focuses on critical environmental issues that at the time of writing of this report include as ecosystem restoration, early warning systems, methane emission reduction, and water as a cross-cutting theme for action, addressing both regional and global sustainability challenges, without sidelining work in a much broader range of issues, as can be seen from the list of working groups and its work plan.

Meanwhile, AMCEN prioritizes desertification, food security, energy self-sufficiency, and transboundary environmental issues, reflecting Africa's distinct environmental and socio-economic context. In contrast, the AP Forum reaffirmed countries commitment to multilateral environmental agreements, especially those related to biodiversity and climate change including marine litter, air

pollution, waste management, and green finance, aligning with the region's rapid industrialization and urbanization. Together, these regional initiatives highlight diverse yet interconnected approaches to addressing global environmental and sustainability challenges.

2. Comparison of types of contributions of the Regional Forums

2.1. Commonalities in the contributions

2.1.1. Policy Development and Advocacy

All three Regional Forums focus on policy development and advocacy to address regional and global environmental challenges, aligning regional priorities with global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and other MEAs.

They have a strong component of policy development support as part of the activities they implement at the request of Member States. Some salient examples have been mentioned before.

The Regional Forums also constitute a channel to bring the common positions and views from the regions into other regional and global spaces, including UNEA. The LAC Forum also develops consolidated regional inputs for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, ensuring the region's voice is represented in regional sustainable development spaces and, from there, in global discussions through the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The AMCEN shapes Africa's position in global negotiations and advocates for MEAs like the CBD, while the AP Forum became a key regional platform to discuss current and emerging environmental challenges including transboundary issues, to provides regional input to the UNEA, and to adopt resolutions on critical issues such as synergies, marine litter and air pollution. Together, these forums play a crucial role in bridging regional and global environmental efforts.

2.1.2. Regional cooperation

As mentioned before, all Regional Forums emphasize regional cooperation to address transboundary environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

2.1.3. Capacity building

Capacity building, as indicated before, is a key activity across all Regional Forums, aimed at strengthening the ability of Member States to develop and implement environmental policies,

projects, and programs. These capacity building initiatives aim to harvest the knowledge and practices developed within each region, while also bringing in knowledge and experience from outside, in collaboration with a multitude of partners active in each region.

2.1.4. Implementation of global agreements

All three Regional Forums support the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements such as the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, CBD, UNCCD, BRS, Escazú Agreement, and others.

This support is provided both at the political level through dialogues between ministers and authorities of the corresponding MEA secretariats, and at the technical level through the capacity building and concrete implementation activities supported by the Regional Forums.

2.2. Differences in Contributions

2.2.1. Regional Priorities

As previously highlighted, each Regional Forum focuses on region-specific environmental challenges or priorities, with the LAC Forum focusing, among others, on ecosystem restoration, water management, and gender integration in environmental policies. The AMCEN prioritizes desertification, marine and coastal management, and climate change adaptation across the African continent. Meanwhile, the AP Forum highlights critical regional concerns such as marine litter, air pollution, and sustainable consumption and production, while also providing regional input to the UNEA and adopting resolutions on pressing issues like marine litter and air pollution.

In conclusion, the LAC Forum, AMCEN, and AP Forum share common goals of promoting regional cooperation, policy development, and capacity building to address environmental challenges. However, their outcomes reflect distinct regional priorities and institutional approaches.

3. Comparison of the governance structure of the Regional Forums

3.1. Commonalities in governance structures

3.1.1. Regional focus and membership

The LAC Forum, the AMCEN, and the AP Forum comprise 33, 54, and 41 member countries respectively, serving as platforms to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable

development within their respective regions.

3.1.2. Leadership

To ensure equitable geographical representation, each Regional Forum employs a rotating leadership structure: the LAC Forum rotates its presidency among four sub-regional groups (Southern Cone, Caribbean, Andean, Mesoamerica), AMCEN rotates among five African subregions (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa), and the AP designates a Chairperson from the host country supported by Vice-Chairs from other Member States.

3.1.3. Bureau or executive body

The Regional Forums have a Bureau or executive body to guide their work, with LAC's Bureau comprising two representatives from four sub-regional groups, AMCEN's Bureau consisting of five members (president, vice-presidents, and rapporteur) representing five subregions, and AP's Bureau composed of the chair and two vice-chairs.

3.1.4. Working groups and committees

Each forum establishes specialized structures to address specific environmental challenges. The LAC Forum has 13 permanent working groups focusing on distinct areas; the AMCEN employs Ecosystem Committees, Technical Cooperation Networks, and Thematic Working Groups such as the African Group of Negotiators. In contrast, the AP Forum does not maintain Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) but supports thematic networks and platforms in the region, such as the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) which provide platform to adaptation practitioners to discuss adaptation issues and challenges, and come up with actors specific recommendations to advance adaptation actions, and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) which mobilized actors including government, UN and Non-UN actors to take actions to deal with air pollution, and provides regular updates on their activities to the Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum.

3.1.5. Support

The three Regional Forums are supported by UNEP as their secretariat.

3.2. Differences in governance structures

3.2.1. Institutional support and secretariat

The LAC Forum benefits from a dedicated staff member within the UNEP Secretariat, enhancing operational efficiency and communication with Member States, while AMCEN relies on UNEP’s

ROA staff for secretariat support but faces challenges due to the lack of dedicated staff, and the AP Forum, lacking a permanent secretariat or dedicated staff, depends on UNEP's ROAP for organizational support.

3.2.2. Sub-regional representation

The LAC Forum explicitly divides its membership into four sub-regional groups (Southern Cone, Caribbean, Andes, Mesoamerica) to ensure balanced representation, while the AMCEN organizes its membership into five African subregions (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa), and the AP Forum lacks a formal sub-regional structure but collaborates with organizations like ASEAN and SACEP.

3.2.3. Working groups and committees

3.2.3.1. LAC Forum: Has a well-defined structure of 13 permanent working groups, focusing on implementation and knowledge-sharing.

- Composition: LAC's working groups consist of technical staff from the ministries of environment, who are generally not negotiators.

- Goals: LAC's working groups focus on knowledge-sharing, regional cooperation, and the development and implementation of environmental policies at the national level. They aim to address specific environmental challenges assigned to each working group.
- Outcome: The groups facilitate regional dialogue and collaboration and support countries in meeting their environmental commitments under global agreements.

3.2.3.2. AMCEN: Relies on Ecosystem Committees, Technical Cooperation Networks, and Thematic Working Groups (African Group of Negotiators), which are more negotiation-oriented.

- Composition: AMCEN's working groups are composed of negotiators who represent African countries in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These groups, known as the African Group of Negotiators (AGNs), focus on specific thematic areas such as biodiversity, climate change, and desertification.

- Goals: AMCEN's working groups aim to prepare African countries for international

negotiations under MEAs, ensuring a unified regional voice. They also focus on knowledge-sharing and capacity-building to support negotiation processes.

- Outcome: The groups contribute to Africa's participation in global environmental governance, particularly in forums like the UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD.

3.2.3.3. AP Forum: Does not have thematic working groups (TWGs); however, it maintains separate thematic forums and networks in the region, such as the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP).

- Composition: Its thematic forums and networks include representatives from Member States and relevant stakeholders across the region. Participation is broad and inclusive, allowing flexible collaboration on specific environmental issues through platforms like the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network and APCAP.

- Goals: The goal is to facilitate regional collaboration on priority environmental issues through inclusive and flexible platforms. They aim to support knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and coordinated action on challenges such as climate change adaptation and air pollution, while contributing to regional implementation of global environmental commitments.
- Outcome: They help align regional efforts with international commitments such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

3.2.4. Integration with broader regional bodies

The LAC Forum and the AP Forum lack a formal relationship with a regional political body, while the AMCEN is closely linked to the African Union (AU) and is expected to become a Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of the AU.

3.3. Summary of key differences

Each forum has evolved in its own way, given the political setting of the region and the resource availability. However, the following table summarizes some key aspects that were compared.

Aspect	LAC Forum	AMCEN	AP Forum
Institutional Support	Dedicated UNEP staff member	AMCEN has one dedicated staff member. The Coordinator of AMCEN solely responsible for AMCEN	No dedicated staff, relies on UNEP ROAP
Sub-Regional Structure	Four sub-regional groups	Five African subregions who are all represented in the AMCEN bureau	No formal structure, collaborates with sub-regional bodies
Working Groups	13 permanent Working Groups	Ecosystem Committees, Technical Networks, and Thematic Working Groups(AGNs)	No Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), but it maintains separate thematic forums and networks
Integration with Regional Bodies	Interagency Technical Committee	Linked to African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities	Collaborates with sub-regional organizations
Financial Mechanism	Not explicitly mentioned	Trust Fund (voluntary contributions)	Not explicitly mentioned
Focus of Working Groups	Implementation and knowledge-sharing at the national level	Negotiation-oriented, preparing for international MEAs	Regional strategy development and global alignment

4. Comparative analysis of the types of outcomes

4.1. Commonalities in types of outcomes

4.1.1. Ministerial declarations

All three Regional Forums produce ministerial declarations that serve as high-level political statements reflecting consensus among participating ministers. These declarations align with global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNEA resolutions, and other multilateral environmental agreements. Each declaration outlines specific regional environmental

priorities and strategies, emphasizing the integration of environmental considerations into sustainable development efforts. Additionally, all declarations underscore the importance of regional and international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and the implementation of MEAs to address shared environmental challenges effectively.

4.1.2. Decisions

Both the LAC Forum and AMCEN produce decisions that are more specific and actionable than their ministerial declarations, addressing particular environmental issues and providing a clear framework for implementation. These decisions are designed to guide national and regional actions, supported by mechanisms for implementation and follow-up, such as capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance, and the mobilization of financial resources to ensure execution of the agreed-upon priorities.

4.2. Differences in types of outcomes

4.2.1. Scope of outcomes

The scope of outcomes varies across the forums. The LAC Forum produces both ministerial declarations and decisions, with the latter addressing specific environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and pollution, while emphasizing regional dialogue and leadership in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Similarly, AMCEN generates ministerial declarations and decisions, covering a broad range of topics including climate change, biodiversity, desertification, and marine and coastal management, with a strong focus on implementing MEAs and advocating for a unified African voice in global negotiations. In contrast, the AP Forum produces only a ministerial declaration, which highlights regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and nature-based solutions, with a key focus on advocating for a legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution.

4.2.2. Implementation mechanisms

The implementation mechanisms of the three Regional Forums vary in focus and approach. In the LAC Forum, the implementation of decisions is driven by regional dialogue followed by implementation through its work plan, which is based on the activities planned by the working groups, with support from UNEP. The AMCEN, on the other hand, relies on close collaboration with UNEP Headquarters and other partners, utilizing capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance, and financial resource mobilization to support its outcomes. Additionally, AMCEN employs a structured follow-up mechanism through the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the NEPAD. Meanwhile, the AP Forum focuses on regional cooperation and knowledge sharing

to implement its declaration. Each forum tailors its implementation strategies to address its unique regional priorities and challenges, using their specific institutional arrangements.

5. Comparative analysis of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms

5.1. Commonalities in monitoring and reporting mechanisms

Regular reporting to Member States: Each Regional Forum ensures regular reporting on the progress of its activities to Member States through structured mechanisms, even when each Forum follows a different process (see below).

5.2. Differences in monitoring and reporting mechanisms

5.2.1. Structure and tools for monitoring

The LAC Forum employs a regularly updated two-year work and monitoring plan to coordinate the activities of its 13 working groups and networks, reporting progress to Member States, while the AMCEN utilizes biennial work programs and inter-sessional committees for oversight, and the AP Forum relies on chair's summaries and senior officials' reports to track progress on UNEA resolutions and regional priorities, though it lacks a structured multi-year plan like the LAC Forum.

5.2.2. Regional integration for reporting

The LAC Forum actively integrates its work with regional mechanisms monitoring the 2030 Agenda, such as the ECLAC-organized Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development, providing leadership on the environmental dimension, while AMCEN is working towards becoming a STC of the AU to align its activities with the AU's development agenda, and the AP Forum focuses on providing regional input to UNEA and integrating its outcomes into global environmental governance, though it lacks formalized integration with a regional political body like the AU.

5.2.3. Frequency of reporting

The LAC Forum reports progress at least twice a year to high-level officials and the Bureau, while the AMCEN provides annual updates to the Bureau and biennial reports to Member States during regular sessions, and the AP Forum delivers progress reports after each meeting, supported by follow-up mechanisms to monitor implementation.

6. Comparative analysis of the major groups and stakeholders mode

of engagement

Each Regional Forum has developed distinct mechanisms to ensure inclusive participation, but there are also notable commonalities in their approaches. Below is a comparative analysis of their engagement models, highlighting similarities and differences.

6.1. Commonalities in stakeholders mode of engagement

6.1.1. Structured participation

All three Regional Forums offer formal platforms for MGS to engage in discussions about their processes, in particular prior to their regular sessions and to UNEA sessions, through Regional Consultative Meetings. In addition, the AMCEN facilitates civil society participation in thematic workshops.

6.1.2. Focus on capacity building

Each forum emphasizes training and capacity-building initiatives to enhance stakeholders' engagement effectiveness, with the LAC Forum offering multiple trainings on engaging with the LAC Forum and UNEA processes, the AMCEN implementing programs like the CLEAA network for environmental impact assessments, and the AP Forum fostering youth engagement and training through platforms such as the Asia Pacific Regional Youth Environment Forum.

6.1.3. Integration of stakeholder inputs into processes

All three Regional Forums ensure that stakeholder inputs are integrated into key documents that are made available to the ministers and their teams.

6.2. Differences in stakeholders mode of engagement

Institutional frameworks

The Forum in the LAC region plays a central role in organizing consultations and capacity-building activities, while the AMCEN prioritizes partnerships with civil society organizations for program implementation. In contrast, the AP Forum focuses more on dedicated stakeholder forums and youth engagement.

7. Comparative analysis of the funding

7.1. Commonalities in funding

7.1.1. Reliance on UNEP and the environment fund

UNEP's Environment Fund serves as a vital resource for each Regional Forum, empowering them to execute their mandates and advance regional agendas.

7.1.2. Partnerships with international and regional organizations

All Regional Forums mobilize contributions from other organizations active in their regions, to support their activities. For example, the LAC Forum collaborates with the members of the Interagency Technical Committee, while the AMCEN works with the African Development Bank and the AU, and the AP Forum engages with organizations like the GGGI and CTCN. These partnerships are instrumental in mobilizing financial resources, technical expertise, and political support to address shared challenges and advance sustainable development goals.

7.1.3. Financing for capacity building and technical assistance

All three forums prioritize capacity-building initiatives and technical assistance to Member States. These activities are often funded through international cooperation and partnerships, strengthening regional environmental governance and attracting donor interest.

7.1.4. Integration with broader regional and global initiatives

The forums align their work with broader regional and global frameworks, such as the SDGs, UNEA resolutions, and regional development plans (e.g., NEPAD for AMCEN).

7.2. Differences in funding

7.2.1. Institutional funding mechanisms

The financial mechanisms of regional environmental forums vary significantly. The LAC Forum relies heavily on UNEP's Environment Fund and structured budgetary allocations, lacking a dedicated trust fund but benefiting from UNEA resolutions that emphasize support for the activities implemented by the regional forum.

In contrast, the AMCEN has established a trust fund to ensure financial sustainability, although it has faced challenges due to limited contributions from Member States, making this fund a unique

feature of AMCEN's resource mobilization strategy.

Meanwhile, the AP Forum does not have a trust fund but focuses on leveraging UNEP's Environment Fund and exploring regional funding mechanisms for specific activities, particularly those addressing transboundary issues such as marine litter and air pollution.

7.2.2. Challenges and financial sustainability

All three forums are dependent on UNEP´s Environment Fund, with AMCEN having a dedicated trust fund that has, however, received limited contributions.

• G. Success stories illustrating how the Regional Forums have contributed to supporting the tackling of environmental challenges, and in designing and contributing to UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Program of Work

1. LAC Forum

1.1. Success stories of the LAC Forum

1.1.1. Thirteen working groups, networks, and coalitions

The Forum has established 13 working groups, networks, and coalitions that provide a unique space for collaboration among countries in the region, and which respond directly to the decisions made by the Forum. These groups focus on a wide range of environmental issues, including pollution, waste management, biodiversity, climate change, and gender equality. A complete list of these working groups has been provided before. By fostering regional cooperation at a technical level, these groups enable countries to share knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions to common environmental challenges.

1.1.2. Five thousand participants trained in pollution and waste management

The Forum has trained 5,000 participants in regional cooperation and information exchange activities related to pollution and waste management. These training programs have enhanced the capacity of government officials, experts, and stakeholders to address critical environmental issues, such as plastic pollution, hazardous waste, and air quality. The training has also promoted the adoption of sustainable waste management practices across the region**1.1.3. One hundred**

scholarships for chemical risk assessment training

The Forum has awarded over 100 scholarships to government officials for training in chemical risk assessment and classification. This initiative has strengthened the region's capacity to manage chemical risks, ensuring the safe use, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances. The training has also contributed to the implementation of international agreements, such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

1.1.4. Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies for LAC

The Forum has developed a Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies for LAC, which is being implemented in 4 countries. This framework provides a standardized approach to classifying sustainable investments, making it easier for governments, businesses, and financial institutions to align their activities with environmental goals. The framework is compatible with other national and international taxonomies, promoting regional and global coherence in sustainable finance.

1.1.5. Training in sustainable public procurement

The Forum has provided training and technical assistance in sustainable public procurement to 7 countries. This initiative helps governments integrate sustainability criteria into their procurement processes, ensuring that public spending supports environmental goals. By promoting the purchase of eco-friendly products and services, the Forum is driving the transition toward green economies in the region.

1.1.6. Support for NDC implementation in 11 countries

The Forum has supported the implementation of NDCs in 11 countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. This support includes technical assistance, capacity building, and the development of policies and strategies to meet climate commitments. The Forum's efforts have been instrumental in advancing the region's climate action agenda under the Paris Agreement.

1.1.7. Technical support for Article 13 of the Paris Agreement

The Forum has provided technical support for Article 13 of the Paris Agreement and the Enhanced Transparency Framework in 10 countries. This support includes the development of monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems to track progress on climate actions. By enhancing transparency, the Forum is helping countries build trust and accountability in their climate efforts.

1.1.8. Capacity building for carbon markets

The Forum has launched a regional project on capacity building for carbon markets and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, involving 8 countries. This project aims to enhance the region's capacity to participate in international carbon markets, promoting investments in low-carbon technologies and projects. The initiative also supports the implementation of cooperative approaches under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

1.1.9. Ecosystem-based adaptation for cities

The Forum has initiated a regional project on Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA) for Cities, involving 11 countries. This project focuses on building resilience to climate change through nature-based solutions, such as restoring urban green spaces, protecting wetlands, and promoting sustainable land use practices. The initiative aims to reduce the vulnerability of cities to climate impacts, such as flooding, heatwaves, and water scarcity.

1.1.10. Capacity development on sustainable consumption and production

The Forum has conducted 8 capacity development activities on SCP, with 3 financing proposals accepted to support these initiatives. These activities focus on promoting resource efficiency, reducing waste, and encouraging sustainable lifestyles. By fostering collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society, the Forum is helping to drive the transition toward more sustainable consumption and production patterns in the region.

1.1.11. Regional integrated environmental information system

The Forum is currently designing and implementing a Regional Integrated Environmental Information System. This system aims to improve the collection, management, and sharing of environmental data across Latin America and the Caribbean. By creating a unified platform for environmental information, the system will enable better decision-making, policy formulation, and monitoring of environmental trends.

1.1.12. Water harvesting project with women's organizations

The Forum has implemented a water harvesting project in 5 countries, working closely with women's organizations. This project focuses on promoting sustainable water management practices, such as rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge. By empowering women as key agents of change, the initiative addresses water scarcity while promoting gender equality and community resilience.

1.1.13. Gender integration in environmental initiatives

The Forum has developed a checklist for gender integration in environmental initiatives and a list of 48 indicators to measure the situation of women in relation to natural resources and pollution. These tools ensure that gender considerations are systematically integrated into environmental policies and projects, promoting inclusive and equitable sustainable development.

1.1.14. Action plan for ecosystem restoration

The Forum has designed an Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is being updated under the new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This plan outlines a regional strategy for restoring degraded ecosystems, such as forests, wetlands, and coastal areas. The plan emphasizes the importance of engaging local communities and indigenous peoples in restoration activities.

1.1.15. Support for the Escazú Agreement negotiation and adoption

The Forum has played a key role in supporting the negotiations of the Escazú Agreement, the first regional agreement in the world to promote environmental democracy. This agreement focuses on access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters. The Forum's support has been instrumental in advancing environmental governance and protecting environmental defenders in the region.

1.2. Success stories of the LAC Forum contributing to UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Program of Work

1.2.1. Alignment with UNEP's strategic objectives

The LAC Forum's initiatives align closely with UNEP's three strategic objectives outlined in the MTS (2022–2025):

- Climate Action: The Forum's support for NDC implementation, carbon markets, and the Enhanced Transparency Framework directly contributes to climate stability by helping countries meet their Paris Agreement commitments.
- Nature Action: Projects like the Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Cities, the Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration, and the Regional Integrated Environmental Information System promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use**,** focusing on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration.
- Chemicals and Pollution Action: Initiatives such as training in pollution and waste management, chemical risk assessment, and sustainable public procurement, to mention just

a few, address pollution and waste challenges, aligning with UNEP's goal of reducing environmental degradation, promoting sound chemical management, and reducing pollution.

1.2.2. Support for foundational and enabling subprograms

The LAC Forum's initiatives also support UNEP's foundational and enabling subprograms:

- Science-Policy: The Regional Integrated Environmental Information System enhances data collection and sharing, supporting evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation.
- Environmental Governance: The Forum's support for the Escazú Agreement and gender integration in environmental initiatives strengthens environmental governance and promotes inclusive decision-making.
- Finance and Economic Transformations: The Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies and capacity-building activities on sustainable consumption and production align with UNEP's efforts to promote sustainable finance and green economies.
- Digital Transformations: The Regional Integrated Environmental Information System leverages digital tools to improve environmental data management and sharing, supporting UNEP's digital transformation subprogram.

1.2.3. Regional collaboration and capacity building

The LAC Forum's emphasis on regional collaboration and capacity building is a key strength. Some examples include:

- Working groups, networks, and coalitions: The establishment of 13 working groups fosters regional cooperation, enabling countries to share knowledge and best practices. This aligns with UNEP's goal of promoting networked multilateralism.
- Training and capacity building: The Forum's training programs, such as the 5,000 participants trained in pollution and waste management and the 100 scholarships for chemical risk assessment, enhance regional capacity to address environmental challenges. This supports UNEP's focus on building institutional and technical capacity.
- Gender integration: The Forum's checklist for gender integration and indicators for measuring women's situation in relation to natural resources promote inclusive and equitable sustainable development, aligning with UNEP's commitment to gender equality.

1.2.4. Contribution to global environmental agendas

The LAC Forum's initiatives contribute to global environmental agendas and frameworks, to mention only a few:

- UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement: The Forum's support for NDC implementation, carbon

markets, and the Enhanced Transparency Framework helps countries meet their Paris Agreement commitments.

- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: The Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration seeks to align with the global biodiversity framework, promoting ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation.
- Escazú Agreement: The Forum's support for the Escazú Agreement advances environmental democracy and governance, contributing to global efforts to protect environmental defenders and promote public participation in environmental decision-making.

1.2.5. Innovative approaches and tools

The LAC Forum has developed innovative tools and approaches that align with UNEP's focus on transformative change:

- Sustainable finance taxonomies: The Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies provides a standardized approach to classifying sustainable investments, promoting regional coherence in sustainable finance.
- Ecosystem-based adaptation: The regional project on Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Cities promotes nature-based solutions to build climate resilience, aligning with UNEP's focus on innovative approaches to climate adaptation.
- Gender integration tools: The checklist for gender integration and indicators for measuring women's situation in relation to natural resources ensure that gender considerations are systematically integrated into environmental policies and projects.

1. The AMCEN

1.1. Success stories of the AMCEN

2.1.1. Development of the NEPAD environment action plan

AMCEN played a pivotal role in developing the new partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Environment Action Plan, which addresses critical environmental challenges such as desertification, climate change, and coastal ecosystem management. This plan has guided African nations in aligning environmental sustainability with development goals, fostering resilience and sustainable growth across the continent.[8]

2.1.2. Revitalization of regional conventions

AMCEN successfully revitalized the Nairobi Convention and the Abidjan Convention, which focus

on protecting and managing the marine and coastal environments of Eastern and Western Africa, respectively. These efforts have strengthened regional cooperation and improved the sustainable management of shared natural resources.[18]

2.1.3. AEO reports

AMCEN initiated the AEO, a comprehensive report series that assesses environmental trends and provides policy recommendations for sustainable development. The AEO has become a critical tool for decision-makers, helping to integrate environmental considerations into national and regional development plans.[9]

2.1.4. Global advocacy for Africa's environmental priorities

AMCEN has consistently advocated for Africa's environmental priorities in global forums such as the UNFCCC and the CBD. This advocacy has ensured that Africa's unique challenges, such as climate vulnerability and biodiversity loss, are addressed in international policies and agreements.5

2.1.5. Capacity building and knowledge sharing

Through its networks and committees, AMCEN has facilitated technical cooperation and capacity-building among African nations. This has enabled countries to share knowledge, best practices, and resources, strengthening their ability to address environmental challenges effectively.[5]

2.2. Success stories of the AMCEN Contributing to UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Program of Work

2.2.1. Development of the NEPAD environment action plan

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The NEPAD Environment Action Plan aligns with UNEP's strategic objective of addressing the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution). By focusing on desertification, climate change, and coastal ecosystem management, the plan supports UNEP's goal of promoting sustainable development and resilience in vulnerable regions.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: The plan provides a regional framework that complements UNEP's efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into national and regional development agendas. It also supports UNEP's focus on fostering partnerships and

[18] AMCEN. (2002). *Revitalization of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions*.

collaboration with regional bodies to achieve global environmental goals.

2.2.2. Revitalization of regional conventions (Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions)

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The revitalization of these conventions supports UNEP's thematic subprogram on Nature Action, which aims to halt biodiversity loss and promote ecosystem restoration. The conventions focus on marine and coastal environments, which are critical for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: By strengthening regional cooperation and improving the management of shared natural resources, these conventions enhance UNEP's efforts to promote transboundary environmental governance. This aligns with UNEP's foundational subprogram on environmental governance, which seeks to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks for environmental protection.

2.2.3. AEO reports

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AEO reports align with UNEP's Science-Policy subprogram, which emphasizes the importance of credible scientific data and assessments to inform policy decisions. The AEO provides a regional assessment of environmental trends, which supports UNEP's goal of integrating science into policymaking.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: The AEO reports serve as a valuable resource for UNEP and its Member States, offering evidence-based policy recommendations that can be integrated into national and regional development plans. This supports UNEP's efforts to promote data-driven decision-making and strengthen the science-policy interface.

2.2.4. Global advocacy for Africa's environmental priorities

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: AMCEN's global advocacy, including the efforts of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN), aligns with UNEP's strategic objective of raising global ambition for environmental action and advancing multilateral environmental agreements. Through AGN's coordinated engagement in key negotiations — such as the UNFCCC climate talks and CITES wildlife trade conventions — Africa has strengthened its influence in shaping global environmental agendas, contributing directly to UNEP's aims in climate action, biodiversity, and environmental governance.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: The AGN has been instrumental in ensuring that Africa's specific environmental challenges — including climate finance, adaptation, and just transitions — are prioritized in UNFCCC negotiations, supporting UNEP's climate and resilience goals. At CITES Conferences of the Parties, AGN wildlife negotiators have played

a central role in advancing African positions on species protection, sustainable trade, and enforcement against illegal trafficking. These successes reinforce UNEP's role in fostering inclusive and science-based multilateralism while amplifying the voices of vulnerable regions like Africa.

2.2.5. Capacity building and knowledge sharing

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: AMCEN's capacity-building initiatives align with UNEP's enabling subprogram on Finance and Economic Transformations, which emphasizes the importance of building institutional and technical capacity to support sustainable development.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: By facilitating technical cooperation and knowledge sharing among African nations, AMCEN strengthens the capacity of countries to implement environmental policies and achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This supports UNEP's efforts to enhance the effectiveness of environmental governance and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

2.2.6. Abidjan Declaration on a Legally Binding Drought Protocol (2024)

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: Supports UNEP's Nature Action and Environmental Governance subprogrammes by promoting ecosystem resilience, drought preparedness, and legal environmental instruments.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Strengthens regional legal frameworks to address desertification and land degradation. Promotes UNEP's role in science-policy integration, aligning African countries with the UNCCD and UNEP's restoration agenda.

2.2.7. Unified African position on global plastic treaty (1 st half of 2023–2024)

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: Supports UNEP's Pollution Action Plan and Nature Action strategy by emphasizing reduced pollution, plastic phase-out, and ecosystem protection.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Ahead of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution, AMCEN helped formulate a strong collective African stance calling for a just treaty rooted in human rights, reinforcing UNEP's push for inclusive, multilateral solutions.

2.2.8. Strengthened continental cooperation: AMCEN-19, August 2023

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy:Reflects UNEP's Finance & Economic Transformation and Environmental Governance subprograms by mobilizing resources and boosting institutional

frameworks.

- Contribution to UNEP's Work: At AMCEN-19 (Addis Ababa), ministers representing 51 countries adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration with five key decisions, including commitments to expand AMCEN's Trust Fund and to push a unified African voice in global environmental fora.

2.2.9. Common African Position on Climate Finance for COP29

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: Advances UNEP's Finance and Economic Transformations subprogramme by promoting just transitions and sustainable financing mechanisms for climate action.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Provides political backing for UNEP's efforts to unlock climate finance through multilateral funds. The African ministers endorsed a target of $1.3 trillion/year by 2030, emphasizing grant-based and high-integrity financing mechanisms, including operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund.

2.2.10. Waste Management and CHAMP Roadmap

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: Supports Environmental Governance and Pollution Action subprogrammes by targeting high-impact waste sources and promoting sustainable urban development.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Ministers agreed to eliminate open burning of waste by 2040 and endorsed UNEP's CHAMP initiative (Clean and Healthy Air for African Cities). Regional pilots (e.g., Kisumu, Kenya) demonstrate UNEP's strategy in action through local implementation and capacity building.

2.2.11. Land Degradation Neutrality and Ecosystem Restoration

- lignment with UNEP Strategy: Supports Nature Action by focusing on land degradation neutrality, ecosystem restoration, and climate-smart land use.
- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Strengthens partnerships between UNEP, UNCCD, AfDB, and the African Union to deliver regional restoration programs. Reinforces UNEP's global role in supporting SDG 15 and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

2.2.12. Preparation for AMCEN-20 and Future Strategic Direction (2025–2027)

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: Contributes across all UNEP subprogrammes, especially Finance and Economic Transformation and Inclusive Multilateralism, by identifying priorities such as critical minerals, youth engagement, and green finance.

- Contribution to UNEP's Work: Sets the agenda for UNEP's engagement with AMCEN over the next Medium-Term Strategy period. Ensures that UNEP's policy directions are informed by regional priorities and grassroots realities.

2. The AP Forum

2.1. Success stories of the AP Forum

3.1.1. Advancing the green economy

The Forum emphasized the transition to a green economy, highlighting opportunities for decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution. It promoted investments in natural capital, green technologies, and sustainable financial systems. Success stories include initiatives to realign financial systems to support renewable energy and energy efficiency, especially in transforming the power sector (Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, pp.2-4).7

3.1.2. Promoting resilience and disaster preparedness

The Forum supported ecosystem-based adaptation measures and early warning systems to protect communities from climate change impacts. Countries have strengthened disaster risk reduction plans, integrating poverty reduction measures into climate response strategies (Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, p.4).7

3.1.3. Addressing environment and health linkages

The Forum highlighted cross-sectoral interventions to tackle air, water, and soil pollution, harmful chemicals, and e-waste management. It fostered collaboration between Ministries of Health and Environment, promoting regional strategies like the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) approach for waste management (Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, pp.5-6).[7]

3.1.4. Enhancing regional cooperation

The Forum facilitated regional cooperation on transboundary environmental issues such as e-waste management and pollution control. Initiatives like the Pacific Oceanscape Framework were supported to strengthen governance for integrated ecosystem management. (Chair's Summary of

the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, pp.3-5).7

3.1.5. Strengthening environmental governance

The Forum advocated for robust national legislative measures aligned with SDGs, including environmental rule of law and integrated institutional arrangements for SDG implementation. Success stories include mainstreaming environment into national financial systems through partnerships with Ministries of Finance and Central Banks (Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, p.3).7

3.1.6. Building knowledge and capacity

The Forum prioritized improving systems for monitoring, data generation, and analysis to provide decision-makers with actionable information. Efforts to raise awareness about the costs of pollution and ecosystem services have helped chart pathways toward sustainability (Chair's Summary of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Forums of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, p.4).7

3.2. Success stories of the AP Forum contributing to UNEP Medium Term Strategy and Program of Work

3.2.1. Advancing the green economy

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's emphasis on transitioning to a green economy aligns with UNEP's Finance and Economic Transformations subprogram, which focuses on shifting finance and business practices towards sustainable consumption and production. The forum's initiatives to realign financial systems to support renewable energy and energy efficiency resonate with UNEP's goal of promoting inclusive green economies and sustainable finance.
- Contribution to UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's success stories provide practical examples of how countries in the Asia-Pacific region are decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution, which supports UNEP's vision of achieving climate stability and a pollution-free planet. These initiatives also contribute to UNEP's efforts to promote sustainable public procurement and consumer information as part of the One Planet Network.

3.2.2. Promoting resilience and disaster preparedness

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's focus on ecosystem-based adaptation and early warning systems aligns with UNEP's Climate Action subprogram, which aims to enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change. The integration of poverty reduction measures into climate response strategies also supports UNEP's emphasis on social equity and inclusive development.
- Contribution to UNEP Strategy: By strengthening disaster risk reduction plans, the AP Forum contributes to UNEP's goal of building resilient communities and supporting vulnerable populations, particularly in the context of climate change. This aligns with UNEP's Nature Action subprogram, which focuses on restoring ecosystems and enhancing biodiversity to reduce disaster risks.

3.2.3. Addressing environment and health linkages

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's efforts to tackle air, water, and soil pollution, as well as harmful chemicals and e-waste management, align with UNEP's Chemicals and Pollution Action subprogram. The forum's promotion of the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) approach supports UNEP's goal of moving towards a pollution-free planet.
- Contribution to UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's cross-sectoral interventions, particularly the collaboration between Ministries of Health and Environment, provide a model for integrating health and environmental policies. This supports UNEP's focus on sustainable consumption and production and the sound management of chemicals and waste.

3.2.4. Enhancing regional cooperation

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's facilitation of regional cooperation on transboundary environmental issues, such as e-waste management and pollution control, aligns with UNEP's emphasis on inclusive multilateralism and strengthening environmental governance. The support for initiatives like the Pacific Oceanscape Framework also resonates with UNEP's Nature Action subprogram, which focuses on integrated ecosystem management.
- Contribution to UNEP Strategy: By fostering regional cooperation, the AP Forum contributes to UNEP's goal of achieving coherent and integrated approaches to environmental challenges. This supports UNEP's efforts to enhance synergies among MEAs and promote transboundary environmental governance.

3.2.5. Strengthening environmental governance

- Alignment with UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's advocacy for robust national legislative measures and alignment with the SDGs aligns with UNEP's Environmental Governance subprogram. The forum's efforts to mainstream environment into national financial systems through partnerships with Ministries of Finance and Central Banks support UNEP's goal of promoting policy coherence and integrated approaches to sustainable development.
- Contribution to UNEP Strategy: The AP Forum's success stories provide examples of how countries are strengthening environmental rule of law and integrating environmental considerations into national planning. This contributes to UNEP's vision of achieving stronger environmental governance and institutional capacity for SDG implementation.

3.2.6. Building knowledge and capacity

- Alignment with UNEP strategy: The AP Forum's focus on improving systems for monitoring, data generation, and analysis aligns with UNEP's Science-Policy subprogram, which emphasizes the importance of credible environmental data and science-based decision-making. The forum's efforts to raise awareness about the costs of pollution and ecosystem services support UNEP's goal of promoting sustainable consumption and production.
- Contribution to UNEP strategy: By building knowledge and capacity, the AP Forum contributes to UNEP's efforts to provide actionable information to decision-makers and enhance public awareness of environmental issues. This supports UNEP's vision of leveraging digital transformations to democratize access to environmental data and knowledge.

In a nutshell, for the AP Forum, the biennial regional ministerial forum has become a key regional platform to discuss current and emerging environmental challenges including transboundary issues, opportunities, partnership and share success stories. The forum consistently reviewing progress on implementation of UNEA resolutions and aligns regional priorities with the UN Environment Assembly (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 Program 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.

The report assesses how these forums contribute to strengthening multilateral environmental governance through contributions to UNEP Program 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.

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 Program 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.

• H. Challenges and opportunities to enhance the role and viability of the regional forums

1. Challenges

1.1. Institutional gaps

- Limited Secretariats: the Regional Forums have very small secretariats to support their multiple activities. In some cases, the Secretariats, provided by UNEP´s Regional Offices, do not have dedicated staff in charge of servicing the Forums.
- Unclear formal links to global processes: Regional Forums tend to operate with limited integration into global environmental governance structures like UNEA and MEAs.
- Limited monitoring and reporting: Systematic mechanisms to track progress on regional commitments are often incomplete.

1.2. Policy gaps

- Disconnect between decisions and action: Ministerial declarations and resolutions are frequently not translated into actionable projects or policies at the national or regional level.
- Limited cross-sectoral integration: Environmental issues (climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, pollution) are often treated in isolation, without integration across environmental agendas, although initiatives such as UNEA resolutions 6/4 and 6/6, and the priority of work on synergies between conventions established at the Special Session of the LAC Forum are starting to address the issue.

1.3. Capacity gaps

- Funding constraints: Reliance on voluntary contributions and varying allocations from the Environment Fund limit the ability to implement decisions and support working groups and projects.
- Limited technical expertise: The Forums sometimes lack the technical capacity to respond to specific mandates from Member States, particularly in areas where UNEP staff are not available and resources are lacking to engage external expertise.
- Stakeholder engagement: Due to the limited availability of resources, both financial and human, the Secretariats of the Forums face challenges to meaningfully and consistently integrate major groups and stakeholders into the processes.

Challenges summary:

- 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.

2. Opportunities for strengthening Regional Forums

2.1. Institutional strengthening

- Establish dedicated Secretariats with full-time staff to ensure continuity and effective follow-up for the implementation of decisions.
- Develop formalized mechanisms for linking regional priorities to global processes like UNEA and MEAs.
- Introduce robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress on commitments and ensure accountability.

2.2. Policy integration

- Translate high-level decisions into concrete, actionable projects with clear indicators and timelines, which is dependent on the availability of financial resources for effectiveness.
- Promote cross-sectoral integration by involving finance, planning, and development ministries in environmental discussions.
- Ensure that the Regional Forums have a role to play in the discussions about collaboration for the implementation of MEAs, and possible synergies in these processes.

2.3. Capacity strengthening

- Seek sustainable funding through stable allocations from the Environment Fund and exploring innovative financing mechanisms, to ensure appropriate responses to the priorities defined at regional level.
- Strengthen major groups and stakeholders engagement by providing adequate resources to ensure meaningful participation.

3. Opportunities for enhanced collaboration between Regional Forums

There are opportunities for enhanced collaboration among the Regional Forums. These opportunities encompass knowledge exchange, resource mobilization, and coordinated advocacy on global environmental challenges. By leveraging these collaborative efforts, regional forums could amplify their impact and drive more effective environmental governance worldwide.

3.1. Knowledge sharing and best practices

One of the most promising avenues for collaboration is the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Each region has developed unique approaches to address environmental challenges, and sharing these experiences can be mutually beneficial.

For example, the LAC Forum's Intergovernmental Platform on Air Quality and the Voluntary Coalition for the Progressive Closure of Landfills could provide valuable lessons for the Asia-Pacific region, which has also prioritized air pollution and waste management. Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Forum's experience in developing regional action plans on ecosystem restoration could inform similar initiatives in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Establishing formal mechanisms for sharing information, such as regular webinars, joint workshops, and online platforms, could facilitate this exchange. These platforms could also serve as repositories for best practices, case studies, and policy recommendations.

3.2. Coordinated advocacy and political influence

Regional forums could amplify their influence on global environmental governance by coordinating their advocacy efforts. By presenting a united front on key issues, they could exert greater pressure on international negotiations and ensure that regional priorities are reflected in global agreements.

The Forums could collaborate to develop common positions on issues under consideration at the UNEA and MEAs. This would involve aligning regional priorities, sharing information on regional circumstances, and coordinating communication efforts. It is understood that each Forum has its own processes and governance, and each focuses on their regional priorities, but collaborating on specific issues could help propel the role of the Forums and the regions they represent in the global agendas.

3.3. Resource mobilization and partnerships

Collaborative efforts to mobilize resources and build partnerships could help address the funding challenges that the regional forums face. By pooling their resources and expertise, the forums could attract greater support from international donors, multilateral banks, and private sector partners.

Developing joint project proposals that address shared environmental challenges could be an effective way to leverage resources. These projects could focus on areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration. Partnering with organizations like the donors, multilateral banks, and other partners can provide access to additional resources and expertise.

3.4. Strengthening the science-policy interface

Enhancing the science-policy interface is crucial for ensuring that environmental policies are informed by the best available scientific evidence. Regional forums can collaborate to develop mechanisms for providing ministers with updated information on regional environmental trends and emerging issues. Conducting joint scientific assessments of environmental challenges and sharing information about networks of experts could help identify common priorities and inform aligned policy responses.

Opportunities summary:

- 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.)

I. Conclusions

This report represents the first comprehensive comparative analysis of three Regional Forums: the LAC Forum, the AMCEN, and the AP Forum. These forums play a critical role in addressing regional and global environmental challenges, fostering international cooperation, and contributing to the implementation of UNEP's MTS and PoW. The report highlights their unique contributions, common challenges, and opportunities for enhancing their role in global environmental governance.

The LAC Forum, established in 1982, is the longest-standing regional environmental cooperation platform. It serves as a unique space for political dialogue and collaboration among 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through its 13 working groups and networks, the forum enables countries to collaborate on regional priorities, exchange knowledge, and implement joint activities. Its contributions include fostering regional cooperation, aligning with global environmental agendas, and promoting inclusive practices.

The LAC Forum has achieved significant successes in advancing regional environmental governance and sustainability. An accomplishment was creating the Common Framework of Sustainable Finance Taxonomies in LAC, which aligns economic and environmental priorities across the region and beyond. Capacity-building efforts have trained 5,000 professionals in waste management and provided 100 chemical risk assessment scholarships. The Forum has also supported climate action by aiding NDC implementation in 11 countries and enhancing Paris Agreement transparency measures. Additional achievements include promoting gender-responsive policies, ecosystem restoration initiatives, and advocacy for the landmark Escazú Agreement on environmental rights. These comprehensive efforts demonstrate the Forum's pivotal role in driving sustainable development across the region.

The AMCEN, founded in 1985, is a key platform for addressing Africa's environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. AMCEN provides a unified voice for African nations in global environmental negotiations, strengthening the continent's ability to influence international agendas. It has been instrumental in advancing regional conventions, conducting environmental assessments, and promoting sustainable development policies. AMCEN has also played a pivotal role in modernizing the legal framework for conservation through the revised Algiers Convention. However, the forum faces challenges such as limited funding and weak follow-up mechanisms, which hinder its ability to fully implement its decisions.

The AMCEN has proven to be a crucial platform for fostering international cooperation in addressing Africa’s environmental challenges. Its successes, such as the development of the NEPAD Environment Action Plan, revitalization of key regional conventions like the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, and the launch of the African Green Stimulus Program (AGSP), highlight its leadership in promoting sustainable growth and climate resilience. The Africa Environment Outlook (AEO) reports provide essential policy insights, while its capacity-building initiatives and knowledge-sharing networks enhance regional cooperation and technical expertise. Through global advocacy, AMCEN ensures that Africa’s environmental priorities are consistently integrated into international agreements, reinforcing its vital role in shaping a sustainable future for the continent.

The AP Forum, launched in 2015, serves as a critical platform for dialogue and cooperation on environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It facilitates regional partnerships, aligns national efforts with global commitments, and fosters collective action. While it is not a deci-sion-making body, its consensus-driven approach ensures that regional concerns are effective-ly represented in international forums like the UNEA and the UNFCCC. The AP Forum has successfully built regional networks and capacity in critical areas such as air pollution and waste management, contributing to the implementation of UNEP's strategic objectives.

The AP Forum has made significant strides in advancing sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region through multiple strategic initiatives. It has championed the transition to a green economy by accelerating renewable energy adoption and developing sustainable financial mechanisms. The Forum has enhanced climate resilience by implementing nature-based adaptation solutions and strengthening disaster early warning systems. Its integrated approach has successfully addressed the interconnected challenges of environmental pollution and public health, while fostering regional collaboration to manage transboundary issues like e-waste and marine conservation. By synchronizing national policies with the Sustainable Development Goals and

promoting evidence-based policymaking through improved data sharing, the Forum has substantially strengthened environmental governance frameworks. These comprehensive efforts directly support UNEP's strategic priorities, including ambitious climate action, pollution control, and inclusive global environmental cooperation.

Insights gathered from government focal points, civil society facilitators, youth leaders, and regional coordinators further illustrate the operational strengths and emerging priorities of these forums. Respondents noted the forums' catalytic roles in shaping regional environmental agendas, building stakeholder networks, and enhancing the visibility of local issues in international negotiations. Forums are also commended for fostering inclusive dialogue through side events and consultative platforms, especially among underrepresented groups such as youth, women, and indigenous communities.

The Forums have been instrumental in pushing forward key issues such as air quality management, environmental transparency, and gender-responsive environmental action. These achievements underscore the forums' adaptability and commitment to locally grounded, yet globally relevant, environmental governance.

All three Regional Forums face a number of common challenges that limit their ability to fully enhance their roles in addressing environmental issues. A primary concern is funding constraints, which severely restrict the implementation of ministerial decisions and the support for working groups. For instance, the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Forum) had to discontinue initiatives such as the network for environmental emergencies due to insufficient funds. Similarly, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) depends on voluntary contributions that are frequently unpaid, while the Asia Pacific (AP) Forum relies on cost-sharing arrangements and external support, resulting in unstable and unpredictable funding streams. This lack of robust and reliable financing hinders the Forums' capacity to execute their mandates effectively.

Implementation gaps also persist, with a frequent disconnect between high-level ministerial decisions and their execution on the ground. This challenge is compounded by the limited capacity of the Forums' Secretariats, which tend to be small teams, often without dedicated staff solely responsible for servicing the Forums' activities. In many cases, the Secretariats operate within UNEP's Regional Offices without sufficient resources or authority to coordinate the broad range of Forum activities efficiently. This staffing limitation negatively affects coordination and follow-

through on agreed actions. Additionally, weak linkages between the Regional Forums and global processes, particularly the UNEA planning cycle and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), further constrain their visibility and influence in the broader arena of global environmental governance. The timing misalignment between the preparation of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), the UNEA sessions, and the AP Ministerial Forum complicates the development of preparatory materials, limiting the Forums' ability to integrate and align their agendas with global priorities.

Moreover, stakeholder engagement across the Forums remains inconsistent and often limited. While the AP Forum has successfully cultivated a network of civil society and youth groups, engagement with the private sector is still underdeveloped. AMCEN and the LAC Forum have further room to improve inclusivity in their decision-making processes. There is a recognized need to better integrate science and technology into policy deliberations, deepen partnerships with academic institutions, and ensure more regular and inclusive consultations with civil society organizations. The lack of robust mechanisms to track progress on regional commitments also impedes accountability and makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of Forum decisions.

Despite these challenges, several opportunities exist to enhance the impact and effectiveness of the Regional Forums. Strengthening the translation of political decisions into concrete, actionable projects and impactful outcomes is essential. Reinforcing the connections and synergies between the Regional Forums themselves, as well as with UNEA, can improve coherence and amplify regional voices in global environmental governance. For example, initiatives such as the synergies resolution proposed by Japan and supported by Fiji at UNEA 6 illustrate how regional collaboration can influence global policy frameworks. Strategic resource mobilization through partnerships with international donors, multilateral development banks, and the private sector could provide more predictable and sustainable financing.

Building stronger and more dedicated Secretariats is also a critical opportunity to improve coordination and implementation. Increasing engagement with major groups, including youth and other stakeholders, at both regional and global levels can foster greater inclusivity and ownership. Enhancing cross-regional collaboration and sharing of best practices would allow Forums to learn from each other's successes and challenges. Additionally, holding more regular focal points meetings would facilitate continuous dialogue and alignment. The Forums also play an important role in political advocacy by raising visibility on key and emerging policy issues such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the One Health approach, thereby

strengthening their relevance and influence.

In conclusion, the Regional Forums remain vital catalytic platforms for international cooperation in addressing pressing environmental challenges. This report has highlighted their significant contributions to regional environmental governance, their alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and Program of Work, and their role in shaping global environmental processes. While each Forum operates within its unique regional context, all are united in their commitment to promoting sustainable development, mitigating environmental degradation, and fostering collaboration among Member States. With strengthened political support, enhanced stakeholder engagement, improved funding mechanisms, and better integration with global governance processes, the Regional Forums can significantly expand their contributions toward achieving global environmental goals and securing a sustainable future for all.

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- ## K. Annexes:

1. Questionnaires

Section: General Questions - Introduction:

Question 1:

Could you briefly describe your role and involvement with [regional forum name] (e.g., African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (Asia-Pacific Forum), Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Forum)? How long have you been engaged with this forum, and what were your main responsibilities or role?

Section: Forum Objectives and Mandates

Forum Relevance

Question 2:

In your opinion, how well does the forum address regional environmental challenges and priorities? How well does it address regional-specific environmental challenges (e.g., pollution, climate change adaptation, biodiversity loss)?

Question 3:

How does the forum contribute to the implementation of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Program of Work (PoW)?

Mandate and Governance:

Question 4:

What are the key strengths of the forum’s governance structure?

Question 5:

Are there areas where governance or mandate improvements are needed?

Section: Contributions and Success Stories

Achievements:

Question 6:

Could you share a success story or example where the forum catalyzed significant progress in tackling environmental challenges, either at national or regional level?

Question 7:

In your opinion, how has the forum contributed to global processes like the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) or Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)? How well does it integrate or align with global environmental agendas?

Catalytic Role:

Question 8:

What mechanisms or initiatives have proven most effective in fostering regional cooperation through the forum?

Question 9:

How has the forum engaged with other stakeholders (e.g., private sector, civil society, academia) and how could this engagement be improved?

Section: Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

Question 10:

What challenges does the forum face in terms of funding, participation, or coordination?

Question 11:

How do these challenges impact on its ability to achieve its objectives?

Opportunities for Improvement:

Question 12:

What opportunities exist to enhance the forum's effectiveness and role as a platform for regional cooperation? What recommendations would you provide to enhance the forum's impact, viability, and catalytic role?

Question 13:

Are there untapped partnerships or resources that could be leveraged?

Section: Regional and Global Integration

Cross-Regional Collaboration:

Question 14:

Have there been successful examples of collaboration between this forum and other regional forums? What lessons can be learned from cross-regional partnerships?

Section: Stakeholder Engagement

Inclusivity and Engagement (question to other stakeholders, not to Chairs of the forum):

Question 15:

How inclusive is the forum in engaging diverse stakeholders, including governments, private sector, and civil society?

Section: Looking Ahead - Future Vision

Question 16:

What is your vision for the forum's role in the next decade?

Question 17:

How can the forum exchange with Ministers of Finance to enable the environmental dimension to be uptake across different ministries? What options do you see as feasible?

Question 18:

Do you have any other ideas on how the forum can be better positioned to address emerging environmental challenges?

2. List of persons interviewed

Region	Status	Name	Last name	Title	Institution	Category
LAC	Mr.	Juan	Bello	Regional Director	UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean Office	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
LAC	Ms.	Andrea	Brusco	Deputy Regional Director	UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean Office	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
AP	Mr.	Mozaharul	Alam	Regional Coordinator	UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
AP	Ph. D., Mr.	Subrata	Sinha	Regional Environmental Affairs Officer	UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
LAC	Mr.	David	Persaud	Environmental Manager	Ministry of Planning and Development	Focal Points for the Forums at the Country Level
LAC	Ms.	Maria Teresa	Becerra	Head, Office of International Affairs	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable	Focal Points for the Forums at

					Development	the Country Level
LAC	Mr.	Alejandro	Luque	Regional Facilitator for Civil Society	Major Groups and Stakeholders Accredited to UNEP	Representatives from Civil Society
LAC	Ms.	Enid	Chaverri	Head of the International Cooperation Office	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Focal Points for the Forums at the Country Level
Africa	Mr.	Allan	Meso	Coordinator, AMCEN Secretariat	Coordinator AMCEN Secretariat UNEP	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
AP	Mr.	Zuhair	Ahmed Kowshik	Operations Facilitation Lead	Children and Youth Major Group	Representatives from Civil Society
Africa	Mr.	David	N. Munene	Africa Regional Facilitators for Civil Society	Major Groups & Stakeholders Accredited to the UNEP, Africa & Programs Manager	Representatives from Civil Society
Africa	Ms.	Ndeye Fatou	Ndiaye	Africa Regional	African Women's	Representatives

				Facilitators for Civil Society	Network for Community Management of Forest (REFACOF)	from Civil Society
AP	Ms.	Chinkie	Peliño-Golle	AP Regional Facilitators for Civil Society	IPEN Regional Coordinator for Southeast and East Asia EcoWaste Coalition	Representatives from Civil Society
AP	Mr.	Ajay	K Jha	AP Regional Facilitators for Civil Society	MGS Regional Facilitator for AP MGS Forum	Representatives from Civil Society
LAC	Mr.	Mauricio	Gonzales	Head of General Office of Cooperation and International Affairs	Ministry of Environment-PERU	Focal Points for the Forums at the Country Level
Africa	Mr.	David	Ombisi	Coordinator, AMCEN Secretariat	Coordinator AMCEN Secretariat UNEP	UNEP Staff Responsible for the Forums
LAC	Ms.	Constance	Nalegach	Chief of the International Affairs Office	Ministry of Environment	Focal Points for the Forums at the

						Country Level
Africa	Mr.	Clement	Tikiwa	Environmental Officer	Environmental Affairs Department of Malawi	Focal Points for the Forums at the Country Level
Africa	Mr.	Mensur Dessie	Nuri	AMCEN Focal Point	CEO, Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Strategic Partnership, Ministry of Planning and Development, Operation Focal Point (OFP) for Global Environment Facility (GEF)	Focal Points for the Forums at the Country Level