

Dear Readers,

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the sixth issue of the ACP MEAs 3 monthly Digest published on the first Monday of every month. As an informative publication, the Digest provides a collation of key information from various sources, including from project partners on issues related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), environmental governance, ocean governance, sustainable development and South-South Cooperation relevant for the implementation of the ACP MEAs 3 Programme.

The key highlights of this month's issue include the role of mega-conferences in advancing sustainable development, Kunming declaration of the judicial conference in the environment, blue economy, nature and Covid-19, technologies and biodiversity, WTO call for ministerial declaration on plastics, payment for ecosystem, and the role of research in environmental policy.

If your organization/department wishes to showcase any of your activities and/or share key information, please send a summary text by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to Mr. Ladu Lemi, communications focal point for the programme at [ladu.lemi@un.org](mailto:ladu.lemi@un.org)

Happy reading!

### Sustainable Development Highlights

#### Political Influences on the Role of Mega-Conferences in Advancing Sustainable Development

Over the past decades, large scale intergovernmental conferences have played important role in advancing sustainable development governance by capturing global media attention and subsequently securing political agreement on future priorities. As a neutral body, the United Nations has the global reputation and leadership to bring together governments, civil society, the private sector, and other nongovernmental organizations and create global forum and to discuss wide-ranging and interconnected global problems such as trade, poverty, environmental protection, and development. This, however, means that the success of mega-conferences in creating global mechanisms for sustainable development governance is dependent on the political will of governments and without which, these conferences will neither secure the future we want nor promote national and local actions that can advance sustainable development. [Read more.](#)



#### Kunming Declaration of the World Judicial Conference on Environment

On May 26-27, 2021, the World Judicial Conference on Environment was held in Kunming, China under the theme: *"the Role of the Judiciary in Advancing Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth"*. Over 160 persons including Chief Justices, Justices, Presidents and judges of supreme courts, constitutional courts, supreme administrative courts and local courts, and foreign diplomats from 27 countries and representatives of international organizations attended the Conference. Recognizing the importance of the rule of law in global environmental governance, the Kunming Declaration noted the necessity to continue deepening international cooperation and exchanges in environmental justice, jointly fight against the global environmental crises, promote green, low-carbon, circular, sustainable development, and work together to realize the vision of living in harmony with



nature. The declaration further urged countries to enhance the judicial response to the environmental crisis, advocate for a diversified judicial measure, and promote the professional development of environmental justice. For a full report, please contact Ms. Georgina Lloyd at [georgina.lloyd@un.org](mailto:georgina.lloyd@un.org)

### **The Legal Indicators for Sustainable Development**



The enforcement of environmental laws is critical to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the formulation of the global SDG indicator framework generally overlooked environment specific legal indicators, which undermined the role of environmental law in achieving the SDGs. To effectively enforce the implementation of environmental laws and treaties, governments, parliaments and civil society need consistent legal indicators to track progress, gaps and regressions, so as to precisely measure the extent to which existing laws and treaties are effectively implemented. UNEP has published a perspective outlined an innovative methodology for the development of science-based legal indicators that can accurately evaluate the effectivity of environmental law at national, regional and global levels. [Read more.](#)

### **Governing Coastal Resources - Implications for a Sustainable Blue Economy**



Coastal ecosystem goods and services are critical to people, nature and the economy, and are a focus for the emerging sustainable blue economy agenda, according to a report governing Coastal Resources by the UNEP. Land-based activities that generate detrimental impacts on coastal resources in the marine environment are the major challenges in the management of coastal areas. The report outlines key pathways through which land-based activities influence coastal resources, across land-sea boundaries and at multiple spatial scales, while stressing on the need for a holistic governance approach that accounts for the connections between land-based activities and coastal resources. Institutional policy frameworks can play a crucial role in this regard. Hence, the report also provides guidance on practical options to strengthen existing land-sea governance practices and presents new governance structures to reduce the impact of land-based activities on coastal resources and support the transition to a sustainable blue economy. [Read more](#)

### **Nature and COVID-19: The pandemic, the environment, and the way ahead**



The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented social, political, economic, and environmental challenges to societies across the world. Different sources states that the virus might have emerged from wildlife reservoirs linked to environmental disruption, transmitted to humans via the wildlife trade, and spread by economic globalization. The global response to address the COVID-19 related challenges such as social and economic development, climate change, and biodiversity loss offers an opportunity to bring transformational change to the structure and functioning of the global economy. A new publication has showed that approaches like One Health in all relevant sectors, sustainable forms of energy, effective international environmental agreements, equitable and sustainable post-COVID development, and nature-compatible international trade are crucial in dealing the Pandemic. while inspiring a new generation of innovators of green solutions. [Read more](#)

## Improving the Performance of Ocean Ecosystems and Vulnerable Marine Life by Sustainable Fisheries



About 30 percent of the global fisheries is considered as the remaining stocks since the 1990s due to overfishing. Thus, there is need to make progress in ensuring all fisheries activities are made sustainable and monitored closely in order to keep currently sustainable fisheries from expanding to unsustainable levels. Reducing fishing pressure across the board would allow the remaining overfished stocks to recover and sustainable fisheries to have greater resilience to pressures such as climate change, ocean pollution and other factors. This could involve adopting or setting ocean protection targets and strategies such as economic policies and market measures as well as involving small-scale fisheries in fisheries sustainability policies dialogue to achieve greater ecological sustainability. More resilient strategies that are sufficiently precautionary in the face of the complexities and uncertainties of fisheries management can and avoid or mitigate the many ecosystem effects of fisheries, including by-catches and impacts on seabed habitats. [Read more](#)

### Biodiversity Conservation Highlights

#### The Role of Technologies in conserving biodiversity



Life on the planet earth would not be possible if we lose our biological diversity and erode the ecosystem. In 2010, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) developed a list of 20 conservation targets, known as the Aichi targets. Ten years down the clock, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' (IPBES) report notes that, the health of ecosystems on which human and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever, indicating global failure in meeting the Aichi targets. However, embedding technology into conservation policies can help conserve biodiversity. An article published by the economist discusses how an explosion of technology is expanding human understanding of ecosystems and how advances in technology add to the policy changes that are needed to reverse the decline in global biodiversity. [Read more](#)

#### Biodiversity Conservation Using Payment for Ecosystem Services Approach



Biodiversity conservation involves the protection, preservation, and management of ecosystems and natural habitats to ensure that they are healthy and functional. This can be achieved by promoting a balance between the environment, society, and development in line with the sustainable development goals. The present society should develop conservation strategies that meet their need without compromising that of the future generation. Developing and enforcing conservation policies and strategies like payment for ecosystem services (PES) is important in promoting involvement of local communities who rely on biodiversity because the system incentivize the structure for conservation while improving livelihoods and local economy. [Read more](#)

#### Biodiversity, Climate, Chemicals, and Water Tops GEF \$281M Funding

During the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council held from 14-18 June 2021, a work program with eight projects worth \$281.1M was adopted to address the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity and wildlife habitat loss, land degradation, ocean pollution and depletion, and dangerous chemicals. During the dialogue, the Executive Secretaries of the conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism raised the themes of collaboration and the need for synergistic action because of



the of the inter-relatedness of GEF focal areas. On the themes of collaboration and the need for synergistic action, the Council highlighted the need to adopt a decision on a long-term vision on complementarity, coherence, and collaboration between the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the GEF. The Council also agreed to take action on all recommendation from the evaluation reports conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF. [Read more](#)

### Digital Technologies Promote the Health of Our Planet

The emergence of the modern digital technologies presents incredible powerful potential for boosting the ways in which we can monitor the health of our planet. According to UNEP Executive Director. “digital technologies can either make the planet a far better place for people, or they can contribute to the further degradation of the environment”. To effectively utilize the digital ecosystem to our advantage, she stressed that policy makers, businesses and citizens need to embrace digital technologies that work for people, that work for inclusion, that work for poverty reduction, and that work for the planet. With effective knowledge utilizing digital information, we will be able to assess and predict risks, increase transparency and accountability in the management of the global natural resources, inform markets and consumer choice and guide the political action required to counter the environmental risks and crises posed by the triple planetary crisis; and ultimately stand a better chance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [Read more](#)



### Chemicals and Wastes Highlights

#### Global Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on E-Waste

Without doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting human lives in many ways and is highlighting the interrelations between our environmental and societal systems. As the pandemic spreads across countries, restriction measures taken to control the spread of the virus across society lead to a decline of economic growth, restrictions of people’s mobility, and a further need of digitization and confinement in homes. This digitization and increase of time spent at home was thought to increase the consumption of electronic and electrical equipment under COVID-19, because of the switch in businesses to home offices, providing their staff with laptops and other office equipment for home use. In the contrary, a report developed in partnership with UNEP showed that, in the first three quarters of 2020, the consumption of electronic and electrical products decreased by 6.4 percent in weight, or by 4.9 million metric tonnes. [Read more.](#)



#### Mercury pollution and the Role of Research in environmental policy

Mercury is among the most dangerous environmental toxins that is spreading across national borders through air and water currents. Despite its extreme harmfulness to humans and the environment, mercury has long been widely used in common consumer products, with large emissions emanating from industrial combustion processes and small-scale gold mining. Research plays a critical role in environmental policy development by promoting interaction between knowledge hubs and policymaking bodies leading to the creation of national action plan for reducing mercury use and pollution through the implementation of Minamata Convention. A collaborative research between Norway and China has shown that, increasing focus on mercury research has made the voices of experts to be heard leading to the formulation of knowledge-based policy. [Read more](#)





## The World Trade Organization (WTO) Calls for Ministerial Declaration on Plastics

Plastic pollution has become one of the most global pressing environmental challenge requiring multilateral solutions, that address the inconsistency of policies along the plastics value chain. Understanding how trade policy can complement efforts at the international, regional and domestic levels to tackle plastics pollution is critical for achieving environmental dimension of sustainable development. On 21 June 2021 for example, the Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (IDP) held a discussion on how the WTO can contribute to strengthening policy coherence, exploring collective approaches among WTO members and improving technical assistance to developing countries in support of global efforts to reduce plastic waste and move towards a circular plastics economy. This resulted to the call for a declaration to be issued at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), to be held in late November, to guide further actions on the global plastic pollution. [Read more](#)

## PPE and Face mask Waste in the Ocean: The marine impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

Plastics are essentially important to society as a widely available and inexpensive packaging material. Mismanagement of plastics like personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 Pandemic, where an estimated 129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves in being used globally in every 3 months is resulting in widespread environmental contamination posing a risk to public health as these wastes gather into our oceans and the environment. A recent research indicates that the global plastic waste problem has already been amplified by the pandemic, bringing a new dimension to the existing global debate on marine litter. [Read more](#)



## Solutions for fighting pollution in the oceans

With plastic bottles drifting in the sea; bags in the stomachs of turtles; and Covid-19 masks dancing in the surf, global plastic pollution is the most urgent issue that needs to be tackle in line with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which emphasize a sustainable use of the seas. A group of marine scientists studied a number of solutions for prevention, monitoring, and cleaning coastal areas at sea and ocean floor and found that reducing ocean pollution requires more support, integration, and creative political decisiveness. They recommend that the integration of solutions into policy guidelines should be pushed politically in order to establish a future industry. [Read more](#).



## Threats to Marine Life from the Pollution of the Deep-Ocean

Oceans are crucial in understanding the global cycling and fate of anthropogenic Hg because they contain more mercury than the upper organic layers of soils and the atmosphere combined. Following the ratification of the Minamata Convention on mercury, pollution control measures have significantly reduced the mercury content of coal-fired plant emissions over the past years. However, the global mercury assessment estimates a 20% increase in anthropogenic mercury emissions between 2010 and 2015. In addition, a new report indicates that the total hadal mercury accumulation in the deep-ocean ranges from 12–30% of the estimate for the entire deep-ocean. [Read more](#)



## News from Partners and Associates

### Introductory Course to Marine Biological Diversity of ABNJ



InforMEA's introductory course is designed to provide knowledge and skills in MEAs. At the end of this course, learners will be able to define areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) and key milestones in the process relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), describe the relevant legal framework, and define the key issues in the process to develop an International Legally Binding Agreement under UNCLOS. Register for the course [here](#).

### Upcoming Events Under the ACP MEAs Programme



Fifth Session of the International Conference for Chemicals Management (ICCM5), July 5-9 2021 (Contact: [haddy.guisse@un.org](mailto:haddy.guisse@un.org))

66th Implementation Committee under the Non-Compliance Procedure for the Montreal Protocol, 11 July 2021 ([haddy.guisse@un.org](mailto:haddy.guisse@un.org))

FAO Regional dialogues on biodiversity mainstreaming, 27-28 July 2021 (Contact: [KimAnh.Tempelman@fao.org](mailto:KimAnh.Tempelman@fao.org))

ANEJ orientation on Chemicals and Wastes, 6th July 2021 (Contact: [balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:balakrishna.pisupati@un.org))

The online segment of COPs for BRS conventions -26 to-30 July 2021 (Contact: [giovanna.chiodi@un.org](mailto:giovanna.chiodi@un.org))

Briefing sessions for the ACP States on the outcomes of SBI 3 and SBSTTA 24 – July 2021 (Contact: [balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:balakrishna.pisupati@un.org))

Launch of the “Support SAMOA Pathway” note from ACP MEAs 3 Programme – July 2021 (Contact: [mary.kanyua@un.org](mailto:mary.kanyua@un.org))

Youth Engagement and Training Initiative (YETI) activities, July 2021 (Contact: [mary.kanyua@un.org](mailto:mary.kanyua@un.org))

CBD negotiators training (with IUCN WCC 2021 partners), July 2021 (Contact: [balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:balakrishna.pisupati@un.org))

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