

Dear Readers,

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the tenth issue of the ACP MEAs 3 monthly Digest published on the first Monday of every month. As an informative publication, the Digest provides a collection of key information from various sources, including from programme 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:

- Need to prioritize nature in the COP26 climate talks
- Gender mainstreaming in coastal fishing communities
- Transboundary collaborations to save species
- Conclusion of the first part of biodiversity conference (COP15)
- The role of indigenous people and local communities in post-2020 GBF
- Human rights and biodiversity
- GEF-8 plastic pollution and circular economy
- Digital response to plastic wastes

If your organization/department wishes to showcase any of your activities and/or share key information, please send a summary text by the 20th 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!



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## Sustainable Development Highlights

### COP26 Climate Talks Urged to Prioritize Nature

In 2022, about 195 countries are set to conclude a new accord to safeguard the future of global biodiversity during COP15. This comes back-to-back with the Paris climate agreement (COP26) taking place this November in Glasgow. Given that climate change is increasingly becoming a serious driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation and that loss threatens to worsen climate change, the two COPs presents an excellent opportunity to show how issues of biodiversity and climate change are inseparable. According to UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Executive Secretary, improving conservation and management of natural areas, such as parks, oceans, forests and wildernesses, is crucial to safeguarding the ecosystems on which humans depend and limiting global warming to internationally agreed targets. [Read more](#)





### **Gender Mainstreaming: Improving Livelihoods in Coastal Fishing Communities**

In many places around the world women and men display different perspectives and priorities needs regarding the environment, natural resource use, and access to basic requirements such as water, energy and food. Within the marine ecosystem for example, women play a critical role as primary land and water resource managers in every Large Marine Ecosystem (LME). In order to be successful, initiatives aimed at the improving the quality of lives and the environment needs to mainstream gender equality and women empowerment into project design and implementation. A policy brief from GEF's LME: LEARN project notes that failure to understand and address gender within environmental and development projects risks negative effects on household welfare, women's equality, and the water resources and wider environment which undermines the long-term recovery and sustainability of marine and coastal ecosystems. [Read more](#)



### **Green Policies for Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery**

According to the 2020 report of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), about 71 million people who were destined to come out of poverty were pushed back into extreme poverty confirming the scale of setbacks in the achievement of SDGs. Using the Southeast Asia as a case study on the economic contraction exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, a report notes that green national recovery policies and strategies are needed to reduce the risk of future pandemics, mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change, and improve competitiveness while guiding investors, businesses, workers, and consumers toward sustainability. The report suggests three pillars to balance green recovery strategies and nine policy levers to be considered by governments in designing impactful green recovery strategies. [Read more](#)

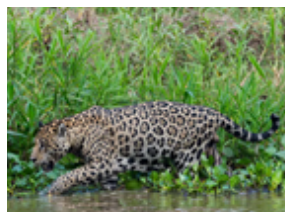


### **Using Adaptation Measures to Make Africa Safer, Greener and More Prosperous**

Adaptation measures, if done right can present major opportunities that are cost-effective and have the potential to start a positively reinforcing cycle of benefits such as drought and floods control, reduce poverty and hunger and raise people's incomes and living standards. A report by the Global Center on Adaptation, State and Trends in Adaptation 2021, notes that Africa is vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters posing systemic risks to its economies, infrastructure investments, water and food systems, public health, agriculture, and livelihoods. The report offers innovative adaptation and resilience ideas, solutions, and policy recommendations and notes that Africa can achieve a rapid development agenda on a new "green" and resilient pathway to growth, harnessing the powerful synergies between adaptation, growth and development. [Read more](#)

## Biodiversity Conservation Highlights

### Transboundary collaborations to save species through the Escazú Agreement



Nature rarely recognizes national borders as species that are considered migratory in nature like birds or other terrestrial creatures hardly spent their lives in a single country. Yet, most efforts to protect ecological processes and habitats are designed and implemented by individual nations making it hard to address ecosystem degrading issues spanning geographical borders. Focusing on the Latin America and Caribbean, as a region with diverse biodiversity hotspot, a report shows that the Escazú Agreement is an important instrument that provides a transboundary approach for species conservation by establishing mechanisms for international collaboration and environmental management across national borders. [Read more](#)

### Enabling Conditions for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation



Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) is an integrated and strategic response to the challenges of sustainable development that addresses climate targets, while also providing solutions to other issues such as food security, biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. A policy paper focusing on Guatemala and India as a case study provides five insights that enable a successful implementation of an EbA to achieve equitable socio-economic development and environmental protection, as well as strengthening participatory governance at the community level. [Read more](#)

### First Part of Biodiversity Conferences Concluded with Signs of Renewed Commitments



The year 2020 was supposed to be the super year for global biodiversity with hopes for the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) during the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) at Kunming. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COP was delayed. This year, from 11-15 October 2021, the first part of COP15 was convened virtually, in which the Kunming Declaration which emphasize the importance of biodiversity for human and planetary wellbeing, economic growth and sustainable development was adopted. Leaders in the meeting also committed to providing the necessary modalities for the effective implementation of GBF including mechanisms for monitoring and reporting. [Read more](#)

### Indigenous People and Local Communities' Role in Achieving post-2020 GBF



Since the release of the First Draft of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), a significant improvement has been undertaken to increase its ambition. However, there is still need for further improvement in areas of human rights, equity, governance, environmental and human rights defenders and financing. A report by the ICCA, a Consortium indigenous peoples and community conserved areas urge parties to align the aspirations of GBF with the needs and priorities of IPLC and their territories. The report notes that, incorporating measures that support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) to secure their rights and determine their governance systems, sustain their cultures, territories and ways of

life is critical. This will offer a sign of hope for IPLC for the recognition of their contributions to conservation and full rights to participate in area-based conservation that will bring opportunities for transformative change in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. [Read more](#)

### **Human Rights and Biodiversity**

The tragic loss of biodiversity driving species extinction is largely caused by human activity such as land use change, climate change, pollution, overexploitation and invasive alien species. Thriving biodiversity, health habitats and ecosystems fulfils a range of human rights including the rights to food, clean air and water, health, culture, and even the right to life. A report published by UNEP and UNHR shows that biodiversity and habitat loss violate human rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, women and girls, children and youth, the poor, and those in vulnerable situations. The report also notes that public and private sectors including organizations need to address biodiversity and habitat loss, prevent its negative impacts on human rights, and ensure that actions to address biodiversity loss are equitable, non-retrogressive, non-discriminatory and sustainable. [Read more](#)



### **Chemicals and Wastes Highlights**

#### **GEF-8 Draft Work Program Includes Plastic Pollution and Circular Economy**

From September 29 - October 1, 2021, representatives of the GEF's member governments, civil society organizations and GEF Agencies gathered virtually to review proposed plans for GEF-8 Trust Fund. Among key discussion topics was the review of the report from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office on GEF-7 performance which highlighted GEF's flexibility in working across focal areas. Representatives from both donor and recipient countries expressed support for GEF's integrated approach to addressing environmental challenges. In addition to tackling issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, chemicals and waste among other environmental threats, GEF-8 will also address plastic pollution, support circular economy, and sustainably manage international waters, including areas of beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). [Read more](#)



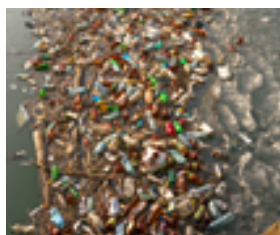
#### **Drowning in Plastics – Marine Litter and Plastic Waste Vital Graphics**

Global plastic production has risen to an estimated 400 million tones per year. Yet, only 12% and 9% of the plastics produced have been incinerated and recycled respectively. A new report by UNEP and BRS entitled Drowning in Plastics – Marine Litter and Plastic Waste Vital Graphics, notes that without action, flow of plastic waste into aquatic ecosystems are expected to triple from around 11 million tones in 2016 to around 29 million tones in 2040. It also provides a complete overview of the global challenges related to marine litter and plastic waste, using graphic illustrations as well as challenges and solutions related to bioplastics and waste management in developing countries including gender



aspects of waste management. Read more. [Read more](#)

### **Coordinated Digital Response to Plastic Wastes: The Global Plastics Policy Inventory**



With an estimated 710 million metric tons of plastic waste expected to enter the environment between 2016 and 2040, plastic waste is one of the leading environmental challenges causing havoc on marine life and threatening communities' livelihoods and public health. In response, many countries have enacted national policies to address plastics pollution, instituting import bans, penalties on plastics use, improvement to recycling infrastructure, and change in public discourse on excessive plastics consumption. In order to amalgamate existing global policies for the eradication of plastic pollution, the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University has developed a free online public digital depository of plastics policy inventory to provide information about what governments are doing about plastic pollution crisis. [Read more](#)

### **News from Partners and Associates**

#### **EEB/ZMWG supporting the phase out of mercury added products in Trinidad and Tobago**



The European Environmental Bureau (EEB), in coordination with the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) has started a collaboration with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago towards phasing out mercury added products in line with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. On the 23rd September 2021, a virtual inception meeting was organized in cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Planning and Development with the participation of Twenty-seven (27) persons representing various national ministries including Planning and Development (MPD), Health, Trade and Industry, the Customs and Excise Division, and several other governmental agencies, economic and trade associations and CSO. Within the mercury added product sector, switches and relays containing mercury were estimated to account for the largest mercury output to the general waste, followed by sphygmomanometers. Given the available information, EEB/ZMWG work in Trinidad and Tobago will focus on six areas. Contact Ms. Elena Lymberidi ([elena.lymberidi@eeb.org](mailto:elena.lymberidi@eeb.org)) for details.

#### **Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury**



Under the presidency of Indonesia, the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention will be held in two segments: a first segment to be conducted online from 1 to 5 November 2021 and a second segment to be conducted in-person in the first quarter of 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. Items of the COP-4 agenda to be considered during its online segment include the programme of work and budget, the 8th replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, national reporting and effectiveness evaluation. A number of side

events, such as one on the Convention's financial mechanism, will also take place during the week. [Read more](#)

## Upcoming Events Under the ACP MEAs Programme



- FAO 9th Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture-December 6-11, 2021 (Contact Tempelman KimAnh at [KimAnh.Tempelman@fao.org](mailto:KimAnh.Tempelman@fao.org)).
- Abidjan Convention Focal Points meeting to take ownership of the ACP MEAs 3 program and define criteria for the selection of implementing countries- November 2021 (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at [abdoulaye.diagana@un.org](mailto:abdoulaye.diagana@un.org)).
- ACP MEAs 3 Project Steering Committee Meeting-December 7-8, 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at [Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org)).
- ACP MEAs 3, CBD Secretariat Dialogue series of Synthetic Biology - November 2021; December 2021 and January 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at [Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org)).
- Webinar on "Outcomes of ACP MEAs 3 YETI Youth Mentorship Programme in support of post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework" November 2021 (Contact Balakrishna Pisupati at [Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org](mailto:Balakrishna.pisupati@un.org)).
- Call for applications for the implementation of the ACP MEAs III program in the Abidjan Convention area-December 2021 (Contact Abdoulaye Diagana at [abdoulaye.diagana@un.org](mailto:abdoulaye.diagana@un.org)).

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The ACP MEAs is a joint UNEP- EU-FAO-OACPS partnership programme. It aims to build the capacity of 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to fulfill their obligations to multilateral environmental agreements. Phase III (ACP MEAs 3) of this programme is being implemented in Africa by the African Union Commission (AUC), Abidjan Convention and Nairobi Convention, in the Caribbean by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cartagena Convention, in the Pacific by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is the civil society partner. This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or official opinion of the European Commission, UNEP or contributory organizations.