

**Joint Statement of  
the European Commission (EC) and  
the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
for 2011-2013**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have been working together for the environment under a Memorandum of Understanding agreed in 2004. This cooperation has been translated into several activities, programmes and projects in areas of common concern. The EC has additionally intensified its operational cooperation with those Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for which UNEP provides a secretariat<sup>1</sup> by funding specific projects and programs.

This cooperation benefits from European Union (EU) funding under the 'Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)' and other EU financial instruments including the European Development Fund and the Instrument for Stability. For example, the ENRTP multi-annual strategy 2007-2010 provided substantial support to UNEP and the MEAs for which UNEP provides a secretariat, amounting to approximately €50.4 million for the implementation of 59 projects at global, regional and national levels.

While joint projects in recent years have strengthened the cooperation between the two institutions, both sides have recognised the need for a more strategic approach with improved predictability in programming agreed initiatives and projects.

As a first step to enhance their collaboration in a more strategic way, the EC and UNEP have agreed that their cooperation will begin with two Strategic Cooperation Agreements (SCAs). The cooperation at the heart of these SCAs will fully respect the decision-making authority and programme of work of UNEP and of each MEA for which UNEP provides a secretariat.

This joint statement signals the renewal of the EC and UNEP's political will to consolidate, develop and increase their cooperation and effectiveness to achieve their common goals and objectives in the field of environment.

## 2. SCOPE AND OVERALL PRIORITIES

Both institutions have identified below potential areas of cooperation on the basis of their institutional priorities; namely, the EU's priorities on environment and sustainable development; UNEP's priorities of work under its Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013; and, the priorities of the MEAs for which UNEP provides a secretariat.

For the period 2010-2015, one of the EC's overarching priorities is to pursue a European economy based on sustainable growth, placing high emphasis on resource efficiency and green

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<sup>1</sup> Secretariat of Vienna Convention for Protection of Ozone Layer (Ozone Secretariat)  
Multilateral Fund for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol.  
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).  
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).  
Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,  
Basel Convention on the control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous and their Disposal.  
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).  
Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent, Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.  
Regional Seas Programme (Administered by UNEP)

economy modes of development. This is currently being implemented through the EU 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Other particularly relevant EU policies include the EU policy on climate change and the EU proposals for a post-2010 global biodiversity policy. Commissioner Potočnik has declared resource efficiency and water as high priorities of his mandate as Environment Commissioner for both 2011 and 2012.

The new 2011-2013 Strategy Paper and the Multiannual Indicative Programme of ENRTP define EC funding priorities regarding international environmental issues in the following areas:

- Climate change and sustainable energy
- Environment and Development, in particular sustainable management and conservation of natural resources, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and green economy
- Strengthening environment and climate governance, including mainstreaming.

These EC funding priorities match with UNEP's strong focus on related topics as outlined in its Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013,<sup>2</sup> namely: climate change; disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; harmful substances and hazardous waste; resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production (SCP); as well as with the objectives of MEAs for which UNEP provides a secretariat.

UNEP and the EC's common priorities include action on: halting biodiversity loss and ecosystem management; green economy, resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production (SCP); hazardous substances; strengthening environmental governance, as well as building more efficient cooperation and synergies among MEAs; mainstreaming environment in other sectors; and climate change.

The EC or UNEP may also propose adding other activities to their collaborative work in order to enhance global and regional environmental assessments. To this end, UNEP and the European Environment Agency (EEA) will collaborate where appropriate. The EEA and UNEP have a long history of collaboration in the areas of environmental data and reporting on the state of the environment. They share a strategic objective to strengthen national and regional institutional frameworks in order to support the creation of a credible and transparent evidence base as well as a policy interface at national level, particularly for the establishment of UNEP-Live.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the EEA is contributing to the establishment of the next UNEP Global Environment Outlook. Using the extensive information the EEA has thanks to Eionet (European Environment Information and Observation Network) and SEIS (Shared Environmental Information System), this collaboration also includes sharing information and methodologies about the environment of the Arctic, the Mediterranean, EURECA 2012, the establishment of Integrated Environmental Assessments and UNEP's Global Environmental Alert Service.

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<sup>2</sup> Approved by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its tenth special session SS.X/3. The selection of the six cross-cutting thematic priorities was guided by scientific evidence, the areas in which UNEP has a comparative advantage, the UNEP mandate, priorities emerging from global and regional forums and an assessment of where UNEP can make a transformative difference. The means of implementation have been informed by directional shifts affecting the United Nations system.

<sup>3</sup> A call by governments for UNEP to migrate from its current Global Environment Outlook published series of reports to an online environment outlook tentatively called "UNEP-Live" (Decision 25/2 of the 25th Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP, February 2009).

### 3. AREAS OF COOPERATION

This joint statement sets out the following priority areas for cooperation:

#### **3.1 Environment for development**

The **objective** is to assist developing countries and those with transitional economies in preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of natural resources while improving the resource efficiency of their economies and reducing pollution.

##### *3.1.1 Biodiversity and ecosystem management*

The **specific objective** is to ensure that developing countries are in a better position to assume their responsibilities as signatories to various MEAs. This especially concerns their commitments to take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020 under the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013.

Biodiversity and ecosystems provide goods and services that are essential for human well-being, economic prosperity and poverty eradication. Despite the efforts already made to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, scientific evidence suggests continued biodiversity loss throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This further biodiversity loss will threaten to push ecosystems past the point of no return where the delivery of ecosystem services is lost completely or seriously jeopardized. There is broad consensus that such development would disproportionately affect the rural poor in developing countries who mostly depend on natural resources and are most vulnerable to natural hazards.

The objective of UNEP's Ecosystem Management Programme is to translate the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment into a workable programme and build up the capacity of countries and regions to implement an ecosystem approach and integrate it into national planning.

*Cooperation will include:*

- (a) Policy dialogue: Both institutions will continue their policy dialogue on biodiversity issues so as to contribute to the achievement of global biodiversity commitments.  
Cooperation will be built around the strategic framework provided by the Biodiversity-Related Conventions (BRC) and other multilateral agreements.
- (b) Early/urgent action: Both institutions will endeavour to undertake early and urgent actions that will lay a solid foundation to achieve the global 2020 biodiversity target. This enhanced collaboration will help to promote the integration of the value of biodiversity into national plans and its incorporation into national accounting by applying the findings of the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report, as well as those from similar studies.
- (c) Resource needs: Joint efforts will be made to support countries in identifying resource needs and ways to mobilise additional resources for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity from domestic and other sources, including through the promotion of innovative financial mechanisms.

- (d) Intergovernmental initiatives: Further support for the establishment and the inception phase of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services will be an important part of the collaboration during 2011-2013.
- (e) Cross-sectoral approach: The cooperation will also facilitate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to ecosystem management to reverse the decline in ecosystem services and improve ecosystem resilience with respect to such external impacts as habitat loss and degradation, invasive species, climate change, pollution and overexploitation, including through international trade. Special attention will be placed on ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of marine and forest species and the productivity and resilience of those ecosystems.

### ***3.1.2 Resource efficiency, green economy and sustainable consumption and production***

The **specific objective** is to assist developing countries and emerging economies at regional and national levels to formulate and implement more resource efficient policies. This assistance will help to ensure that natural resources are produced, processed and consumed in an environmentally sustainable way, paving the way to a green economy, in which environmental impact is decoupled from economic growth and social co-benefits are optimized.

The EC's vision of a resource-efficient green economy for 2050 is one based on functions – where the economy delivers what citizens want: adequate and affordable food, good jobs, security, housing, mobility, good health and a resilient environment within the constraints facing the world. This vision should address the global challenge to meet the needs of 9 billion people in 2050, 70% of whom will be living in urban areas in terms of energy, land, water, waste management and materials supply, while addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and health threats.

The above challenges can be met by a transition process towards a green economy where patterns of consumption and production are sustainable and enable all citizens to have access to resources while conserving the quality and quantity of the world's shared resources. This implies primarily the decoupling of economic growth and well-being from energy and resource consumption.

Responding to these challenges will require in practice a new generation of public policies, increased and redirected investment, research & development and application of environmentally sound technologies, international cooperation, as well as capacity-building and training to reshape national economies and the global economy.

#### *Cooperation will include:*

- (a) Policy, law and management support: Advising and supporting governments and the private sector on improving their capacities to design and implement policies, laws and management actions that promote the production and consumption of resource-efficient and sustainable goods and services. In doing so, UNEP and the MEAs for which UNEP provides a secretariat will emphasise a product life cycle and/or a supply chain approach, and promote *inter alia* regional and sub-regional cooperation and policy dialogue, public-private partnerships and market-based instruments such as sustainable procurement, amongst others.

- (b) Macro-level assessment support: Advising and supporting governments in the development of macroeconomic assessments, production and application of socio-economic indicators, the design of enabling policy frameworks, including relevant policies, and the use of economic instruments in promoting the transition to a green economy.
- (c) Presenting policy options: Organizing in-depth scientific assessment and study on the sustainable use of natural resources and their environmental impacts over the full life cycle and the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation to provide policy-makers and other stakeholders with best available information and policy options;
- (d) Informing the public: Disseminating public communication materials and conducting educational and public awareness campaigns on the benefits of resource efficiency and sustainable production and consumption to influence the choices of consumers and better inform other market actors. In this regard capacity-building in public institutions to not only promote, but also apply in-house, resource efficient approaches, so as to lead by example and learning-by-doing, is of particular importance.
- (e) Resource efficiency collaboration: In the resource efficiency area the EC is ready to work closer with UNEP for an economy which has: greater innovation and greater responsiveness to change; reduced energy and resource dependence; less waste and better waste management practices; conservation of the world's natural resource base; improved health and a high degree of biodiversity. Both institutions will seek maximum coordination between their respective resource efficiency projects.
- (f) UN system collaboration: In order to achieve the above, both institutions especially welcome closer co-operation towards a successful United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, which is expected to facilitate the transition towards a green economy, as well as further close co-operation on the implementation of the United Nations International Decade for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

### ***3.1.3 Harmful substances and hazardous waste***

The **specific objective** of work under this priority is to minimize the impact of harmful substances and hazardous waste on the environment and human beings.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) agreed that by 2020 chemicals are to be produced and used in ways that minimize the significant adverse effects on the environment and human health.

Key challenges to achieving the WSSD goal at national level are: a) the widespread institutional responsibilities for chemicals and hazardous waste control; b) the lack of systems for identifying, assessing and regulating the hazard and risk of chemicals; c) the lack of evidence regarding the full environmental and health impacts of chemical use and the improper management of hazardous wastes.

*Cooperation will include:*

- (a) Support for countries to increase their capacities for sound management of chemicals (including the modular approach) and hazardous waste (including e-waste) within a life cycle approach.

- (b) Promote the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)
- (c) Data collection, the assessment and management of chemicals, the elaboration and strengthening of chemical and hazardous waste legislation and regulatory frameworks.
- (d) In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations entities, the mainstreaming of chemical management (including chemical safety/accident prevention) in development agendas will be promoted.
- (e) Promote internationally agreed chemical management regimes including through the implementation of the environmental component of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the development of a mercury treaty, and immediate action through the Global Mercury Partnership.
- (f) Assist countries to develop, implement and enforce national regulatory frameworks and economic instruments for the control of *inter alia* mercury, persistent organic pollutants and ozone depleting substances and hazardous wastes.
- (g) Engage in long-term reflections to ensure that additional new substances are placed for consideration under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and partake in active measures to ensure that they are nominated.
- (h) In view of the 2020 commitment, advance co-operation on the global assessment of Endocrine Disruptors, promote knowledge about the risks of multi-chemicals exposure and explore the risks/benefits of nano.
- (i) Examination of the usefulness of broader chemical legal instruments and the development of international structures for sound management of chemicals post-2020.

### **3.2 Strengthening environmental governance**

The **objective** is to improve environmental governance and natural resource management through the provision of appropriate methodological and governance tools.

While significant progress has been achieved in promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment over the past few decades, the world today faces a significant challenge in prioritizing and making coherent international policies in the field of the environment due to the multiplicity of international decision-making processes at the intergovernmental level. Parallel and often fragmented decision-making processes in the governing bodies of many organizations within the UN system, international financial institutions and multilateral environmental agreements have added to this challenge.

Moreover, while a number of multilateral environmental agreements have been adopted over the past three decades to address key global and regional environmental issues, implementation of these agreements remains a challenge, partly because of the lack of coherent arrangements to support them or to enhance cooperation between them.

In addition, national environmental governance, and the rules, practices, policies and institutions that shape natural resource management, are key for finding solutions to environmental and development challenges.

The activities to be implemented under this priority shall be at international, regional and sub-regional levels. Work can be undertaken towards coherence and collaboration between the environmental and other pillars of international governance for sustainable development, in particular in the context of the UNCSD 2012 conference..

To address these challenges both institutions can take advantage of UNEP's mandate to promote international cooperation in the field of the environment in order to provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the UN system.

*Cooperation will include:*

- (a) Increasing UNEP's effectiveness and impact to improve the ability of the UN system and the ability of individual countries to address environmental challenges.
- (b) Support MEAs: Cooperate with multilateral environmental agreements, particularly those for which UNEP provides a secretariat, as well as support collaboration amongst such agreements in order to facilitate their effective implementation, in particular in the chemicals/waste and biodiversity areas.
- (c) Support UN system-wide coherence and cooperation in the field of the environment by integrating environmental sustainability into country UN Development Assistance Frameworks.
- (d) Assist environmental mainstreaming: Assist governments and multilateral organizations towards mainstreaming environmental matters into their development policy processes, including through the UNEP-UNDP Poverty and Environment Initiative and coordination of activities under the UN Environment Management Group.
- (e) Foster joint environmental assessments: Develop and implement joint/multi-agency integrated environmental assessment processes and methods for country environmental profiles. Based on an initial outline agreed between a group of partners including UNEP, UNDP, European Commission, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Norway, pilot assessments will be carried out, eventually leading to a commonly agreed process for making relevant and up to date environmental information available at country and regional levels.
- (f) Support other international processes as well as international civil society advocacy groups.
- (g) Strengthen the capacity of developing countries to participate in international negotiations, including better access to information on ongoing international processes.

### ***3.2.1 Natural Resource Management for Disaster Risk Reduction, Crisis Response, Recovery and Peace-building***

The **objective** is to minimize threats to human well-being from the environmental causes and consequences of disasters and conflicts.

Global disaster risk has increased dramatically over the last decades. It is now widely recognized that protecting and enhancing ecosystem services provides multiple benefits – livelihoods, “green” development, risk reduction and climate change resilience – and offers a cost-effective strategy and sustainable solution.

In order to make significant progress towards disaster reduction, there is an urgent need to reduce the underlying drivers of disaster risk in countries and communities. This entails minimising the environmental costs of disasters, arresting environmental degradation and improving environmental and ecosystem management. However, there is still a long way to go for policies, programmes and plans at regional and country levels to clearly reflect an integrated Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eb-DRR) approach. The UNISDR Partnership on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction serves as a key partner in developing and disseminating UNEP's DRR policy agenda.

*Cooperation could include:*

- (a) Ecosystem-based DRR policy development and advocacy.
- (b) Capacity-building for the integration of environment-DRR into national policy, planning and investment frameworks as well as in risk and vulnerability assessments; enhancing disaster preparedness and response to environmental risks at global, national and local levels.
- (c) Developing, disseminating and applying training and educational modules, tools and guidelines on environment-DRR approaches.
- (d) Promoting partnerships and networks for learning exchanges, knowledge development and diffusion, policy advocacy, and coordinated implementation.
- (e) Field-based demonstrations and pilot tests at ecosystem and community levels to develop a variety of good practices that could feed into the global knowledge base.

In addition, environment and natural resources are now recognized as important factors in triggering, fuelling and maintaining conflict, but they can also play a critical role in supporting post-crisis recovery, peace-building and sustainable economic development. Current research suggests that over the last sixty years, at least forty percent of all intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources. Whether connected to illegal resources for arms exchanges, conflict over ownership and access to high-value and scarce resources, land degradation, or climate change, a link to natural resources and environment has been found to double the chance for conflict relapse within the first five years of a peace agreement. Unfortunately the capacity of national governments and the international community to assess, manage and integrate these linkages into post-conflict relief, recovery and development planning is currently limited.

Therefore there is a need to strengthen the capacity of national and local environmental authorities, and explore how natural resources can support and reinforce recovery and peace-building efforts.

*Cooperation could include:*

- (a) Post-crisis environmental assessments, including Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs), rapid and detailed environmental assessments, and country environmental profiles.
- (b) Capacity-building for natural resource governance and conflict prevention, including the development and implementation of policies, laws and pilot projects on natural resource management, restoration and cooperation.

- (c) Integrating environment and natural resource risks and opportunities into humanitarian interventions, UN peacekeeping operations or EU CSDP missions, peace-building strategies and conflict prevention plans.

The above-mentioned activities would need to build on existing platforms of institutional cooperation, including the EC-UN-World Bank Memorandum of Understanding on Post-Disaster and Post-Crisis Needs Assessments, as well as the UN-EU Partnership on Natural Resources and Conflict.

### **3.3 Climate change**

The **objective** is to assist developing countries in preparing for climate-resilient low-emissions development including the integration of climate change responses into national development processes.

Climate change is the major, overriding environmental issue of our time. It is a growing crisis with economic, health and safety, food production, security, environmental and other dimensions. It interacts and often exacerbates already existing threats to biodiversity.

Many developing countries are at risk of being left behind in the transition to a low-carbon economy, as well as in future climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, because they lack the readiness, funds and capacity for choosing and implementing new and more efficient technologies and forward-looking ecosystem based climate adaptation measures.

Without support in selecting the optimum mix of technologies, adopting policies and economic tools that favour investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency, the technology gap between rich and poor nations will grow. Investing in low-carbon alternatives in energy and other sectors (e.g. renewable energy sources, and sectors producing or using fluorocarbons with a high global warming potential in refrigeration, air conditioning, foam blowing, etc.), reducing emissions from inefficient energy consumption, maintaining, restoring and enhancing the carbon storage potential of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and managing other potential sources of greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. land use change, ecosystem degradation and the environmentally sound destruction of banks of unwanted or discarded ozone depleting substances) offer the best ways to achieve immediate and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

*Cooperation could include:*

- (a) On climate adaptation: countries need support to assess vulnerability to climate change across key areas (water resources, agriculture, urban development, coastal areas, green infrastructure, etc) including the economic assessment of climate change impacts. These assessments have to be accompanied by the identification of appropriate ecosystem-based responses (protecting watersheds, planting mangroves, increasing urban green spaces etc) together with the quantification of their cost and benefits to be integrated in the country development plans. In addition, the strengthening of national and local capacities to deal with adaptation, the removal of finance and policy barriers to delivery (removal of environmental harmful subsidies, better policy integration) and active financial support (schemes for Payment of Ecosystem Services, etc) also needs to be supported.
- (b) For mitigation and energy policy purposes: cooperation could include initiatives that promote renewable sources of energy and a more efficient use of energy in the following areas: analyzing the mitigation options, implementing projects related to technology transfer in key sectors (including the buildings sector), networking of national climate

change focal points, establishing partnerships to mobilize financing for cleaner energy technologies, fostering innovative financial mechanisms, and extending the carbon market. National mitigation initiatives should not only efficiently reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, but also create green jobs, enhance energy security, and reduce the environmental impacts of conventional technologies including impacts to the ozone layer. Bearing in mind the agreement reached in Cancún on the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), tropical forest countries will require special attention in their efforts to develop national strategies for its implementation.

- (c) In the area of science: there is a need to further strengthen the linkage with policy-making in order to formulate mitigation and adaptation policies. The objective is that national-level policymakers and negotiators, civil society and the private sector have access to relevant climate change science and information for decision-making.