

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: August 2005 to August 2006

The implementation of the UNEP/GEF Medium Size Project (MSP) on the “Capacity-building Programme for the Development of Sub-regional Environmental Action Plans of NEPAD” continued with the objective of assisting African countries implement the NEPAD Environment Action Plan.

From May 2005, UNEP in partnership with the NEPAD Secretariat, the African Regional Economic Communities (REC) and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) organized in Algiers, Abuja, Djibouti City, Libreville and Gaborone, five sub-regional consultative meetings. The meetings were aimed at reviewing the draft reports of the sub-regional environmental action plans and also initiating the process for the finalization of these reports. From March to September 2006, five sub-regional meetings will be held to endorse and adopt the respective sub-regional environmental action plans. Support will be provided to the RECs to develop a project database of ongoing projects and programmes in the sub-region.

Furthermore, in January 2005, UNEP and the NEPAD Secretariat signed a 3-year agreement (2005-2008) aimed at enhancing the human and institutional capacities for the implementation of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD of the five sub-regional African economic communities by recruiting Environment and Natural Resource Coordinators in the RECs. The Coordinators for ECCAS and SADC have already been engaged.

An integral intervention to this project is the piloting of synergetic implementation of the Rio Multilateral Environmental Agreements/Conventions (MEAs) and its relevancy to poverty alleviation by establishing a convention coordination framework and demonstrating the MEAs-poverty linkages through Micro-Grant Programme (MGP) activities at national and local levels. The experience gained from the four pilot countries (Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) is to be replicated in other African countries.

In support of the implementation of NEPAD, UNEP is assisting 12 African countries through the National Capacity Self-Assessment Project (NCSA) process which is thorough self-assessment and analysis of national level priorities and needs for capacity building to address global environmental issues, in particular biological diversity, climate change, persistent organic pollutants and land degradation, with the aim of catalyzing action to meet those needs in a coordinated and planned manner. Most countries are at advanced stages of completing their NCSA Reports and Action Plans. In addition, UNEP is supporting over 70 ongoing national and regional projects in Africa that focus on the thematic areas – biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, international waters, and persistent organic pollutants – with funding from the Global Environment Facility.

In September 2005, UNEP, in close cooperation with UNDP initiated the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) on Technology Support and Capacity Building in Africa. In the context of the African region, the Bali Plan is of particular interest, being fully in line with the objectives of the Capacity Building Programme of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD. The Plan will promote effective implementation of recommendations of the two partners' conferences held on the implementation of the Action Plan as well as the AMCEN work plan. To this end, pilot projects were initiated in six countries, namely Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda and Tunisia.

UNEP has continued to undertake different environmental assessment and early warning activities in support of NEPAD. The activities in 2005 included the preparation of the second Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-2) report which was launched during the 11th regular session of AMCEN in Congo-Brazzaville in May 2006. The AEO process incorporates the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) and early warning activities, particularly in the Great Lakes region. AEIN is an AMCEN initiative aimed at supporting the Africa Environment Outlook reporting process. The goal of AEIN is to enhance general accessibility to more reliable environmental data at the national level for environmental assessment and reporting. UNEP also supported the preparation of the AEO for Youth report. The youth held sub-regional meetings to discuss the contents of the report, which will be launched during the 11th regular session of AMCEN.

The Action Plan for NEPAD Environment Initiative identified post conflict environmental management as one of the priority issues to be addressed in Africa. In this context and as part of the global effort UNEP has initiated a post conflict environmental management programme in Africa. UNEP is supporting post-conflict work in Liberia, Sudan and Somalia. In 2005, UNEP was also involved in the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region by supporting the mainstreaming/integration of environmental issues in the Programmes of Action developed for the reconstruction of the Great Lakes Region.

Since August 2005, UNEP has continued to provide support in the development of the African 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the context of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and NEPAD Environmental Action Plan, and worked with the Federal Ministry of Environment and Nuclear Safety of Germany on the launching of the "Task Force on Collaboration with Africa" for the further development and implementation of the African 10 Year Framework Programme. Implementation of the project "Making the African Power Sector Sustainable" continued in 2005. This project was jointly implemented by UNECA-Sustainable Development Division and UNEP with the main goal being to facilitate integration of socio-economic and environmental concerns into the power sector reforms (PSR) in Sub-Saharan Africa for poverty alleviation.

The Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African region and the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment

of the West and Central African region are implementing two year work programmes directed at improving the assessment and management of marine and coastal environment in sub-Saharan Africa. At their 7th meeting in Gabon, March 2005, the contracting Parties to the Abidjan convention requested the Regional Coordinating Unit to work closely with NEPAD to ensure the implementation of NEPAD's Environmental Action Plan and particularly its sub-theme on coastal and marine environment.

The Joint Secretariat for the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, which is hosted by UNEP, has consequently directly supported the NEPAD Coastal and Marine Secretariat (NEPAD-COSMAR) in Kenya and the NEPAD Interim Secretariat in Senegal. The joint Secretariat in 2005 supported the Kenya Focal Point for the Nairobi Convention who is also the coordinator of NEPAD-COSMAR, to operationalise the Nairobi Convention Focal Points office in Kenya and to compile a national status report on the coastal and marine environment. The Joint Secretariat, with the support of the Contracting Parties to the Conventions is planning to hold a joint conference with NEPAD in South Africa in May 2007, in conjunction with the Conference of Parties for the two conventions.

UNEP continued in 2005, to implement activities related to the NEPAD action plan priority of improving health and environment through reduced urban air pollution. The main activities to improve urban air pollution have been the support to eliminate the use of leaded gasoline, introduction of vehicular catalytic converters and lowering sulphur levels in fuels, particularly in diesel. A regional conference that included countries in North Africa still using leaded gasoline was held in May 2006. The conference aimed at sensitizing countries still using leaded gasoline to eliminate the use of leaded gasoline as a means to improve air quality. A regional conference for sub-Saharan Africa on Better Air Quality in African Cities is planned to take place from 25-28 July 2006 at UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi. The conference aims to increase the awareness of African decision makers with regard to urban air pollution issues.

UNEP supported AMCEN to convene a high level preparatory meeting for its member States in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2005 ahead of the seventh Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD-COP7). UNEP also supported AMCEN to convene a high level preparatory meeting for its member States in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2005, ahead of the eleventh Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-COP11) and the first Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol held in Montreal, Canada in December 2005.

In 2005, UNEP supported five countries in Africa (one from each sub-region) to develop their NEPAD national action plans, in line with the suggestions made by AMCEN at the Partners' Conference.

Implementation of the programme Partnership on the Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA) continued in 2005. PADELIA has particularly enabled the building of capacities of the African judiciaries (i.e. Senior Judges and Chief Justices of Anglophone and Francophone countries), through workshops organized on

environmental law as well as other sub-regional and national capacity building programmes that were undertaken in 2005. All these activities are contributing to the implementation of the action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD.

Innovative approaches for funding the priorities of NEPAD

In order to mobilize the necessary resources for the implementation of the Action Plan, a decision was adopted by the Second Ordinary Assembly of the African Union Summit calling for a Donors (Partners) Conference. Two donor conferences have already been held in Algiers, Algeria in December 2003 and in Dakar, Senegal in March 2005 to deliberate on the financial mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan. Both conferences noted that the absence of appropriate financial mechanisms was hampering the implementation of the Action Plan, and called for the creation of an African Environment Facility within the African Development Bank (AfDB). To this end, UNEP attended a consultative meeting on the establishment of the African Environment Facility that was held at the AfDB headquarters in Tunis, Tunisia from 22-26 November 2005 to deliberate on the objectives of the proposed facility and practical modalities for its establishment. UNEP will fund study to be undertaken on the proposed facility.

Challenges and constraints

Much sensitization, within and outside the African continent, is still required to dispel any conceptual misunderstandings about NEPAD and ensure its full comprehension, especially with respect to its Environment Initiative, so as to deepen ownership of prioritized projects. The lack of integration of NEPAD priority initiatives into national development frameworks has further compounded the difficulties in realizing the implementation of projects. Major constraints to implementation have also been due to institutional weaknesses and the lack of adequate financial and human resources, which means that, in most cases, even the most basic coordination and facilitation needs, let alone their implementation, have been hindered. Furthermore, there is need for harmonization of ongoing programmes, as well as institutional coordination to avoid duplication and overlap of institutions.

Collaboration with other UN agencies

Under the leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), clusters of UN agencies working in Africa were formed in the context of a co-coordinated approach of the whole UN system in support of NEPAD. UNEP is the lead agency in co-coordinating environmental issues within cluster 4: Environment, Population and Urbanization. The objectives of the cluster are to focus on the challenges posed by population growth and movement; rapid and uncontrolled growth of human settlements; environmental depletion, degradation and pollution; and the lack of demographic statistics. UNEP has also been an active member of the sub-clusters on water and energy of Cluster 1: Infrastructure Development: Water and Sanitation, Energy and Transport and has also played a significant role in shaping the content of the newly established Cluster 6: Science and Technology.