

Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries

Commitment 1: Fostering a people-centered policy framework

Many of the world's poor are dependent on land and natural resources for their livelihoods. Poverty is often a direct result of peoples' limited opportunities to generate wealth from local natural resources and other assets and of limited access to public goods and services. Access and benefit sharing are determined partly by public policies and government practices that sometimes allow for the concentration and capture of environmental benefits by small groups of elite.

Though, the World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized that the sustainable management of the natural resource base is essential for economic and social development, links between poverty and environmental degradation are insufficiently reflected in national development processes, including PRSPs.

In recognition of the failure to adequately reflect poverty and environment linkages in national development processes, UNEP Governing Council through its decision 21/15 requested the Executive Director of UNEP to develop and promote understanding about the existing linkages between poverty and environment and assist Governments on ways and means to integrate key environmental concerns into their national development plans. Following this decision, UNEP developed a conceptual framework on poverty and ecosystems, an approach that fully integrates the environment into the challenge of poverty alleviation. Decision 22/10 of the Governing Council endorsed this conceptual framework and requested UNEP to operationalise it, with a focus on Africa.

UNEP has developed a four-year project that aims at increasing developing countries' capacity to mainstream environment/ecosystems in their development strategies. This mainstreaming will ensure that poverty reduction is not undermined by unsustainable use of environmental resources. The project has commenced with pilot studies to provide technical assistance to seven African countries. These countries are: Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Specifically, the project aims to:

- Assess how environment has been included in national development processes, including PRSPs,
- Demonstrate in practical terms links between environment and development in the country, and how these linkages can reduce poverty and achieve other development goals, including the MDGs.
- Develop practical steps to include environment in existing national development strategies through work plans developed with the government. Activities in these work plans vary between countries but include, for example, training courses, micro-projects, capacity building, identification and implementation of concrete tools and other mechanisms for including environment in development processes, identification of longer term capacity building programmes and stakeholder consultations.
- Assist countries to develop and put in place longer term capacity building programmes.

The final output will be a poverty-environment strategy designed by each country, integrated with other national development and poverty alleviation measures addressing the national and local social, economic, political and ecological issues in an integrated manner - a long-standing goal of UNEP.

In addition, UNEP has launched an initiative on Integrated Assessment and Planning for Sustainable Development in Tanzania and Uganda. These projects aim at integrating environmental considerations into policy design and improving the countries' planning processes to make them more sustainable. In Uganda, the project included a broad assessment of the draft national trade policy and fisheries policy. The project in Tanzania focused on assessing the District Agricultural Development Plan in two districts. Both studies recommended modifications to the existing policies to integrate sustainability considerations and thus to contribute to poverty reduction and ensure sustainable use of the natural resources. The project fostered inter-ministerial dialogue and stakeholder participation, and enhanced the capacities of the national teams to apply the integrated assessment methodologies to different plans and policies. Both projects contributed to fostering a people-centered policy framework, good governance at the national level, building human and institutional capacities, building institutional capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, enhancing the role of trade in development

UNEP's work on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) though comes under the rubric of Commitment 6 also aims to integrate its objectives and policies in the Poverty Reduction Strategies, as these tools offer new opportunities for combining environmental and poverty alleviation objectives. Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs) offer a logical, country-driven means to design and implement SCP tools, facilitate local ownership and ensure that they are effectively integrated in overall development and economic planning.

By generating gains in efficiency of resource use, increasing re-use and recycling of products and raw materials, and reducing pollution with its associated economic and human health impacts, SCP contributes to poverty eradication as well as environmental protection. In this way SCP enhances national revenues and economic growth that in turn, if distribution policies and activities are in place, will increase per-capita income of the poor.

The project involves pilot countries' multidisciplinary teams, led by the Ministry of the Environment or other Institutions, working with relevant stakeholders to identify specific SCP objectives, policies, and instruments which match the country situation. UNEP then assists the Ministries of the Environment in dialogue with PRSP responsible authorities to draft and include a specific chapter in the new or revised PRSP, or the related Annual Progress Report. The project was initially launched in Senegal, and a manual on the integration of SCP in PRSPs is being developed by UNEP and the Wuppertal Institute.

Commitment 2: Good governance at the national and international levels:

In the field of environmental law, UNEP continues to provide assistance to LDCs in Africa in enhancing their national environmental legislation and related institutions under the Partnership for Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA). PADELIA, as a Phase II of African Law Project seeks to enhance capacity of the countries in implementation of existing laws; developing legal instruments to fill gaps in the existing laws; and enhancing capacity for sustained development and implementation of environmental law.

PADELIA supports 13 countries in three subregions of Africa, namely, east Africa, comprising Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania; the Sahel, comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) subregion, comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe. These 13 countries have already identified priority problems requiring legal intervention and have prepared work plans covering the period 2003–2005. In the Sahel and SADC regions, countries are focusing on transboundary environmental law, institutional capacity-building on issues and forestry management. In east Africa, countries have begun the process of developing a protocol for environmental management and are also focusing on transboundary in addition to cross-border environmental law and institutional capacity-building issues. Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe are in the process of developing their own internal laws.

Other activities undertaken in the project countries include training and awareness raising of stakeholders, including, judges, magistrates, legal practitioners, etc. and focus on specific subjects related to environmental law.

UNEP has been working with the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) on a pilot project to develop national legislation in the South Pacific that implements a cluster of chemicals- and waste-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). UNEP convened two regional workshops on implementation of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and related MEAs, focusing on legislative measures in the Caribbean (included Haiti) and Pacific. The first workshop was held in Kingston, Jamaica (July 2005) for the Caribbean (in partnership with the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit), and the second workshop was held in Suva, Fiji (August 2005) for the Pacific (in partnership with United Nations University, University of South Pacific, and the South Pacific Environment Programme).

UNEP's work on good governance at the national and international level also includes intensive work on post conflict assessment. The links between conflict and the environment are complex, and proper environmental management is essential for reconstruction efforts and long-term peace and stability. To achieve this objective, the Post-Conflict Assessment Unit was established in 2001 to conduct strategic assessments of post-conflict environmental problems. Those assessments identify immediate risks to human health and livelihoods, and provide recommendations on priorities for clean-up, sustainable resource use and strengthening environmental governance.

In the Great Lakes region, UNEP organized a stakeholders' meeting in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, to enable experts in the region to identify and discuss the major environmental issues related to peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration, and humanitarian and social issues that should be incorporated in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region process.

UNEP has also joined the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) process as the focal point for environmental issues in Haiti, Liberia and Sudan.

UNEP's Post-Conflict Assessment Unit, in cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and the Environment, conducted a post-conflict environmental assessment in Afghanistan in 2002. The final report, entitled *Afghanistan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment*, was released in January 2003. Following its release, the ministry requested UNEP to develop a 2.5 year comprehensive capacity- and institution-building programme. The purpose of the programme is to develop a stand-alone and self-sufficient department of environment with the required technical capacity to implement the ministry's environmental mandate. The programme will train and mentor a minimum of 45 counterpart staff, provide technical assistance and advice to the ministry on an as-needed basis, and supply the department with basic office and field equipment. The programme is being implemented by the Post-Conflict Assessment Unit from October 2003 to June 2006 in cooperation with the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific, and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

In May 2004, UNDG and the World Bank undertook a mission to Haiti for the purpose of conducting an assessment of the Haitian Government's needs. The Post-Conflict Assessment Unit and the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the mission. Thirteen thematic working groups were established for the mission, including one on the environment. UNEP assisted the environment working group and also provided inputs to other groups such as those dealing with infrastructure, energy and agriculture. A state of the environment report, drafted by the environment working group, was submitted to the mission steering committee.

Following the signing of a peace accord in Accra, Ghana, in August 2003, UNDG and the World Bank undertook a joint needs assessment for Liberia from November 2003 to February 2004 covering 13 priority sectors. UNEP's Post-Conflict Assessment Unit was the focal point for the cross-cutting issue of the environment and provided an input paper outlining the key environmental issues to be addressed. The Post-Conflict Assessment Unit also published the *Desk Study on the Environment in Liberia*, which it launched in New York at an international reconstruction donors conference that took place on 5 and 6 February 2004. Based on the findings of the desk study, UNEP received an official request in April 2004 from the National Transitional Government of Liberia that it provide additional technical assistance in the areas of environmental policy, law and assessment. Based on this request, UNEP is developing a proposal to strengthen environmental administration in Liberia at the national and local levels through a combination of capacity-building activities, technical advice and the provision of basic equipment. As an input to the programme, UNEP organized and co-hosted, along with the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a two-day seminar on the environment in Liberia in Monrovia in July 2004. Efforts are now underway to mobilize funds for programme implementation.

The United Nations has been closely monitoring negotiations both with regard to the Darfur crisis and the North-South peace negotiations in Sudan. A joint mission co-led by the United Nations and the World Bank to provide an assessment of rehabilitation and transitional recovery needs over the next two years, has been initiated. The Post-Conflict Assessment Unit is the focal point for the cross-cutting issue of the environment.

Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities:

At its twenty-third session, held in Nairobi from 21 to 25 February 2005, UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, by decision 23/11, adopted the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The Bali Strategic Plan aims at a more coherent, coordinated and effective delivery of environmental capacity-building and technical support at all levels, and by all actors, including UNEP, in response to well defined country priorities and needs. It complements and enhances the more traditional activity areas of UNEP, such as assessment, environmental policy and law, environmental institution building, and promotion of cleaner production systems. It focuses the technology support and capacity-building currently being carried out by UNEP in line with activities in function of well defined country priorities and needs.

Capacity building and technology support are not new to UNEP. Since its inception, and within available resources, UNEP and its partners, have assisted countries and regions to develop, implement and strengthen their environmental capacities. In the 2004-2005 biennium, UNEP and its partners, e.g., the GEF, have continued to conduct capacity building and technological support activities in line with the approved Programme of Work.

Anticipating the emerging recommendations of the Bali Strategic Plan, UNEP undertook in the last quarter of 2004 a preliminary stock-taking review of its capacity-building and technology support activities. Since the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan, the Executive Director has:

- Strengthened and enhanced the delivery of capacity-building and technology transfer in the context of the implementation of the programme of work for 2004–2005;
- Through the UNEP regional offices, undertaken a preliminary inventory and analysis of regional and national needs and priorities for environmental capacity-building and technology support. This inventory, amongst others, indicated that a more systematic, targeted and comprehensive approach towards needs assessments was needed, building on many needs assessments that exist already at national and regional level;
- Further strengthened cooperation between regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies, to better equip Regional offices to guide the regional and subregional implementation of the BSP;
- Conducted an in-depth analysis of existing and planned capacity-building and technology support activities within the framework of the 2006–2007 programme of work to align the implementation of the approved programme of work with the BSP requirements;

A review of the operational modalities of UNEP is being conducted to facilitate, amongst others, the implementation of the BSP, as well as a review of project development, approval and implementation procedures in operation both at UNEP and UNDP to identify possible areas for increased efficiency.

Examples of enhanced capacity building and technology support activities implemented by UNEP following the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan include the following:

- At the request of countries, the UNEP Global Programme of Action Coordination Office has greatly expanded its training course on municipal wastewater treatment. The office has also further assisted countries to develop and implement national programmes of action within relevant development frameworks, include through the promotion of low cost technologies and sustainable financing with a focus on domestic resource mobilization;
- The UNEP capacity-building and technology support activities in urban environments have been strengthened, among others, through the hosting of the secretariat of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, by supporting countries and non-governmental organizations in sub-Saharan Africa to develop activities to reduce air pollution, and through the phasing out of leaded petrol
- To strengthen national capacities for monitoring environmental change and to enhance the scientific basis for decision making, UNEP provided 170,000 satellite data sets from the Landsat series to 168 countries. Capacity-building is being provided through workshops on the interpretation and use of satellite data, remote sensing and information management in Africa and other regions

A pilot project on assisting countries in developing targeted and concerted needs assessments has been initiated in close consultation with UNDP in six countries in Africa (Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda and Tunisia). The projects will build on recommendations from existing national environmental action plans, national processes such as the United Nations development assistance framework and the common country assessments, as well as other capacity-building initiatives at country level, including the UNDP/UNEP/GEF national capacity self-assessment aimed at assisting countries to make a self-assessment of their capacity-building needs, particularly in the areas related to the three Rio conventions, namely, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

The pilot projects will focus on the development of a strategic national capacity-building and technology support plan to coordinate the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan at the country level. This will be part of the mainstreaming of the environment into national development planning and will provide input into poverty reduction strategies, thus building on existing work by UNEP on poverty and the environment. The projects will result in the development of specific project proposals emanating from the strategic national capacity-building and technology support plans and fund-raising strategies for effective implementation of the identified activities. The pilot projects will also lay a basis for appropriate information, data and knowledge on environmentally sound technologies, including in the context of South-South cooperation.

The initial results of these pilot projects will be presented at the ninth special session of the Governing Council in Dubai in February 2006. The further development of the pilot projects post Dubai will also provide key lessons for further implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in other countries in Africa and potentially in other developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

UNEP has prepared a three-year project that aims to build national and local capacity in environmental policy development for the sustainable management of the Parkland ecosystems (integrated crop-tree-livestock systems) of the semi-arid lowlands of West Africa. The project is conducted in partnership with the World Agroforestry Centre, the University of Florida Centre for Environmental Policy, and the Governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. UNEP plans to extend the application of these approaches to projects in other African regions to promote sustainable land management as an integral part of national development policies, strategies and plans.

With financial support of the Dutch government and the Office of Oceans Affairs in the United States Department of State, the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, jointly with UNESCO-IHE, SPREP, SOPAC and the University of the South Pacific, has delivered the UNESCO-IHE – UNDOALOS - UNEP/GPA Train-Sea-Coast Course on “Sanitation and Wastewater Management for Pacific Islands” in Fiji in October 2005. Participants came from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs:

UNEP launched the Africa Rural Energy Enterprise Development Program, known as AREED in 2000 with support from the United Nations Foundation to invest in the enterprise approach to sustainable energy service delivery in countries of West and Southern Africa. Three of the five countries where AREED is active are Least Developed Countries, namely: Mali, Tanzania and Zambia. AREED is making direct and indirect contributions to the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries, mainly to Commitments 4 and 6.

AREED empowers small and medium size enterprises to deliver modern energy services to the poor, thus promoting energy equity while creating new opportunities for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The approach offers rural energy entrepreneurs a combination of enterprise development services and a seed fund managed by the public purpose investment company E+Co. This integrated financial and technical support allows entrepreneurs to plan and structure their companies in a manner that prepares them for growth and makes eventual investments by mainstream financial partners less risky.

AREED has approved 31 investments in 33 energy enterprises and disbursed \$1,840,234 to enterprises in the 5 participating countries, including 3 LDCs, namely Mali, Tanzania and Zambia. Enterprises so far supported are engaged in a wide range of energy businesses including: industrial energy efficiency services; solar PV products; solar crop drying; improved cook stoves manufacture; liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distribution; and wind-powered pump maintenance. Collectively, these energy enterprises are contributing to Commitment 4 by improving energy access while putting more cash directly in the pockets of local entrepreneurs and their employees. By supporting small and medium-sized enterprises capable of extending energy services to populations that often cannot be reached by centralised utility approaches, AREED is helping to make globalization work to improve and sustain livelihoods for people in African LDCs.

As illustrated in below, AREED is helping LDCs advance towards the achievement of environmental goals and targets:

- An energy enterprise in Tanzania processes biomass wastes into fuel for sale to a cement factory, displacing up to 15% of the 44,000 tons of heavy fuel oil otherwise used yearly to provide heat. Environmental impacts include both local benefits arising from waste disposal, and the global impact of offset GHGs, otherwise emitted from combustion of heavy fuel oil at the cement plant.
- An LPG distribution company in Ghana sells about 2,000 tons of LPG per year to an estimated 9,000 households, 80% of whom use the gas for cooking. Former charcoal users comprise 63% of the company's customers. By promoting the switch from charcoal to LPG, this energy enterprise is helping reduce the problem of deforestation in Ghana.

UNEP is supporting UNIDO in its work on Cleaner Production capacity building in Laos and Cambodia, with the goal to establish National Cleaner Production Centres in both countries. Through the Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction from Industry in Asia and the Pacific (GERIAP) project created in-country capacity to support sustainable management practices in industry in Bangladesh through application of cleaner production techniques. The Sustainable Consumption in Asia project has also provided training and guidelines on how to support sustainable consumption in Nepal, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia and Bhutan.

Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development

UNEP's work on economics and trade has contributed to the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The following activities have been undertaken.

- Support for assessing the effects of trade liberalization in the rice sector in Senegal, assessing trade and fisheries policies in Uganda, and assessing the District Agricultural Development Plan in Tanzania.
- A two-year initiative on promoting production and trading opportunities for organic agricultural products in East Africa, under the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force (CBTF) on Trade, Environment and Development.
- A four-year initiative on "Integrated Assessment of Trade-Related Policies in the Agricultural Sector – Supporting the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity" is also focused on LDCs.
- An event on "Trade Liberalization, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)" at which several LDCs participated actively.

UNEP's project on Integrated Assessment of the Impact of Trade Liberalization on the Rice Sector in Senegal was completed in 2005. It provides a basis for formulating appropriate measures to ensure that the rice sector supports sustainable development objectives. This assessment was used to develop a policy package to strengthen the positive impacts and ameliorate the negative impacts of rice production on the environment in the context of trade liberalization. This project contributed to the commitments fostering a people-centered policy framework, building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, enhancing the role of trade in development and reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

The UNEP-UNCTAD CBTF initiative on Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa aims at creating policies and measures to address structural challenges faced by Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya in the development of the organic agriculture (OA) sector. This project

directly addresses the commitments outlined in the LDC PoA on fostering a people-centered policy framework, building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, enhancing the role of trade in development and reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment.

Organic agriculture can offer a range of environmental, social and economic benefits. On the economic side, growing world markets for OA products offer interesting export opportunities for developing countries that may have some comparative advantage in OA due to relatively abundant labour and lower use of agrochemicals. In addition, OA production has been shown to have a positive effect on the local environment, biodiversity and soil fertility, and has the potential to increase the yields and incomes of subsistence farmers in developing countries, particularly those who are not currently using agrochemicals, thus contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable rural development.

To reap these multifaceted benefits, however, the countries must create an enabling framework that fosters the development of this sector. The project will commission a capacity-building study prepared by international and national experts on key issues identified in the course of previous consultations and activities. The studies will focus on providing relevant stakeholders with essential information and analysis in the promotion of OA production and trading opportunities. The project will also result in the creation of an East African standard for organic products with the aim that this standard will eventually be recognized and accepted by the major consumers in the world.

In 2005, UNEP launched a four-year initiative entitled, “Integrated Assessment of Trade-Related Policies in the Agricultural Sector – Supporting the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity”, funded by the European Commission. The initiative supports developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP countries) in their efforts to implement the CBD by enhancing national capacities to assess, design and implement policies that maximize development gains from trade in the agricultural sector, while minimizing the impact on agricultural biodiversity. A key first step in the initiative is the development of a biodiversity assessment Reference Manual that will include guidance on assessment methodologies, impact analysis and development of biodiversity indicators. National institutions in six ACP countries will customize and apply this material to fit local conditions and needs and will undertake national assessments of agricultural trade-related policies. Policy action plans will then be developed to respond to the outcomes of the assessments. It directly addresses the commitments outlined in the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries regarding fostering a people-centered policy framework, good governance at the national and international levels, building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, enhancing the role of trade in development and reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment (Commitments 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, respectively).

UNEP side event on Trade Liberalization, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was convened during the ‘International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)’ (11 January 2005 in Mauritius). The aim was to provide a forum for SIDS countries, including several LDCs, to discuss and consider opportunities and challenges related to sustainable development through enhanced trade and sound environmental management. Discussion topics included sustainable fisheries management, organic agriculture as a market access opportunity, sustainable tourism development and protecting and promoting traditional knowledge. It directly addressed the commitments outlined in the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries regarding building human and institutional capacities, building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs, and enhancing the role of trade in development.

Country projects on trade liberalization in the agricultural sector and the environment were initiated in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal with the purpose of identifying the main concerns related to cultivation and trade in rice. Two projects on the implementation of policy response packages to promote sustainable management of fisheries are being implemented in Uganda and Senegal. National projects have been initiated in Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania under a UNEP capacity-building initiative for integrated assessment and planning for sustainable development. The initiative aims to enhance capacities by undertaking integrated assessment and planning for sustainable development with particular focus on agriculture, poverty alleviation, environmental management and sustainable trade promotion.

In addition, UNEP, together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, convened a capacity-building task force on trade, environment and development training workshop on integrated assessment for African countries on 19 and 20 July 2004, at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. It targeted African research and training institutions in a position to train others in the future or initiate integrated assessments in cooperation with their Governments.

UNEP convened and supported a train-the-trainers workshop for Francophone Africa based on a UNEP environmental impact assessment training resource manual. Held in Tunis from 22 to 26 September, the workshop targeted participation from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia.

UNEP convened a subregional capacity-building seminar on trade and environment issues of special relevance to the development agendas of African Portuguese-speaking countries. The seminar, in addition to raising awareness and enhancing capacity of the individual participants and their countries, provided a platform for discussing national trade and environment issues in the regional and international context.

Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment:

It must be noted that the majority of the LDCs are located in the African region. The launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in July 2001 renewed the commitment to Africa by the international community. Decisions taken by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council demonstrate that the two bodies consider NEPAD to be the framework for support to Africa.

The Government of Algeria, with support from UNEP, hosted a partner's, i.e., donor's, conference in Algiers in December 2003 to engage Africa's development partners in supporting the effective implementation of the priority projects and programmes identified in the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD. UNEP, upon the request from the Government of Senegal, also provided institutional support for the establishment of the interim secretariat of the NEPAD environment initiative. UNEP has now initiated the implementation phase of the capacity building programme of the action plan, which was highlighted as a priority by African Governments.

UNEP has continued to provide the secretariat services for AMCEN. UNEP supported the organization of a special session of AMCEN convened in Maputo, Mozambique, in June 2003, at which AMCEN reviewed and endorsed the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD. UNEP also contributed financially and technically to the organization of the tenth regular session of AMCEN, held from 26–30 June 2004 in Sirte, Libya. At that meeting, AMCEN adopted a declaration, deliberated on its indicative work programme for 2005–2006, including priority actions contained in the environment initiative action plan, and adopted eight decisions providing policy guidance in the environment field in Africa.

During 2005, UNEP supported the holding of the Second Partners Conference on the Implementation of Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD. Partners for Africa's development met in Dakar, Senegal from 15 to 16 March 2005 to review the implementation of the Action Plan and deliberate on the financial mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan. African environment Ministers attending the forum dwelt on validation of a mechanism to finance the environment component of NEPAD through the setting up of an Environment Fund at the African Development Bank. In addition, five intergovernmental consultative meetings to review the first draft of environmental sub-regional action plans of NEPAD were also held with the technical support of UNEP.

Assessing the state and trends of the environment and early warning of environmental emerging issues.

This work, which falls under commitments 3 and 6 of the progress report on the Programme of Action for LDCs, was initiated as part of UNEP's mandate to monitor and assess the state of the environment (Agenda 21, UNCED, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Malmö Ministerial Declaration, Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum and Governing Council) and to assist countries in building their technical and human capacity to conduct assessments (in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building).

In Africa, UNEP has started the process to prepare the 2nd Africa Environment Outlook Report (AEO II) to reflect a variety of regional and subregional environmental perspectives and priorities, and identifying case studies that look at how policy driven environmental changes impact on human and ecosystem vulnerabilities recommending, at the same time, some policy actions which could lead the region towards the most favourable outcomes. This process is conducted with a broad participation of African experts and institutions, through which UNEP is implementing a number of capacity building activities at the national and subregional levels, in order to strengthen the ability of African institutions (in particular in the Least Developed Countries) to respond technically to the preparation of state of the environment reports, and the associated

data and information management (including remote sensing and geographic information system technologies). Twelve countries in Africa (Uganda, Ethiopia, Gabon, Congo Brazzaville, Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Zambia, Lesotho, Eritrea, Cameroon and Zimbabwe) have completed the preparation of their national environment outlook reports, which provided valuable inputs in the AEO II.

An important component of this process is the Africa Environmental Information Network (AEIN); a multi-stakeholder capacity building process that aims to harness and enhance access to information and knowledge to support the management of Africa's environmental resources as assets for sustainable development. The goal of the AEIN is to strengthen the capacity of African countries to use good quality information on environmental assets to make informed investment choices at sub-national and national levels, and manage these assets on a sustainable basis. As of today, capacity in data and info management has been particularly enhanced in the following LDCs: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Ghana.

In the Latin American and Caribbean Region, UNEP is assisting Haiti in the preparation of its first state of the environment report which will contain recommendations for policy actions to help improving the state of the environment and management of the vastly depleted natural resources of Haiti. Working with national authorities and representatives of civil society, UNEP is helping to build the some times inexistent capacity to manage environmental data and information for assessment purposes.

Strengthening early warning, assessing risk and vulnerability and incorporating the environmental dimension in disaster risk management

UNEP launched in 2003 the Environment and Conflict Prevention Initiative (E&CPI), which aims to explore the role of environment as a tool for cooperation and trust building between potential conflicting parties. Environmental agreements, common natural resources shared management at different scales (from community to government level) are explored with specific regional case studies to withdraw examples, best practices and lessons learnt. Regional assessments have started in Africa, including countries of the Great Lakes Region, in Latin America, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and Asia and the Pacific. The assessments and their results will be presented to Governments during the 24th Regular Session of UNEP Governing Council, in 2007.

UNEP is participating in the "Sensitivity Mapping and Development of Tsunami Inundation Maps for the East Coast of Africa" project. This initiative is being undertaken as a joint exercise by UNEP, UNDP and National governments.

Under the auspices of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Africa Unit, UNEP also participates in the discussions for the creation of a Regional Early Warning Center for the East Coast of Africa, which outlines a partnership approach to supporting the integrated development of tsunami early warning systems. Of the 12 countries affected by the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, 5 were in Africa, with a further 5 African countries also directly at risk of natural hazards in the Indian Ocean. African countries suffer from inadequate preparedness for tsunamis and related risks, including a lack of effective early warning and public/political awareness. This project will address these challenges in Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and the Seychelles.

UNEP has set up a Task Force on Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Warning which is developing a pilot study for selected countries in Africa (including LDCs) on how best environmental and disaster risk reduction elements can be integrated into environmental assessments. This cooperative effort has been initiated through the UNEP-OCHA Joint Unit.

Integrated water resources management

Acknowledging the urgency of the vulnerability issue, which affects the livelihoods of Africa's people and environment, UNEP and the System for Analysis Research and Training (START) initiated a study in February 2003 on the vulnerability of water resources in Africa to environmental change. To kick-start this assessment of the region, a rapid assessment has been executed. In this rapid assessment, four regional groups of researchers addressed the vulnerability issue for their respective regions (southern, eastern, western and northern Africa) by means of assessments of selected river, lake and aquifer basins according to natural (physiographic), anthropogenic (social and economic) and management criteria. This rapid assessment has clearly shown that water resources in Africa are now at risk and will be even more so in the near future.

A workshop of African specialists was held from 27 to 29 September 2004 in Nairobi to assess the preliminary results and agree on modalities for continuing the effort for a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of Africa's river, Lake and aquifer basins.

Support to transboundary river basin management was strengthened in the context of AMCOW by the provision of technical support to the Nile Basin Initiative and UNEP/GEF activities in the region through the Fouta Djallon management project as well as a project on integrated ecosystem management of watersheds shared by Nigeria and Niger.

UNEP/GEF has a portfolio in Least Developed Countries encompassing the following types of projects:

- Assistance to countries to develop their National Biodiversity Strategies, Action Plans and National Reports to the CBD (Vanuatu, Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Mauritania);
- Assistance to countries to develop their National Communications to the UNFCCC (Lesotho, Zambia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Central African Republic, Nepal, Haiti, Comoros, Djibouti, Bangladesh and Rwanda);
- Assistance to countries to participate in the Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism under the CBD (Mauritania, Malawi, Mozambique, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Gambia);
- Assistance to countries to prepare National Implementation Plans to phase out Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (Mauritania, Gambia, Mozambique, Yemen, Haiti, Benin, Kiribati, Cambodia, Madagascar, Senegal, Vanuatu);
- Assistance to countries to develop their National Biosafety Frameworks within the context of the Cartagena Protocol (Uganda);
- Assistance to countries to assess their capacity needs to implement the Rio Conventions (Gambia, Uganda, Haiti, Nepal, Eritrea, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Comoros, Mozambique);
- Assistance to countries to prepare national plans for Adaptation to Climate Change (Haiti, Mauritius, Lesotho, Tanzania, Comoros, Uganda, Gambia, Djibouti, Senegal, Liberia);

There is also a vibrant portfolio involving LDCs in regional and global projects on Environment Management in the five focal areas of the GEF (Biodiversity, Climate Change, International Waters, Land Degradation and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs))

Mountain Ecosystems

The United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/RRC-AP) in partnership with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development created a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of glaciers and glacial lakes in Nepal and Bhutan using available maps, satellite images, aerial photographs, reports, and field data on different scales. This has brought a greater understanding of glacial retreat and the impact of climate change on the fragile mountain ecosystems of the Himalayas and the vulnerable mountain communities. The scientific data has been invaluable in Bhutan's understanding of the potential threats of glacial lake outburst floods and have provided the key scientific basis for the preparation of Bhutan's National Adaptation Programme of Action. Priority projects in their NAPA include siphoning of glacial lakes.

Great Apes Survival Project

The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), a UNEP and UNESCO-led WSSD Type II Partnership, unites all the principal institutional actors in great ape conservation – UN agencies, biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, great ape range state and donor governments, non-governmental organizations, scientists, local communities and the private sector. The GRASP Partnership was established in 2001 to address the extinction crisis facing the four main types of great apes in Equatorial Africa and South East Asia; bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans; and the mainly forest ecosystems on which they and their human neighbours depend for survival.

As the lead agency in the GRASP Partnership, UNEP supports a number of Least Development Countries in Africa towards achieving commitments 1 (Fostering a people-centered policy framework), 2 (Good governance at the national and international levels), 3 (Building human and institutional capacities), 4 (Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs) and 6 (Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment).

GRASP activities already undertaken, or planned for the near future, in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, including the following:

- Commitment 1: GRASP support for integrated conservation and development pilot filed projects with poverty reduction as a key objective.
- Commitment 2: GRASP financial and other assistance to international and national civil society actors and media institutions to encourage greater participation in great ape conservation planning.
- Commitment 3: GRASP field projects that improve local community and protected areas infrastructure, including educational and health facilities, as well as GRASP-supported strengthening of parks & wildlife authorities' capabilities.
- Commitment 4: GRASP promotion of sustainable development principles in mining and forestry industries, funding for great ape ecotourism activities and best practices and enhancing access to information technology and the Internet.
- Commitment 6: GRASP support to conservation and sustainable management of great ape habitat (benefiting apes and humans), incorporation of indigenous people's knowledge in, and support to, national and regional priority conservation planning, promotion of South-South and North-South cooperation through intergovernmental dialogue and raising public awareness and funding.

Support to the Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Many African LDCs are vulnerable to the effects of global environmental problems. The Governments of the region have repeatedly observed the need for enhancement of their negotiation capacity to ensure that they participate fully in the international environmental negotiation fora. UNEP has supported the African countries to enhance the capacity of African negotiators in the major MEAs as well as supporting them to participate in related meetings.

UNEP, as the implementing agency under the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, has provided support to 51 countries in Africa to enable them to meet their protocol compliance targets. Apart from regional and subregional network meetings of national ozone units, UNEP also assisted the countries through innovative capacity-building mechanisms such as South-South cooperation, thematic dialogues and non-governmental organization participation in the phase-out of methyl bromide. The work of French-speaking, English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking networks in subregions has resulted in a steep improvement in data reporting and policy making. Through the Regional Office for Africa's OzonAction's Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP), UNEP continues to provide capacity building and specialized technical support to African countries for compliance with the Montreal Protocol, including the Regional Network of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Officers for English and French speaking African countries.

UNEP also provided technical assistance to establish and operation of national ozone units to implement the Montreal Protocol to phase out ozone depleting substances to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The LDCs including SIDS are especially vulnerable to the impacts of global warming and natural disasters. Adaptation is necessary if countries are to overcome the negative consequences of climate change. UNEP continues to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs) prepare their national plans for adaptation to climate change. Also UNEP supports African NGOs from among LDCs in Africa to participate in the UNFCCC COPs meetings. For example, UNEP supported the African NGOs participation in the UNFCCC 22nd Session of the Subsidiary Bodies from 16 – 27 May 2005 in Bonn, Germany. UNEP also organized preparatory meetings for the eleventh Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 11 of UNFCCC) and the first Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol (MOP 1 of Kyoto Protocol) for African countries, among them LDCs on 23 October 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

UNEP has supported the African region in facilitating enabling activities under the climate change convention. UNEP supported several African countries with their first and second national communications to the convention and, by means of technical training workshops, assisted several least developed countries with their national adaptation plans for action. UNEP also supported an African workshop on the implementation of the convention's article 6 (Education, training and public awareness). Related activities include the development of an African climate change curriculum project.

A Preparatory Meeting for the seventh Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP-7 of UNCCD) was also organized by UNEP on 22 October 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Regional Agreements

A large majority of LDCs in Africa have signed and ratified all the main regional environmental conventions. UNEP has endeavoured to mobilize the political will of the Parties to the Nairobi and Abidjan Convention as well as assisting in the development of a funding mechanism that will ensure reliability, predictability and sustainability of the budget of the convention. UNEP has further assisted in the development of an effective system as well as providing financial support for the operationalization of the Regional Coordination Unit in Abidjan. UNEP is also providing support to the secretariat of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of the Trans-boundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa. This is to strengthen and support the capacity of the secretariat of the Bamako Convention to carry out effectively its functions and also organize the first Conference of Parties (COP-1) of the Convention in 2006.

Algiers Convention

UNEP facilitated the revision of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention). The revised text was adopted at the summit of the African Union in Maputo. Efforts are now being directed at encouraging African countries to accede to the convention.

Lusaka Agreement

UNEP continued to work with the Parties to the Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna And Flora (Lusaka Agreement) and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force for Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora. Specific decisions have been adopted requesting UNEP to assist Parties and the task force in the areas of developing and/or strengthening and harmonizing their wildlife law and regulations, capacity-building, awareness raising, and independent review of the work of the task force and implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

UNEP has facilitated a review of the work of the task force since its establishment in 1999 as well as the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. The review resulted in recommendations for the enhancement of the task force and the agreement. These recommendations underwent critical analysis by the main stakeholders and were adopted by the Governing Council Meeting of the agreement at its seventh meeting, held in January 2005.

Also, UNEP facilitated a training of trainers' course for regional law enforcement officers held in Naivasha, Kenya, in December 2003. The training enabled Lusaka Agreement Party States which are also Parties to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) to meet their obligations to enhance the capacity of specialized wildlife enforcement units called for under CITES resolution CONF.11.3.

Cleaner production and sustainable consumption

The African Round-table on Sustainable Consumption and Production was established as a regional coordinating institution to be based in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. The roundtable's third meeting was held on 17 and 18 May 2004 in Casablanca, Morocco.

The first African expert meeting on the 10-year framework plan on sustainable consumption and production was held on 19 and 20 May 2004 in Casablanca, Morocco. The meeting participants identified the key priority areas for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production in Africa in the areas of water, energy, urban environment and poverty reduction, and adopted the Casablanca Declaration on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which was later endorsed by AMCEN at its tenth regular session.

In 2005, two African Expert Meetings on the 10 Year Framework Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production were held and identified the key priority areas for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production in Africa. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), whose secretariat is based at UNEP, approved the 10 Year Framework Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production during the NEPAD Partners' conference in Dakar in March 2005.

In addition, three national and one sub-regional roundtables were organized in collaboration with the African Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ARSCP) which was established in 2004 as a regional coordinating institution and is supported by UNEP.

UNEP continued its support for implementation of the Declaration of Dakar on the phasing out of leaded gasoline in Africa and its work on expanding follow-up activities into the area of air quality improvement in selected African cities. In this context, a conference on the progress made on the phasing-out of leaded gasoline from sub-Saharan Africa was held to review the progress made over the last two years. The conference participants adopted decisions on the phasing out of leaded gasoline, which were later adopted by AMCEN at its tenth regular session.

Enhancing the integration of environmental dimension in refugee situations

Large refugee settlements and flows continue in many countries in Africa. They pose a major threat to environmental resources, including land, water, forests and biodiversity, and create other challenges in the areas of economic development, security and social services. These challenges are exacerbated by non-existent or weak capacities for addressing the impacts of refugee situations at the national and local levels. The challenges therefore call for better understanding of the environmental dimension of refugee situations and the formulation of appropriate policies as well as the strengthening of the capacities of Governments to promote the integration of environmental considerations into the planning and management of refugee settlements and flows. UNEP, with support from the Government of Norway and in close cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, is implementing a project on strengthening capacities for integration of environmental dimensions in the management of refugee settlements and flows in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The project is intended to reduce the risks of environmental emergencies by promoting and raising awareness of the complexity and importance of environmental issues at all phases in planning and management of refugee settlements and flows; strengthening capacity of national and local Governments to enhance the integration of the environmental dimension in refugee situations; and strengthening understanding at the national, local and community levels of the use of environmental vulnerability profiles in planning refugee operations.

Indigenous Knowledge

Global science has acknowledged the relevance of indigenous knowledge and the need for scientific and traditional knowledge to be integrated into environment and development programmes such as those relating to management of natural resources, understanding of natural disasters and mitigation of their impacts. Through indigenous knowledge systems, African people have well-developed traditional strategies for managing the environment and coping with environmental change. These systems and strategies are used to conserve nature and reduce the vulnerability to environmental change caused by hazards such as floods and drought. UNEP recognizes fully the importance of indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation and is therefore currently implementing, in close collaboration with the IGAD Drought Monitoring Centre, the National Meteorological Authority of the United Republic of Tanzania, the University of Witwatersrand and the Swaziland Environment Authority a project intended to promote the harnessing, use and application of indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation and coping mechanisms for flood and drought disasters in Kenya, the United Republic of South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania. The information obtained will be made accessible to a wide range of users by creating a web site and interlinking it with other web sites, including those of UNEP and the African Environment Information Network.

Environmental Emergencies

Over the years, the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit has developed a number of practical tools, including guidelines for the development of a national environment contingency plan and for environmental assessment following chemical accidents. In 2003 and 2004, the unit provided expertise and financial support for the development of guidelines for rapid environmental impact assessment by the Benfield Hazard Research Centre of University College London. The guidelines have been developed and field tested, and the joint unit is currently exploring their further application, for example to assess the negative environmental impacts of natural disasters. The guidelines are available from the joint unit web site (<http://ochaonline.un.org/ochaunep>). They provide a practical tool for relief workers who do not necessarily have a strong background in environmental issues, enabling them to undertake a rapid assessment of the environmental impacts of a disaster.

In June 2004, the Environmental Emergencies Partnership, with support from UNEP, OCHA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations University and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre, organized an advanced wildland fire management training course in Nelspruit, South Africa. The course, which was aimed at the Southern Africa Development Community region, focused on management, including risk and vulnerability reduction, of forest, grassland and savannas fire disasters caused by human and natural activities. Delegates from 12 African countries concluded the course with the Nelspruit Declaration on Wildland Fire Management.

In May 2004, UNEP developed profiles of institutions working on disaster and environmental risk reduction in Africa. The profiles are intended to enhance information exchange and promote coordination of efforts in the management of disasters in the region.

Also, a number of UNEP and ISDR joint activities have been undertaken to strengthen capacities and promote regional perspectives in the area of disaster reduction and management. UNEP, the ISDR regional office for Africa, the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union organized in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2003 a consultative meeting on disaster risk management with a view to developing a regional programme for disaster reduction in Africa. Following this, an African regional workshop on environmental disasters was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 28 to 30 July 2003 to promote awareness and interactive dialogue among experts on disaster reduction and environmental emergencies management in Africa. In addition, a workshop was organized in Lesotho in February 2004 on national legislation and institutions for environmental disasters in selected countries in southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Swaziland), with a focus on disaster prevention and risk reduction in southern Africa. The workshop served as a forum to raise awareness of the interlinkages between environmental degradation, disaster risk and vulnerability, and emphasized the need for appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks for environmental emergency prevention, preparedness, response and mitigation, as well as disaster risk reduction at the national, subregional and regional levels.

UNEP organized a waste management workshop in Malé in May 2005, which was attended by some 40 participants, including the Acting Minister of Environment and Construction (MEC), the UN Resident Representative, representatives from MEC, Energy and Water, Health, Tourism, and the National Security Service, as well as UN agencies including UNDP, WHO, FAO, and donors. Following the workshop, a waste action plan was developed and a tsunami waste management forum was established, which continues to meet on a weekly basis to coordinate activities in the waste sector. UNEP has completed a project to clean-up hazardous wastes from 89 of the most impacted islands. These hazardous wastes include asbestos cement roof sheets, used engine oils, solvents, pesticides and clinical waste. A total of 60 workers have been trained and equipped in the identification, handling, storing and labelling of hazardous wastes, with appropriate supervision from UNEP and MEEW. Following the safe collection and storage of these wastes, UNEP will hold a Hazardous Waste Workshop introducing legislative, waste treatment and disposal options. UNEP continues to provide general waste management advice to MEEW including the co-sponsoring workshops on the future of waste management in the Maldives. UNEP in consultation with MEEW has also developed a Tsunami Project Environment Review (PER) screening tool to be used to determine if projects (housing, harbours, waste, procurement of goods and services) have a potential to impact the environment.

In the Maldives, work has been initiated on activities designed to strengthen the capacity of Ministry of Environment (MEEW) to support national and regional early warning and disaster risk reduction measures.

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

UNEP remains a major actor at the core of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (some of which are also LDCs, - Kiribati, Maldives, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanatu) and its Strategy. Of particular relevance to UNEP within the implementation section of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States are the actions related to energy, biodiversity, natural and environmental disasters, marine resources, transport and security (with regard to the minimization of environmental impacts) and sustainable production and consumption.

In preparation for the 10 – year review of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States, UNEP provided the Governments of small island developing States with substantive and financial support for the preparation of national assessment reports, organization of thematic workshops, participation in regional preparatory meetings and the elaboration and dissemination of technical reports. Also, UNEP helped to facilitate institutional capacity-building events, cooperation with regional organizations and preparation of

fund-raising proposals. During the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, UNEP organized a high-level special event which was co-chaired by the Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and UNEP and involved several ministers from small island developing States.

UNEP also made important contributions during the meeting itself, including organizing and moderating the first plenary panel, which addressed the environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS. One of the recommendations of the panel, in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004, related to the establishment and/or strengthening of regional and subregional early warning and information systems. UNEP launched the Atlantic and Indian Oceans Environment Outlook, the Caribbean Environment Outlook and the Pacific Environment Outlook, together with the four reports prepared by the Global International Water Assessment programme for the Indian Ocean islands, Pacific islands, Caribbean islands and the Caribbean sea. The Environment Outlook reports, issued as part of the Global Environment Outlook process, represent a contribution to the review of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. The reports highlight the state of the environment in small island developing States by showing trends of national, regional and global significance; providing policy guidance and early warning information on environmental threats; calling for cooperation and action based on sound research and recommending strategies for sustainable development in small island developing States.

Together with various partners, UNEP organized several side events with direct links to the agenda of the meeting.

As a follow-up to the meeting in Mauritius, further attention will be paid within the UNEP programmatic areas to the following elements of the Strategy:

- Good governance and South-South cooperation in areas such as capacity-building, disaster management, environment, oceans, water and energy which are covered in the introductory paragraphs of the Strategy;
- Natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, land resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, science and technology, sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development, sustainable production and consumption, health, knowledge management and information for decision-making and capacity-building, which are covered in the main text of the Strategy.

Within the context of UNEP's assistance to Small Island Developing States, UNEP Regional Seas programme is supporting the Blue Ocean Institute and the University of Tasmania, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to investigate the: *Capacity of Pacific island countries and territories to assess vulnerability and adapt to mangrove responses to sea level and climate change: Priorities for technical and institutional capacity- building*. The project assessed the capacity of Pacific Island Countries and territories to determine vulnerability and adapt to mangrove responses to sea level and climate change. Information was obtained through responses to a questionnaire distributed to national focal points of the 16 countries and territories in the Pacific Islands region with native mangroves. Eight countries (Republic of the Fiji Islands, **Republic of Kiribati**, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Kingdom of Tonga, **Republic of Vanuatu**) and two territories (American Samoa, USA, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, USA) participated in the project.

Shoreline development and coastal ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to relative sea level rise and climate change in the Pacific islands region. Many of the low islands do not exceed 4 m above current mean sea level, and even on high islands, most development is located on narrow coastal plains. Land-use planners can obtain information from assessments predicting shoreline response to projected relative sea level rise and climate change over coming decades and use this information to mitigate habitat degradation and damage to coastal development. This advanced planning will enable coastal managers to minimize social disruption and cost, minimize losses of valued coastal habitats, and maximize available options.

Results highlight priority gaps in technical and institutional capacity of Pacific Island Countries and territories needed to assess vulnerability and adapt to mangrove and other coastal ecosystem responses to sea level and climate change. This project advances the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme's *Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands*, which identifies priority management, capacity-building, and research and monitoring regional activities for mangroves. Results support the development of

National Communication Reports to the United Nations Framework Climate Change Convention. The project also contributes to implementing the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands' Resolution VIII.3 on climate change and wetlands, which highlights the need for advanced land-use planning, adaptation, and mitigation to prepare for the effects on wetlands from climate and sea level change.

Within the context of UNEP's support to address serious threats to the marine and coastal environment through the Regional Seas Programme, UNEP's assistance to Small Island Developing States UNEP Regional Seas Programme supported the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Meteorology (MNREM) in Samoa, within the context of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to print a booklet on the mangroves in Samoa titled: "*Mangroves of Samoa: Status and Conservation*", following a request from the Government of Samoa. The booklet conveys the message of the seriousness of the problem of mangrove ecosystem degradation in Samoa and remedial action needs to be taken immediately. s provide.

The UNEP Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force in collaboration with the UNEP Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GPA Coordination Office) convened a meeting on February 2005 in Cairo, Egypt to discuss coastal zone rehabilitation and management in the tsunami-affected region (includes Maldives). This allowed key principles for coastal reconstruction and rehabilitation to be discussed within the broader framework of integrated coastal zone management, while providing a venue for knowledge to be exchanged on related policy tools and mechanisms aimed at reducing impacts of possible future disasters. The participants, including Senior Government Officials for Indonesia and other participants adopted 12 Guiding Principles for environmentally sound coastal rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Cairo meeting also agreed on expanding and annotating the principles to further extend and illustrate the guidance with references and practical experiences. For more information see: <http://www.unep.org/tsunami/>

Following the UNEP Tsunami Disaster Task Force Meeting in Cairo a UNEP-Report was released: "After the Tsunami – Rapid Environmental Assessment", published on 22 February 2005. The report summarizes the findings from the rapid environmental assessments and highlights critical issues for the recovery and rehabilitation phase. Subsequently, detailed environmental assessments were completed for Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

UNEP produced updated versions of the environment outlooks on three SIDS regions of 1999, namely the Caribbean (includes Haiti), the Pacific Islands (includes Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) and Atlantic (includes Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe) and Western Indian Oceans (includes Comoros), linking with the preparation of NARs and the regional reports, to be launched at the International Meeting.

UNEP through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) is providing technical and financial assistance to Haiti to prepare a state of the environment report.

Based on an Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Bangladeshi Ministry of Environment and Forest and the GPA Coordination Office, a revised national programme of action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities was drafted and presented during a national consultation workshop in August 2005. The workshop was attended by various government officials, as well as representatives of NGOs and research institutions. The input received on the draft NPA during the workshop is currently being incorporated and the NPA is expected to be launched shortly. Furthermore, in order to implement the revised NPA, two pilot projects are presently being prepared.

In collaboration with the Regional Coordination Unit of the GEF Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem project (GCLME), the first workshop on the development of an NPA took place in Sao Tome and Principe (October 2005). The workshop aimed at acquainting relevant government officials and other stakeholders with the GPA and the concept of national programmes of action, as well as to identify potential pilot projects.

UNEP/GPA Coordination Office is supporting a project in Mozambique to improve water resources and coastal area management of the Incomati basin.

Mozambique and Madagascar are currently receiving technical and financial assistance from UNEP in the framework of the GEF project "Addressing Land-based Activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-LaB)" which aims at: Reducing stress to the ecosystem by improving water and sediment quality; strengthening

regional legal basis for preventing land-based sources of pollution; and developing regional capacity and strengthen institutions for sustainable development.

Conclusions

The first progress report had identified three obstacles – country ownership, capacity and resources as hampering the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by the LDCs. In the context of reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment and other commitments in Brussels PoA, it calls for a more coherent, coordinated and effective delivery of environmental capacity-building and technical support at all levels, in response to well defined country priorities and needs.

The Bali Strategic Plan for Technological Support and Capacity Building adopted by UNEP's Governing Council at its 23rd session addresses the three core issues identified in the first progress report. Most significantly, the Bali Strategic Plan recognizes the rich diversity in the social and economic situation and requirements of the developing countries, especially the LDCs and countries with economies in transition.

Crucially, the Bali plan will focus on the development of needs assessments to provide a concerted platform to all relevant actors for national and international capacity-building and technology support activities in response to priorities approved across entire Governments, where appropriate within the framework of poverty reduction strategy papers. Through this plan UNEP will aim at assisting countries, upon request, in addressing their capacity-building and technology support needs in a coordinated and concerted manner. Also UNEP will assist countries in transforming their sectoral needs into a set of strategic priorities and plans which will provide a platform of comprehensive and coordinated international responses.

In doing this, UNEP will work through collaboration with initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, and the Regional Environment Action Plan in Central Asia. This will provide the necessary entry points for targeted, differentiated and focused delivery of capacity-building and technology support at regional level.

Special attention will be given to less developed countries, land-locked countries, the small island developing States and Africa. UNEP's regional offices will be better equipped to ensure priority setting and delivery of capacity-building and technology support that reflects the differing needs and priorities of recipient countries and institutions and that also responds to their particular stage of development and levels of capacity.
