

Capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements in Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP MEAs)

Newsletter with updates on the programme from October to December 2017



Africa Hub

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in Sierra Leone

The National Environmental Protection Agency in Sierra Leone reviewed the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) with the support of the ACPMEAs Africa hub. Sierra Leone, which became a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1994, developed its NBSAP from 2004 to 2010 as a response to the alarming rate of biodiversity loss and degradation of various ecological belts in the country.

The NBSAP is the main national-level strategic instrument that encompasses a country's key biodiversity priorities as well as the action plan in achieving its international obligations in the biodiversity cluster. Sierra Leone has had a fair share of successes and challenges towards its implementation with yet a huge backlog of project objectives to be achieved. All these were taken into consideration during the reviewing process for the current updated NBSAP (2017-2026). Most importantly, the process took into consideration that biodiversity loss be integrated

into the country's relevant national legislation, plans, programmes and policies to drive public policy and produce actions and changes that will achieve the objectives of CBD, within the country's socio-economic development framework.

The main themes of the reviewed strategy are wildlife, forest, agriculture and biodiversity, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems. The cross-sector strategies and cross-cutting issues include financial resources, policies, regulations and legislation, research and training, capacity building, public participation, monitoring, conservation of protected areas, sustainable use, incentive measures, public education, impact assessment, access to technology, information exchange, sharing of benefits and indigenous knowledge. Additionally, intellectual property rights and climate change, collaboration between stakeholders, the problem of overlapping mandates and conflict of interest among government agencies, were other priority topics recognized in the strategy.

The updated NBSAP document will be launched in early 2018.

Promoting the ratification of the Nagoya and Kuala Lumpur protocols in Africa

A workshop, held from 12 to 13 December 2017 at the African Union Commission premises in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was organized by the Hub, in collaboration with the UN Environment Liaison Office to the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union Commission (AUC), in order to promote the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and the Kuala Lumpur Protocol. Under the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol is an instrument for the fair and equitable access and benefit sharing of genetic resources and the Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol (which will enter into force in March 2018) serves as a redress and liability framework for biosafety. With over 25 attendees, the participation was not limited to non-Signatories but also included focal points from countries that could share their experiences as well as regional stakeholders.

The workshop ensured that country representatives had a good understanding of the significance and purpose of the protocols, their ratification process, their global and local benefits, and means of effective implementation.

Guidelines for national waste and chemicals management strategies

With expert inputs, the Hub has finalized a guidance document titled Guidelines to Develop National Strategy for Integrated Waste Management including Chemical Waste, designed for policy makers involved in development planning, especially in the waste sector. The guidelines address infrastructural, political, technical, social/economic, organizational/managerial, regulatory and legal challenges to ensure sound waste management and achieve sustainable development.

With the waste management in most African countries being an informal and ad hoc process, the developed guidelines aim to provide a clear systematic framework that African countries can apply and adapt to their particular circumstances in developing national strategies for integrated waste management in their respective domains.

At the national level, it is hoped that Zambia and Gabon will finalize their integrated waste management strategies by this year, with support from the ACP MEAs programme. After this guideline is endorsed through the member states, it will be available in the AU official languages, and widely disseminated and integrated into the planned capacity building efforts.

Caribbean Hub

Training customs officers in Suriname in pesticide inspection

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries in Suriname, the Caribbean Hub led a training workshop on Pesticides Inspection and Customs Issues in the Caribbean. With support from the FAO, the workshop was held in the capital Paramaribo from 4 to 6 December 2017, and saw the participation of 20 pesticides inspectors and 14 customs officers.



Pesticides inspectors and customs officers receiving their certificates at the Pesticides Inspection Training Workshop held in Paramaribo, Suriname from 4 to 6, December 2017

Aimed at enhancing the capacity of pesticides inspectors and customs officers, the training focused on managing pesticides and enforcing relevant national and international law, including the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions.

This workshop was a follow up of another joint training workshop on pesticides inspections and customs issues in the Caribbean, organized by the FAO and CARICOM Secretariat in Saint Lucia 15-17 March 2017, where the importance to transfer the knowledge to national stakeholders was recognized. One of the desired outcomes of the FAO and CARICOM Secretariat workshop was for participants to organize follow-up training sessions at the national level in their home countries.

Thus, this timely organization of this workshop by the Government of Suriname is a demonstration of countries' commitment to the work being done under the ACP MEAs programme and to participants' honoring the commitments made at the regional workshop, upon return to their respective countries. This national workshop was the first follow-up activity organized by a national agency. Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries has expressed a commitment to implement additional national training workshops over the next five months, an initiative that will be supported by the ACP MEAs Caribbean Hub.

Pacific Hub

Compliance and enforcement of environmental laws and policies in Fiji and Samoa

Environmental and natural resources management policies and legislation support the sustainable management of the Pacific island nations' natural capital for the benefit of current and future generations. A major challenge however, is to ensure consistent compliance and effective enforcement of these laws.

SPREP – serving as the Pacific Hub – partnered with International Union for Conservation of Nature's Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance and the Australian Centre for Financial and Environmental Compliance to provide a training to build the capacity and the confidence of managers and officers tasked with ensuring environmental compliance and enforcement. The training took place in Fiji and Samoa in October 2017, and was attended by 20 participants who play a key role in environmental compliance and enforcement from various Ministries. The Pacific Hub will follow up with the participating countries on compliance and enforcement work, and it is hoped that with adequate funding, they can replicate similar trainings to other member countries.

Environmental impact assessment in the Federated States of Micronesia

The Pacific Hub has had a longstanding involvement in training for environmental impact assessment at the national level, and last quarter was no different. The trainings took place in the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM): Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae.

Beyond providing training on EIA, the activity assisted with the finalization of the State of Pohnpei's EIA guideline, provide technical advice, and undertake a snapshot review of the



Participants at the EIA training in Pohnpei, one of the states of the Federated States of Micronesia. A volcanic island that is rich in flora and fauna, Pohnpei is known for being one of the rainiest inhabited places in the world.

FSM National Environmental Strategy (NEMS) 1993 from a state perspective.

The training was appreciated by those attending and recommending that refresher trainings take place every few years by the Pacific Hub, in order to ensure follow through on the teachings.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Support to Kenya's Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS)

Ongoing support is being provided under the MEAs team to the drafting of the Kenya ASTGS. Several meetings and write-shops held in Nairobi over the last quarter of 2017 gave the chance to tap in the process, and specifically to provide technical backstopping with regards to the mainstreaming of agro-biodiversity in the document.

A multi-stakeholder event, involving both the agriculture and environment sector, is planned for Q1 2018. The event will give the chance to facilitate exchange between the two ministries, particularly with regards to lesson learnt during the ASTGS process that can be relevant to the ongoing revision of the country's NBSAP.

Harmonizing pesticide registration in the East African region and identifying Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 10 to 12 October, 2017, a workshop was organized by FAO and the East African Community (EAC) to finalize the EAC Regional Guidelines for Harmonization of Pesticide Registration. There will be a series national validation workshops for the 3 Regional Guidelines in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. A regional workshop is also planned to kick start the regional strategy on risk reduction of Highly Hazardous Pesticides.

Furthermore, a training workshop was held at the Tanzania Tropical Resources Institute from 16 to 18 October, 2017 to assist in identifying Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs). The activity allowed for an evaluation of the register of pesticides for Tanzania as well as a review of the shortlist of HHPs.

Southern African Pesticide Regulators' Forum's (SAPReF) regional workshop

In partnership with the Swedish Chemical Agency (KemI) and the University of Cape Town, a Southern African Pesticide Regulator's Forum regional workshop was held to review the new legally binding SADC Regional Guidelines for Pesticide Management; fast track registration of bio-pesticides for Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) and provide training on identification of HHPs.

SAPReF developed a Fall Armyworm roadmap with clear short, medium and long term activities. The roadmap is also being used as a resource mobilization tool. SAPReF identified low risk synthetic pesticides and bio-pesticides for FAW that they agreed would be the basis for fast track registration in the region for the 2017/18 agricultural season. HHPs among the pesticides used to control FAW in the region were identified. A regional HHP and registration toolkit training will be conducted in the first quarter of 2018.

The Guidelines were forwarded to the SADC Secretariat for further review. Thereafter the documents will be validated in the 15 SADC countries through national workshops.



Obsolete stocks disposal in Malawi. Photo ©FAO/Hisham Osman

Disposal of obsolete pesticide stocks in Malawi

With co-financing from the MEAs project a total of 231 tonnes of obsolete pesticides was repacked and shipped from Malawi to Europe in December 2017 for disposal by high temperature incineration. There will be remediation activities for at least 2 prioritized contaminated sites in Malawi.

Civil society engagement in tackling mercury

Partnering with the European Environmental Bureau / Zero Mercury Working Group (EEB/ZMWG)

With the close of 2017, the three year project on the effective ratification and implementation of the Minamata convention on mercury carried out its closing activities, the four project partners carried out their closing activities. In Ghana, Friends of the Nation (FoN) held their final mining community consultations and organized a workshop with the Ghana National Association of Small-scale Miners, whose members demonstrated willingness to switch to mercury free alternatives. Other closing workshops held in Tanzania with the Agenda for Environment and Responsible Development (AGENDA), in Nigeria with the Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development (SRADeV) and the Pesticide Action Network of Mauritius (PANeM) in Mauritius demonstrated strong engagement from governments and civil society stakeholders in finding effective pathways for the implementation of the Minamata Convention. Some of the activities included mercury emissions inventory field training from an international mining expert, endorsed a clear mandate for the development of legislations and regulations to prohibit or restrict the production, import, trade, use and disposal of mercury added products, among other aspects covered.

UN Environment

Implementing the Nagoya Protocol in francophone Africa

With its lowland forests, coastal landscapes, rich river basins, West Africa has rich biodiversity and natural resources that provide social, ecological and economic resilience to the region. In order to ensure the fair access and equitable sharing of benefits of such crucial resources, the Nagoya Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity aims to support countries and regions develop regulatory and legislative frameworks on access and benefit sharing (ABS).



Experts, national focal points, and other stakeholders at the workshop on implementing the Nagoya Protocol in Abidjan, Ivory Coast

To that effect, UN Environment led a workshop in Abidjan, Ivory Coast from 13 to 16 November, 2017 to support West African countries in enhancing their capacities to initiate legal and regulatory frameworks on ABS at the national level. In contrast to the event organized by the African hub, this workshop targeted countries that have already ratified the Nagoya Protocol and are focusing on enhanced implementation. The sessions included developing national roadmaps as tool to support implementation, sharing knowledge and lessons learnt in the course of implementation at the national level, among other objectives.

Providing such a platform for knowledge sharing and technical assistance has been a crucial means of capacity building under the ACP MEAs programme. In order to maintain the momentum built through this workshop, it is expected that further support will be provided to beneficiary countries in implementing the roadmap developed at the workshop, and find further means to develop regional and national projects with a harmonized approach on ABS measures.

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