



Distr.: General
20 September 2017
Original: English



**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Third session**

Nairobi, 4–6 December 2017

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Performance of the programme of work and budget,
including implementation of the resolutions of the
Environment Assembly**

**Progress made pursuant to resolution 2/6 on supporting the
Paris Agreement**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its resolution 2/6 of 27 May 2016 on supporting the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme requested the Executive Director, within the mandate of the Environment Programme and in collaboration with other relevant organizations and stakeholders, to contribute to the implementation of the pre-2020 global efforts to address the challenge of climate change by the means specified in the resolution, including accelerating support to countries, especially developing countries, for building national readiness capacity to implement the Paris Agreement.

The Environment Programme has been supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement through a wide range of activities and initiatives. Those efforts are aligned with the Environment Programme's climate change subprogramme, as outlined in its programme of work for the period 2016–2017.

* UNEP/EA.3/1.

I. Background

1. In its resolution 2/6 on supporting the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director, within the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme and in collaboration with other relevant organizations and stakeholders, to contribute to the implementation of pre-2020 global efforts to address the challenge of climate change by the means specified in the resolution, including accelerating support to countries, especially developing countries, for building national readiness capacity to implement the Agreement. The efforts undertaken by the Environment Programme in that regard are described in the present report.

II. Progress on the implementation of resolution 2/6

A. Supporting the implementation of nationally determined contributions

2. Before the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Environment Programme provided technical assistance to 35 countries in the preparation of their intended nationally determined contributions. That collaboration, supported by the Global Environment Facility, has continued in the two years since the session, assisting countries with particular tasks related to integrating such contributions into national development priorities and supporting the implementation of related policies and actions.

3. The Environment Programme is preparing a new programme to provide in-depth support to 10 additional countries over the next four years. The programme will be coordinated with the newly established Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership, which was initiated by the Government of Germany in collaboration with Morocco and of which the Environment Programme is a partner. In addition, the Environment Programme is working closely with a large number of countries on ecosystem-based adaptation, transport systems, energy efficiency, climate finance and many other issues. Those efforts are among the priorities addressed by nationally determined contributions, but are envisaged as regular development support.

B. Capacity-building for transparency, measuring and reporting

4. The issue of transparency regarding national actions is prominent in the Paris Agreement. The Environment Programme has been supporting developing countries for many years in the area of national communication, and more recently in the preparation of the biennial update reports mandated under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those programmes have been supported by the Global Environment Facility, which is mandated under the Agreement to establish a specific capacity-building initiative for transparency. They are currently supporting two countries in Africa and two in Latin America, while concept notes are being developed for 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. The first national projects were approved at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, along with an initial support programme, which is being jointly implemented by the Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme. The Environment Programme, through its Finance Initiative, is enabling influential private sector financial institutions worldwide to prepare and issue disclosures on the climate-related risks and opportunities that they face, in response to the recommendations of the Financial Stability Board Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

C. Support for the legal and regulatory frameworks of countries

6. The Environment Programme has been supporting countries in strengthening their legal and regulatory frameworks, including by providing guides and toolkits. It is developing a law and climate change toolkit in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, a web portal in partnership with the Legal Response Initiative and a guide on legal preparedness for climate finance, and in 2016 it developed a guide on energy efficiency and renewable energy laws.

7. In 2017, the Environment Programme released the first-ever analysis of global climate change litigation, *The Status of Climate Change Litigation: A Global Review*, which provided information on trends, including the expected rise in the number of climate refugees and human rights cases. The Environment Programme has continued to reinforce its partnerships with parliamentarians to increase capacity within the law-making process. Through the Nairobi Framework Partnership, the Environment Programme is providing support to countries in strengthening climate legislation and implementing nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.

D. Supporting countries in implementing adaptation action

8. The Environment Programme is supporting 26 countries in the implementation of adaptation action, with funding provided by the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. The total value of those projects is \$193 million. In addition, the projects have leveraged \$625 million in co-financing.

E. Supporting countries in REDD-plus readiness and implementation

9. The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries (REDD-plus), jointly implemented by the Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme, is supporting 64 countries in becoming “REDD-plus ready”, or prepared to welcome relevant investment opportunities.

10. In 2016, Chile, the Congo, Ecuador, Peru and Sri Lanka finalized and adopted national REDD-plus strategies that recognized the multiple benefits of the programme, as well as the role of the private sector. That progress marked an important step in complying with the requirement, set out in the Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus, that countries be allowed to receive results-based payments. While such payments are critical, the Environment Programme is also supporting countries in examining the ways in which domestic spending can contribute to efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

11. Many of the countries receiving support for REDD-plus readiness from the REDD-plus programme have been assisted in developing their approaches to meet Warsaw Framework requirements on safeguards. The Environment Programme leads the programme’s thinking and implementation with respect to safeguards, particularly in relation to the ways in which environmental safeguards can be applied to the conservation of biodiversity.

12. Specifically, the Environment Programme has supported Ecuador, Indonesia and Peru in reviewing the alignment and complementarity of fiscal incentives for the production of key agricultural commodities and the attainment of REDD-plus objectives, including the identification of mechanisms for enhancing such complementarity. In El Salvador, the Environment Programme is supporting the Government in designing a programme of incentives for the implementation of ecosystem and landscape restoration to promote the widespread adoption of agroforestry practices in the country.

F. Key initiatives and partnerships

13. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants has been catalysing ambition for action on short-term climate change and informing the climate negotiations, with a particular focus on options for quick action and quick results while achieving multiple benefits. It focuses on four short-lived climate pollutants: black carbon (soot), methane, tropospheric ozone and hydrofluorocarbons. Reducing those pollutants in the atmosphere can reduce short-term warming by approximately 0.6 degrees Celsius, and can directly prevent 2.4 million premature deaths and up to 50 million tons of crop losses from air pollution annually.

14. Since the United Nations Climate Summit 2014, both States and non-State actors (cities and local governments, businesses and civil society) have committed themselves, through the Coalition, to further reducing short-lived climate pollutants. Those initiatives include “green freight” programmes, the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership, municipal solid waste management programmes, the *BreatheLife* campaign (cities) and the Soot-Free Urban Bus Fleets project (cities and bus manufacturers).

15. The Climate Technology Centre and Network is the operational arm of the climate technology mechanism under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and is mandated by the parties to provide technical assistance on climate technologies to developing countries at their request. The Centre has received more than 180 requests for technical assistance from more than 80 countries in its four years of operation and has built a network in excess of 400 expert organizations that help to meet those requests. The Centre supports countries at various stages of the technology cycle, from the identification and prioritization of technology to its deployment and scaling-up, while also strengthening frameworks and conditions for faster deployment.

16. The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, the secretariat of which is hosted by the Environment Programme, was launched at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change under the Lima-Paris Action Agenda

to scale up climate action in the sector, focusing on awareness and education; public policies; market transformation; finance; and measurement, data and accountability. A first *Renewables Global Status Report*, which took stock of progress made in the sector towards zero-emission, resource-efficient and resilient buildings, was issued at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, and a second report is being finalized for release at the twenty-third session. A road map for global climate action, detailing policy priorities, has been developed and is now being refined by region to take their respective contexts into consideration.

17. The “Climate Resilience Initiative: Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape” was launched by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Paris in November 2015. The Environment Programme and FAO are providing the secretariat for the Initiative. A multi-stakeholder effort, it has a leadership group that includes Germany, Samoa, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Bank, the Global Resilience Partnership, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Earth Institute. The Initiative brings together partners at the global level to address key emerging solutions on climate resilience.

18. The Environment Programme is one of the three initiating partners, along with Japan and the Netherlands, of the Global Centre of Excellence on Climate Adaptation. The Centre is due to be launched at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017. The Centre will engage with stakeholders on adaptation, manage adaptation knowledge and provide guidance on best practice in adaptation.

19. The Global Peatlands Initiative was launched in Marrakech in 2016 as a targeted effort of leading Governments, experts and institutions to save the world’s largest terrestrial organic carbon stock, which is under increasing threat from degradation and fire. The Initiative aims to scale up the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands in countries with significant peat deposits, thereby reducing up to 5 per cent of current global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The Initiative is coordinated by the Environment Programme with the participation of more than 20 international and national partners, including FAO; the Centre for International Forestry Research; the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat; the European Commission; the European Space Agency; the Greifswald Mire Centre; GRID-Arendal; Wetlands International; and the World Resources Institute. It has focused on four initial pilot countries: the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia and Peru. As a first joint product of the Initiative, a global rapid response assessment will be launched at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

G. Access to the Green Climate Fund

20. The partnership between the Environment Programme and the Green Climate Fund is aimed at assisting developing countries in making the transition to a resilient and low-emission pathway and building the capacity of developing countries to design, implement and finance transformative sustainable development strategies and programmes. Areas of support include readiness support, redirecting unsustainable financial flows, ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation, and low-emission development, including in the area of transport. The Environment Programme provides readiness support to more than 30 countries for access to the resources of the Fund. That includes support for 11 countries in national adaptation planning and for 4 countries in the area of technology through the Climate Technology Centre and Network. To date, 12 readiness proposals have been officially approved by the Fund secretariat and 8 are being implemented. One project proposal, focused on ecosystem-based adaptation in the Gambia, has been approved by the Fund secretariat, and 12 project proposals and concepts are under review.

H. Climate action by non-State actors

21. Increasing transparency on climate action by non-State actors with the aim of scaling up is the main goal of the Environment Programme’s Climate Initiatives Platform,¹ which has become a reliable source for more than 200 cooperative climate initiatives driven by non-State actors. In 2016, it became an official data provider for the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action platform, the online space of the Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat for non-State action. Through those activities, the Environment Programme supports the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action,

¹ See www.climateinitiativesplatform.org.

which seeks to catalyse and support climate action by convening, showcasing successes, tracking progress and reporting achievements.

22. One of the initiatives captured and presented through the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action and the Climate Initiatives Platform is the Environment Programme's Finance Initiative Portfolio Decarbonization Coalition, which brings together and monitors 30 institutional investors who have set targets to reduce portfolio exposure to greenhouse gas emissions and greenhouse gas-intensive industries across a total of \$600 billion worth of assets under their management.

III. Recommendations and suggested action

23. Many environmental policy measures are not adequately supported at the national level with appropriate legislation, and where such legislation is in place, implementation and compliance remain significant challenges. The Environment Assembly may wish to acknowledge the importance of legislation in ensuring the effectiveness of country-level efforts to address the challenge of climate change.

24. The Environment Programme has been strongly supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoting the coordination of related efforts across the United Nations system. Additional human and financial resources are required in order to achieve further progress.
