

Fifth Programme for the Development and  
Periodic Review of Environmental Law  
(Montevideo Programme V):  
delivering for people and the planet  
Ninth Meeting of the Steering Committee for Implementation  
Microsoft Teams (online), 14 November 2024  
14:00 – 17:00 (EAT/GMT+3)  
Item 7 of the provisional agenda: Update on the implementation of priority areas

### **Update on the implementation of priority areas**

The Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V) requires UNEP as the Secretariat of the Montevideo Programme, to monitor implementation of the Programme, and to prepare progress reports on the status of implementation, activities and funding every two years (on a biennial basis).

The Second Global Meeting of Focal Points of Montevideo Programme V, which was held from 3-5 June 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya, agreed on specific priority areas of implementation on legal responses to climate change and biodiversity, under the Programme, to augment the priority areas of implementation on legal responses to pollution, as outlined at its First Global Meeting.

This update outlines progress made in implementing priority areas of Montevideo Programme V – namely pollution, climate change, and biodiversity – as well as the cross-cutting areas, from 3 June 2024 to November 2024 at the Ninth Meeting of the Steering Committee for Implementation.

This update also informs the meeting of the current challenges and opportunities as the Secretariat, in pursuance of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 4/20, prepares to present a Mid-Term Review Report of the Montevideo Programme V at the Seventh Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2025.

#### **Status of Implementation of the Montevideo Programme V focusing on the Priority Areas of the Programme.**

UNEP's Law Division continued implementing the Road Map for Implementation of Montevideo Programme V, focusing on the following items: Legal Responses to address the Pollution Crisis; Legal Responses to Combat the Climate Change Crisis; and Legal Responses to Combat the Biodiversity Crisis. The activities also encompassed ongoing efforts in cross-cutting areas such as Education and Capacity building, and Access Rights.

Montevideo Programme V is currently implemented under the framework of the UNEP Programme of Work 2024/2025, and the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025. Also important is

the Environmental Law Branch Project – Progressive Development and Implementation of Environmental Law-Delivering Montevideo Programme V, as well as the Montevideo Programme Trust Fund and other extra-budgetary financial resources that continue to fund activities of Montevideo Programme V.

Below is a detailed report of the activities that took place from June to October 2024 categorized in the three thematic areas and cross cutting issues.

## **1. Pollution**

The report on the status of implementation of the priority areas of Montevideo Programme V on pollution categorizes pollution in two areas, namely air pollution and pollution from chemicals, waste and other sources of pollution.

### **1.1 Air pollution**

*1.1.1 Supporting countries to develop and strengthen the legal and institutional framework to address ambient air pollution using the Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation.*

After UNEP completed the First Global Assessment of Air Pollution legislation in 2021, and the 2023 Guide on Ambient Air Quality legislation, the Law Division has been promoting the use of these resources to relevant stakeholders in collaboration with partners using events that are scheduled in various regions.

UNEP continued to engage more countries in technical assistance initiatives to assist their efforts in developing and strengthening their ambient air quality legislation using the UNEP Guide on Ambient Air Quality legislation. Legislative workplans have been agreed and developed with Argentina and Guatemala, as well as with the Republic of Comoros, to draft air quality legislation. Similarly, agreements have been signed with Cote D'Ivoire to develop regulations under the framework of the Environment Code on an Air Quality Observatory; the establishment of a National Air Quality Plan; an Air Quality Monitoring Program and to establish a Commission to monitor maximum limit values for air pollutants.

*1.1.2. The Law Division also built the capacity of various stakeholders to develop and implement ambient air pollution legislation.*

On 19 July 2024, the UNEP Law Division, in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), engaged Parliamentarians of Thailand on a Dialogue of Strengthening the Legislative Response to Air Pollution. The Parliamentarians were from the Ad-hoc Committee on Clean Air Act of Thailand with the responsibility of reviewing the air quality law. UNEP's presentation focused on key legislative areas for lawmakers to consider when developing air quality legislation, as per the 2023 UNEP Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation. The legislators found the dialogue useful in supporting the process of reviewing and strengthening of air quality legislation of Thailand.

The Third Air Quality Central Asia Conference which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 19 – 20 September 2024, provided another opportunity to promote the 2023 UNEP Guide on Ambient Air Quality to Central Asian countries. Resulting from the Conference, Kazakhstan requested support to strengthen national air pollution legislation with current mechanisms and standards. This conference was organized to discuss and share experiences on air pollution monitoring, dust storms and air quality management. Participation was drawn from relevant state bodies, international organizations, academia, civil society organizations and media from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

*1.1.3. Addressing knowledge gaps by supporting Legal Practitioners, the Judiciary and other stakeholders with a recurrent Global Report on Air Pollution litigation.*

The Law Division is preparing a Global Air Pollution Litigation Report as part of a series of recurrent publications, to collate and disseminate air pollution cases from various jurisdictions as a resource for legal practitioners, the judiciary and other stakeholders to learn from developments that are taking place in various parts of the world on ambient air quality.

## **1.2 Chemicals and Waste**

*1.2.1 Supporting countries to develop and strengthen the legal and institutional framework on chemicals and waste.*

UNEP has continued to support countries to develop and strengthen legal and institutional frameworks on chemicals and waste. Cote D'Ivoire is being supported to develop a regulation under the Environment Code on Extended Producer Responsibility. In addition, a national workshop will be organized in Cote D'Ivoire on persistent organic pollutants to support implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

UNEP's Law Division continues to provide technical legal assistance to Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Sierra Leone under the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project "Environmentally sounder and safer waste management frameworks in Africa". This project is geared towards strengthening institutional capacities to develop, reform and implement legislation that effectively prevents, controls, and manages waste pollution, protecting both the environment and human health. Additionally, it promotes legislative reforms that include specific measures to protect informal workers, particularly women, and children, thereby advancing the environmental rule of law and embedding both procedural and substantive aspects of the right to a healthy environment.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNEP held the Second Joint Regional Meeting on *Unwaste* from 28 – 31 May 2024 in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the theme "Tackling Waste Trafficking in Southeast Asia". The meeting was organized to facilitate the formulation of a regional draft action plan, and to explore potential synergies with initiatives within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region to address waste management challenges. UNEP

presented the key findings and recommendations of its publication on “[Legal Frameworks On Waste Trafficking in the ASEAN Region](#)”, which was developed under the *Unwaste* project.

*1.2.2. Collaborating with Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) Secretariats on countries’ needs of technical assistance to develop and strengthen e-waste national legislation.*

The Regional Workshop on the implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes for African countries was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 14 – 18 October 2024, with the main objective of strengthening e-waste legislation with a new amendment which will come into force in January 2025 and to address issues of illegal traffic and trade of e-waste. Participants were drawn from relevant authorities on waste management, as well as customs officials. In response to an invitation by the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Convention Secretariat, UNEP informed countries of the opportunity to receive support on the subject under Montevideo Programme V.

*1.2.3 Developing Guidance Documents on National Legislation for Sustainable Chemicals Management.*

UNEP is preparing a Guide on Chemicals legislation that will be used to support selected countries to develop effective national normative framework in this sector in response to Target 1A of the Global Framework on Chemicals.<sup>1</sup>

A guidance document relating to sustainable management of nitrogen in all sectors is in the final stages of publication. The document, titled An Integrated Approach to Legal, Policy and Regulatory Changes to Reduce the Nitrogen Footprint from Sectors will ensure wider appreciation of legal, policy, and regulatory issues relating to sustainable nitrogen management.

## **2. Biodiversity**

In June 2024 the Second Global Meeting of National Focal Points of the Montevideo Programme agreed to prioritize three options for biodiversity to be undertaken by UNEP considering the relevant UNEA resolutions.

*2.1 Strengthening capacity of stakeholders to develop and implement biodiversity legal and institutional frameworks.*

UNEP’s Law Division collaborated with the IPU to organize a Regional Dialogue for Parliamentarians from Africa on combating land degradation, desertification and drought, which was held virtually on 2 October 2024. The Dialogue received insights on the outcomes of the tenth Special Session of the African Ministers Conference on Environment (AMCEN). It also explored

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<sup>1</sup> Target A1 – By 2030, Governments have adopted and are implementing and enforcing legal frameworks, and have established appropriate institutional capacity to prevent or, where prevention is not feasible, minimize adverse effects from chemicals and waste as appropriate for their national circumstances.

opportunities for enhancing parliamentary engagement in the implementation of goals set out by AMCEN.

On 11 and 12 July, the SAFE project on the prevention of zoonotic diseases organized its Second Regional Expert Group Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand. The event brought together 48 experts from national authorities from Thailand, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Malaysia scientific bodies, from China, EU and ASEAN countries relevant NGOs and members of the SAFE Scientific Advisory Committee. The Expert Group Meeting was a key step in strengthening regional dialogue. A draft SAFE discussion paper will be revised to include insights and guidance from the meeting. An ASEAN-EU forum will also be organized towards the end of 2024 to develop a roadmap for an intensified cooperation at scientific and policy level on the prevention of zoonotic diseases related to wildlife.

## *2.2 Address knowledge gaps, conduct research, and promote tools to provide guidance to stakeholders on biodiversity law*

In response to the priority areas identified by focal points of the Montevideo Programme V in June 2024, the Law Division has initiated a desk study on developing and strengthening national biodiversity legislation and its implementation on criminal activities that adversely affect biodiversity, including in areas affected by armed conflict, consistent with UNEA resolutions by initiating the preparation of two documents.

- (i) A situational analysis report with recommendations and proposals on emerging and innovative approaches to developing and strengthening national legislation and its implementation on criminal activities that adversely affect biodiversity, including in areas of armed conflict.
- (ii) A guidance document for supporting countries to develop and strengthen legislation relating to criminal activities that adversely affect biodiversity, including in areas affected by armed conflict.

This will be followed by nominating two countries to support in strengthening their national laws in this field.

UNEP provided input to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) [Legislative study on biosafety mainstreaming](#), which has now been published as a related study to the biodiversity mainstreaming publication. The study was launched at a side event held on 21 October 2024 in the margins of the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Biosafety Protocol (COP-MOP 11), held in Cali, Colombia.

## *2.3 Supporting countries to develop and strengthen biodiversity related legal and institutional frameworks.*

UNEP's Law Division is currently supporting the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Guinea, and the Kingdom of Morocco in response to requests for technical legal assistance received through the Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP) to develop their legal and institutional

frameworks on biosafety, and more specifically, to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In addition, through the UN2UN Tripartite partnership between the CBD, UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), four countries – the Dominican Republic, Gabon, St Lucia and Seychelles – are receiving technical legal assistance to strengthen their national biosafety legislation to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

UNEP is also supporting Cambodia to develop regulations on community and natural protected areas, according to the country's Environment and Natural Resources Code. This includes support with drafting two regulations, namely a Sub Decree on Establishment and Management of Community Protected Areas, and a Sub Decree on Ecotourism Development and Management in Natural Protected Areas.

On 6 August 2024, UNEP attended a Good Regulatory Practice workshop organized in Sabah, Malaysia. The workshop was hosted by Sabah Wildlife Department on Multi-stakeholders' consultation for Proposed Amendments to the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 and supported by the SAFE project, designed to address the risk of transmission of zoonotic diseases from wildlife facilities.

### **3. Climate Change**

In June 2024 the Second Global Meeting of National Focal Points of the Montevideo Programme V, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, agreed to prioritize three options for climate change to be undertaken by UNEP considering the relevant UNEA resolutions.

*3.1 Strengthen capacity and awareness of stakeholders to mitigate and adapt to climate change, contributing to the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and other relevant MEAs, including on implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).*

Under the UNEP technical legal assistance plan of Cote D'Ivoire, a workshop on building capacity and raising awareness on Carbon Markets is scheduled to take place.

UNEP, IPU and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) organized a Workshop on 18 October 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop contributed to capacity building of parliamentarians to implement National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and advance the climate agenda at the national level.

On 28 August 2024, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) and the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) of Tonga, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UNEP, the Pacific Regional Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Oceania hosted a side event at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting on

“Advancing Environmental Rights in the Pacific to support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent”. The high-level panel discussion provided support to an emerging regional commitment to promote “the importance of protecting human rights and environmental rights”. The panel comprised speakers from Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the Marshall Islands.

From 19 – 21 August 2024, UNEP supported the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Centre for Judicial Excellence to host the [10th Asia Pacific Mediation Forum 2024](#) in Port Moresby. Over 350 participants from 23 countries from across the Pacific and the world including State Ministers, Chief Justices, judges, magistrates, scholars, diplomats and experts convened to discuss the resolution of climate and environmental disputes. Within the theme of “Regional Challenges, Regional Solutions, Global Outcomes: Using Mediation to Resolve Environment and Climate Change Disputes”, some common messages and recommendations arose from multiple sessions of the conference. These common thoughts reflected the importance of the issues and ideas being progressed under the proposal for a Pacific Environmental Dispute Resolution Centre, which was presented and discussed during the conference.

*3.2 Address knowledge gaps, conduct research, and promote tools to provide guidance to stakeholders on climate change law.*

Since 2017, UNEP’s Law Division has continued to track trends in climate litigation. After the release of the 2023 report, preparation for another status review of the Global Climate litigation Report is underway.

A study on how mandatory building codes can promote effective legislative frameworks for green buildings, i.e., legislation for the building and construction sector that effectively integrated decarbonisation mechanisms, is being completed together with a legislative guide to support countries in this sector.

Also important is the process of the expansion and update of the Law and Climate Change Toolkit, which is currently ongoing. This toolkit is being improved so that it can continue to support countries to develop and strengthen legal frameworks for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Its uniqueness stems from the fact that partners can bring specialized expertise to the content of the four modules, namely climate framework laws, urban planning, energy and agriculture. The update and expansion of the toolkit will bring in new climate laws and revised taxonomy that will consider new developments in climate governance, compilation of case studies and lessons learnt from selected countries, and the improvement of user interface.

*3.3 Supporting countries to develop and strengthen climate change related legal and institutional frameworks.*

UNEP is providing technical legal assistance to Zimbabwe to develop climate change legislation. UNEP is collaborating with the country’s Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife to support the process of drafting, consultations and validation and to assure the quality of the draft.

UNEP has also partnered with the Ministry of Environment of Chile to provide technical legal assistance to the country under the PAF project to develop/review national regulations to implement the Chilean Law No 21,455 “Climate Change Framework”. The regulations that are being developed under this initiative include:

- (i) Regulation establishing a Green House Gas (GHG) certification system associated to GHG emission standards;
- (ii) Regulation establishing a voluntary certification system of GHG emissions and water use;
- (iii) Regulation on the Register and Transfer of Emissions and Pollutants;
- (iv) Regulation to issue Prevention and/or Environmental Decontamination Plans.

In addition, 20 sectoral plans for climate mitigation and adaptation will be developed, covering, *inter alia*, the following sectors: health, forestry, farming and livestock development, fishing, water resources, transport, infrastructure, and housing.

As for the results, a baseline mapping and analysis of the policy, legislative and institutional framework governing climate change in Chile has already been submitted. Three initial draft regulations are already developed, as well as proposed changes to the initial drafts of two regulations. The consultations on the drafts are ongoing.

#### **4. Cross cutting Areas of Montevideo Programme V**

##### **4.1 Education and Capacity building**

The First in Person Meeting of the Platform of Environmental Law Lecturers for Latin America and Caribbean took place in Montevideo, Uruguay on 27 August 2024. The meeting agreed on ways of addressing various regional specific priority issues to strengthen the teaching and learning of environmental law for students at the University level.

The [21st Annual Colloquium of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law](#) was organized and hosted by Gujarat National Law University, in Gandhinagar, India, from 4 – 7 July 2024. The colloquium included participation – both online and in person – of over 100 national and international academics and lawyers from more than 20 countries. Participants gained greater knowledge of the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme, UNEP LEAP and the capacity building resources to advance environmental law. One session increased knowledge on how environmental law academics, in particular youth, may engage in global decision-making processes, in preparatory or inter-sessional processes or in implementation of key global decisions (such as UNEA resolutions) or Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) commitments.

On supporting countries to develop and strengthen environmental laws and institutional frameworks, UNEP’s Law Division is providing technical legal assistance to Cameroon to revise its framework environmental law. To this end, a National Workshop for the Revision of the Framework Environmental Law took place in Cameroon from 18 – 20 September 2024.



In addition, the UNEP technical assistance to Cote D'Ivoire also includes an item concerning the development of draft subsidiary legislation to the Environment Code regarding establishing environmental police to strengthen enforcement of environmental law in the country.

## 4.2 Access Rights

The ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group (AER WG) convened its 5th Meeting on 1 – 3 July 2024, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The meeting continued deliberation on the draft ASEAN Declaration on the right to a safe, clean, [healthy], and sustainable environment. The final draft Declaration was agreed for submission to AICHR (ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights) for consideration at the [Special Meeting of AICHR 1/2024](#) which was held from 23 to 26 July 2024, in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

On 22 – 23 August in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, UNEP, together with OHCHR and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Papua New Guinea, conducted a training for the Papua New Guinea UN Country Team on "Human Rights and Environmental Rule of Law: Upholding the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment". The participants were drawn from government, United Nations, IUCN, and NGOs.

On 27 – 28 August in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, UNEP, together with OHCHR and the RCO in Lao PDR, conducted a training on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for Government Officials in Lao PDR. The training had 40 participants including from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (National and Provincial level).

On 3 September, UNEP supported and participated in the [UN Interagency Dialogue on Business and Human Rights](#) which aimed to provide a platform for UN agencies, including national and regional specialists, who work on business and human rights in Asia Pacific to analyze global and regional trends, exchange best practices, and re-imagine and finetune BHR programming.

The [6th UN Asia Pacific Responsible Business and Human Rights \(RBHR\) Forum](#) took place on 25 – 27 September at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of this year's forum was *The Remedy Blueprint: Bridging Gaps and Accelerating Access*. Over 1100 people joined the forum in-person, including from governments, academia, civil society, business and media. The Forum was co-organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG). UNEP organized three sessions:

- The session *Building a Path to Effective Remedy in the Financial Sector*, organized together with UNEP Financial Initiative, shed light on how financial institutions strengthening social and environmental frameworks can play a key role in improving the approach to remedy and preventing harm.

- The UNEP Sea Circular project organized a session on *Bridging Rights and Responsibilities: Tackling Plastic Pollution together with the Informal Sector*. This session explored how waste pickers and the informal sector can be better included in Extensive Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes.
- UNEP also co-organized the session *Access to Remedy in the Energy Transition Sector: Regional scan of the 'right' pathway to the just transition*, together with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. This session explored human rights-based approaches to identifying and addressing the risks and adverse impacts associated with the extractives and renewable energy sectors.
- Photos are available at this link:  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/197823823@N06/albums/72177720320565473/wit\\_h/54022513504](https://www.flickr.com/photos/197823823@N06/albums/72177720320565473/wit_h/54022513504)

The [Human Rights Dialogue on Rights-based Pathways to climate Mitigation & Just Energy Transition in Asia Pacific](#) took place in Bangkok on 22 – 23 September 2024. This human rights dialogue was jointly organized by OHCHR Regional Office for South-East Asia, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, and UNEP, in partnership with the Business and Human Rights Resources Center, Publish What You Pay Asia-Pacific Transition Mineral Accountability (AP-TMA) Working Group, Global Witness, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), and Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) to create a safe space for Environmental Human Rights Defenders to discuss the current situation and challenges they have experienced advocating for climate justice and climate actions. The event also served as a platform to develop an output document for the RBHR Forum, COP 29 (12-22 November 2024) and the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights (26-28 November 2024).

UNEP collaborated with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and IUCN to deliver a Pacific Regional Lawyers Workshop on Environmental Rule of Law from 23 – 25 September 2024, Nadi, Fiji. This training served to develop the capacity of 10 lawyers from nine Pacific Island Countries (Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue and Nauru) to be well-equipped with understanding and knowledge of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their role in promoting the environmental rule of law. Building the capacity of government lawyers and attorney-generals in the Pacific region supports their respective roles to effectively address the complex environmental challenges through policy and legislative development and review.

A Collective Rights Workshop was also held in Montevideo, Uruguay on the 27 of August 2024 in the margins of the Uruguay Environmental Law Congress.

On 8 October 2024, a preparatory meeting to launch an initiative to establish a European Forum for Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) was organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in partnership with UNEP, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and in cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention and the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change. UNEP's work on the protection of EHRDs globally

and the importance of implementing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment were highlighted in the meeting.

From 18 to 20 September 2024, in Arusha, Tanzania, UNEP participated in the Second Tripartite Judicial Dialogue between the Continental and Regional Courts in Africa: the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), the Community Court of Justice (ECOWAS-CCJ), and the East African Court of Justice (EACJ), to highlight UNEP's work on human rights and the environment. The meeting, which was organized by the three Courts and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), discussed the protection and promotion of human rights related to the environment on the continent and explored further collaboration with regional courts in the context of UNEP's global judicial programme.

UNEP participated in the Fifty Seventh (57<sup>th</sup>) Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and delivered two statements. The first statement was delivered at the [Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights](#) which was focussing on pollution information portals, it took place on 17 September 2024. The second statement was delivered during the [Interactive Dialogue on the Secretary General's analytical study on climate change](#) on 16 September 2024. The Secretary General's report focused on the impacts of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights. Both statements highlighted UNEP's work on pollution and climate change as well as commitment to address the climate change crisis and pollution.

On 9 October 2024 UNEP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR) convened an informal briefing on efforts under UNEP-OHCHR memorandum of understanding to advance the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Discussions during the briefing also focused on recent developments and key updates related to the environment and human rights. Key updates focused on new reports presented during the Human Rights Council Session, upcoming multilateral environmental agreements conference of the Parties as well as UNEP and OHCHR joint activities.

On 17 October 2024 in New York on the margins of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, UNEP and OHCHR convened an informal briefing together with the three UN Special Rapporteurs working on the right to a healthy environment, climate change and toxics. The briefing was opened by the UNEP's Deputy Executive Director and participants were Member States, UN entities and civil society representatives. The briefing discussed key developments in the area of human rights and the environment as well as future directions to further advance the agenda.

As part of the UNEP-Environmental Law Institute (ELI) series on Environmental Rule of Law, UNEP and ELI organized two thematic webinars on 17 September 2024 and on 15 October 2024. The first focused on [impacts of Covid 19 on Environmental Rule of Law](#), and the latter one focused on [climate change and Environmental Rule of Law](#). The last webinar of the series is scheduled for 19 November 2024 and will focus on the [Importance of justice and equity in Environmental Rule of Law](#). The series continue to contribute to knowledge sharing and raising awareness on environmental rule of law.

## **Challenges**

UNEP Law Division is receiving several requests through LEAP. To efficiently address them, there is a need to secure additional financial resources for the Montevideo Programme Trust Fund.

## **Opportunities**

There are opportunities to collaborate with partners under the framework of Montevideo Programme V to leverage funds, when initiatives are organized jointly or back-to-back with other scheduled meetings and events to save on costs.

## **Looking Ahead**

The Law Division is now preparing the Mid-Term Review Report of the Programme which is required by UNEA Resolution 4/20. This report will be submitted to UNEA-7 in December 2025.

Overall, it is important to note that while the programme initially experienced delays in implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now progress with the recent agreement on priority areas for biodiversity and climate change as well as in the implementation of Montevideo Programme V.

The Law Division under the guidance of the Steering Committee Meeting of Implementation will continue to implement Montevideo Programme V subject to the availability of resources.

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