

Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V)

Concept note and annotated agenda for the regional consultation of the Group of African States

9 July 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m. EAT

Background

By its [resolution 4/20](#) of 15 March 2019, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted the [Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law \(Montevideo Programme V or “the Programme”\)](#) for the decade 2020-2029. Serving as the foundational framework for UNEP’s environmental law initiatives and activities since 1982, the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme has significantly shaped the development and implementation of environmental law at national, regional, and international levels through its four previous iterations.

The Programme’s primary objective is to promote the development and implementation of environmental rule of law, strengthen related capacities in countries and contribute to the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since its inception, the Montevideo Programme V has served as a catalyst for legal and institutional reform across countries and regions, enabling Member States to translate global environmental commitments into effective domestic legal frameworks and enforceable norms, strengthen their regulatory and institutional capacities and built partnerships across sectors, actors and stakeholders to advance effective and inclusive environmental governance.¹

The year 2026 marks an important juncture for the Montevideo Programme V.

Following the [First Global Meeting of National Focal Points for the Montevideo Programme V held in two parts in 2021 and 2022](#), and the [Second Global Meeting held in 2024](#),² and in line with a decision of the Programme’s [Steering Committee for Implementation](#), a Third Global Meeting is planned online for 4-5 November 2026. The Third Global Meeting will provide an opportunity for National Focal Points to review progress in the implementation of the Programme, provide thought leadership for its strategic direction and guidance to the Secretariat for its implementation during the remainder of its fifth iteration, in line with the [UNEP medium-term strategy 2026-2029](#) and [programme of work](#). The meeting will also be an important opportunity to designate members of its next Steering Committee for Implementation.

¹ Handbook for The Fifth Montevideo Programme on the Progressive Development and Implementation of Environmental Law, UNEP (2024), available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/ac6f9b64-fae3-479e-9d3d-ed6c3e5e20cf/content>

² Including, amongst its outcomes: [Options for clearly defined priority areas to combat the biodiversity crisis](#); [Options for clearly defined priority areas to combat the climate crisis](#); a [Partnerships and stakeholder engagement strategy](#). A full report of the meeting, including progress in advancing the implementation of the Programme’s implementation roadmaps is available here: <https://leap.unep.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/2411780E%20UNEP-Env-Law-MTV5-GNFP-2-6%20English.pdf>

UNEA through resolution 4/20, *inter alia*, mandated the UNEP Executive Director to provide a midterm review report, including clearly defined and measurable targets, to be considered by UNEA at the session following the submission of that report. The midterm review report is expected to be presented to UNEA at its eighth session in December 2027. This provides a significant opportunity to put a spotlight on the Montevideo Programme V, to bring its achievements to the attention of Member States before the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, set its direction until 2029 and possibly prepare the ground for the follow-up phase of the current Programme.

Objectives of the regional consultation

In preparation for the Third Global Meeting, the Steering Committee for Implementation has decided to organize a series of regional consultations led by the respective Steering Committee members with the support of the UNEP Secretariat.

The regional consultation for the Group of African States will serve as an opportunity to:

1. **Identify nominees for the Montevideo Programme Steering Committee for Implementation**, to be presented at the Third Global Meeting for their designation (or re-designation). **Each region will be expected to identify 2-3 nominees** in line with the Modalities of Work of the Steering Committee.³
2. **Identify environmental law and governance trends, challenges, needs and emerging issues from the region** to inform the implementation of the Programme during the remainder of its fifth iteration **and consider specific national / regional / sub-regional activities**⁴ that will inform UNEP's work in environmental law and governance as well as the Programme's midterm review.
3. **Consider how to link the Montevideo Programme V implementation to the priorities identified by regional ministerial fora for the environment** and also provide the space to, as appropriate, reflect on key priorities that, through the Programme, Member States may wish to bring to the attention of the next session of UNEA.

The following questions will guide the substantive segments of the consultation:

³ According to the [modalities of work for the Steering Committee for Implementation](#), the Steering Committee should have a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 designated national focal points as members, comprising two to three representatives from each United Nations region, ensuring gender balance to the extent possible. **Members of the Steering Committee should begin their terms of office at the closure of the global meeting at which they are designated and should remain in office until the closure of the next global meeting.** Members of the Steering Committee may be subject to re-designation and may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

⁴ In line with the [Montevideo Programme V strategic activities](#), these may include: model laws and approaches, practical guidance, tools, resources, best practice and model indicators to aid countries with the effective and inclusive development and implementation of environmental law; information and data exchange among legal stakeholders; activities to promote public participation, access to information and access to justice in environmental matters; partnerships and stakeholder engagement; education, research and capacity building; trainings for legal professionals such as lawyers, judges, prosecutors and other enforcement officials.

1. In your view, **what emerging environmental law and governance issues** from your region warrant attention from the Montevideo Programme V, and what specific actions would you recommend?
2. What **specific activities** would you like the Montevideo Programme V to focus on in your country/region (e.g. model laws, guidance tools, trainings and capacity building, research and education, others)? Please indicate any relevant partners/stakeholders that should be involved.

To support and facilitate the participation of all members from the Group of African States to the regional consultation, interpretation services will be available from English to French and English to Portuguese.

Expected outcomes of the regional consultation

The regional consultations will be reflected in a **non-attributable summary report** that will be compiled into an information document serving as background to the Third Global Meeting. It may be annexed to the UNEP Executive Director's midterm review report of the Programme to be presented at UNEA-8.

Provisional agenda

Time	Agenda item
30 minutes	Connection test
30 minutes	1. Introductions and presentation of the Montevideo Programme V
10 minutes	2. Roadmap and upcoming key environmental governance milestones
30 minutes	3. Expressions of interest for nominations to Steering Committee
15 minutes	4. Short overview of Montevideo Programme achievements since the Second Global Meeting
60 minutes	5. Environmental law trends and challenges in the Africa region - emerging issues and needs
5 minutes	6. Closing of the meeting and AOB