

Our Planet

FREDERICO RAMOS DE ARMAS RIO+20-START OF A PROCESS
 ACHIM STEINER MAKING HISTORY AMINA J. MOHAMMED UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Rio+20: From Outcome to Implementation





Our Planet — the magazine of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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To view current and past issues of this publication online, please visit
www.unep.org/ourplanet

ISSN 1013 - 7394

Director of Publication: Nick Nuttall
Coordinator: Mohamed Atani
Editor: Geoffrey Lean
Sub-editor: Jonathan Clayton
Design: Enid Ngaira
Produced by: UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information
Printed by: UNON
Distributed by: SMI Books

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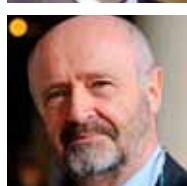
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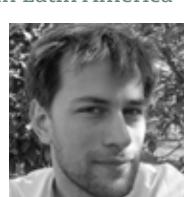


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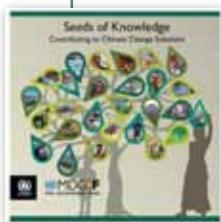


UNEP The First 40 Years; A Narrative by Stanley Johnson

To mark its 40th anniversary, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has sponsored a new book detailing the history of the Nairobi-based organization over the last four decades. Written by award-winning conservationist Stanley P Johnson (See People section), the book charts the evolution of UNEP from its inception at the landmark Stockholm conference of 1972 to its position today at the heart of the global environmental movement. Entitled: "UNEP The First 40 Years; A Narrative", the book – which is not an official UN history but the view of its world-acclaimed author – explains in depth UNEP's role at the forefront of efforts to protect the environment and is stuffed with interesting facts and figures.

http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6285

ISBN: 978-92-807-3314-3



Seeds of Knowledge - Contributing to Climate Change Solutions

This booklet presents 24 case studies from 17 countries on grassroots solutions to the impacts of climate change. These solutions come at a critical time. As never before the world is in a race against time to act on climate change or face cataclysmic natural disasters. Heat waves, droughts and flooding, we have seen them all. While vulnerability to climate change poses risks to all communities, the impacts are likely to be tilted against many of the world's poorest regions, which have the least economic, institutional and technical ability to adapt and cope. Seeds of Knowledge aims to show that grassroots, community-led responses are already playing an essential role in building resilience to climate change across all regions of the world.

With the right levels of investment and support, such initiatives can be scaled up and become a central component in reducing climate risks and supporting the transition to an inclusive Green Economy.

http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6279 ISBN: 978-92-807-3307-5

Mercury: Time to act



This report speaks directly to governments involved in development of the global treaty on mercury. It presents updates from the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment 2013 in short and punchy facts and figures backed by compelling graphics that provide governments and civil society with the rationale and the imperative to act on this notorious pollutant.

The report underlines the fact that mercury remains a major global, regional and national challenge in terms of threats to human health and the environment, especially but not uniquely to the health of pregnant women and babies world-wide through the eating of contaminated fish for example or marine mammals in places like the Arctic. http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6281 ISBN:978-92-807-3310-5



Towards a Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment: Making informed choices on products

This report presents sources of mercury emissions to air and water. It presents estimates of anthropogenic emissions to air from various sources based on data from 2010 and estimates for releases to aquatic environment. The report also presents the latest information on atmospheric and aquatic chemistry, fate and transport. It is an overall summary report for the policy makers based on a technical background report. **Towards a Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment:** http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6282

The Emissions Gap Report 2012



The Emissions Gap 2012 is a follow-on to the UNEP 2010 and 2011 reports on the global emissions gap: The Emissions Gap: A Preliminary Assessment and the Bridging the Emissions Gap respectively. The 2012 report reviews current and projected national and global emissions and provide an updated estimate of the size of the emissions gap. The report goes further to provide information on possible implications of not bridging the emissions gap, while also providing an update on the estimates of the mix of measures that could potentially help bridge the emissions gap. In order to encourage positive thinking on the national, regional and global levels with respect to bridging the emissions gap in 2020, the report reviews examples of best practice policies being implemented by countries and conditions for success on a sector-by-sector basis.

The Emissions Gap Report 2012 : http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6282
978-92-807-3303-7

Rio+20—Start of a process



FREDERICO RAMOS DE ARMAS
Secretary of State for the
Environment, Spain, and President of
UNEP's Governing Council.

“The Future We Want” must be considered as a starting point, establishing guidelines and launching global processes to integrate sustainability into decision making. Thus “Rio+20” should be seen as the beginning of a process and not an end. Turning it into a success, or failure, is therefore up to us and will depend on what we are able to achieve from now. The next few years will be decisive.



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The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, known as "Rio+20", highlighted the international community's commitment to foster sustainable development. Member States and civil society worked actively in preparing and developing the Conference with the aim of achieving an ambitious outcome that would provide value to the international development agenda. The Conference focused on two themes: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development. The decisions and conclusions on these and other issues resulted in a focused political outcome document -"The Future We Want"- containing clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development.

The green economy discussions laid the foundations for an effective transition to a low carbon economy, efficient in the use of resources, with the primary objectives of creating jobs, increasing social inclusion and, ultimately, eradicating poverty. The document calls on governments, civil society and the private sector to join, and comply with, a series of commitments that aim to adapt our economies to the limits of the planet. Recognising the need for broader measures of progress to complement Gross Domestic Product with environmental and social considerations, and the need to increase the role of the private sector in promoting sustainable development policies, are just two of these.

Another valuable success was establishing a High Level Political Forum that will help enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development - environmental, economic and social - in a cross-sectoral manner at all levels. There were agreements to promote more coherent and effective implementation of the environmental

dimension of sustainable development within the UN system. Among these were the strengthening of UNEP by, inter alia, establishing universal membership of the Governing Council - currently chaired by the Government of Spain - and enhancing its role to fulfil its coordination mandate among multilateral environmental agreements.

The green economy discussions laid the foundations for an effective transition to a low carbon economy, efficient in the use of resources, with the primary objectives of creating jobs, increasing social inclusion and, ultimately, eradicating poverty.

I especially welcome the establishment of foundations for effective progress in the transition to a green economy, which is essential to achieve sustainable development. I particularly highlight the importance of launching an ambitious process to develop universal and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals, applicable to all countries and to all three dimensions of sustainable development. These goals must help integrate sustainability in policy making and guide development cooperation policies in the coming years.

Finally, Rio+20 reaffirmed many commitments previously made in specific thematic areas, closely related to UNEP's objective, such as the adoption of the 10-Year Framework

of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, the development of an international instrument for the protection of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, and the universal recognition of the human right to water and sanitation. It is very important to underline that these commitments - and others adopted on climate change, ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, desertification and drought - are unavoidable if sustainable development and poverty eradication are to be achieved.

As a proof of its commitment, the Council of the European Union recently adopted the Conclusions "Rio+20: outcome and follow-up to the UNCSD 2012 Summit", in which the European governments reaffirmed their determination to take the actions required at national and EU level to implement the agreements adopted in Rio. Thus, EU Member States have noted the need to consider, where appropriate, the review of policies, strategies and programs such as the EU Sustainable Development Strategy: this will be supplemented with several future actions, among them, the European Commission Communication, to be delivered in the first quarter of 2013, on the follow-up and implementation of the Rio+20 agreements. This, in turn, will enable the initiation of debates and the launching of further concrete actions in this challenging process.

"The Future We Want" must be considered as a starting point, establishing guidelines and launching global processes to integrate sustainability into decision making. Thus "Rio+20" should be seen as the beginning of a process and not an end. Turning it into a success, or failure, is therefore up to us and will depend on what we are able to achieve from now. The next few years will be decisive.



Photo: UN/Flickr



ACHIM STEINER
UN Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director, UNEP

Making history

History will be made at the 27th session of the UNEP Governing Council when States meet for the first time under the umbrella of universal membership.

The Rio+20 Summit, followed by a later UN General Assembly resolution, requested an upgrading and strengthening of UNEP. While stopping short of the ambition of some nations who had pressed for a fully-fledged UN organization for the environment, these decisions signal a determination to do more to strengthen the environment pillar of sustainable development. Discussions are also now under way in New York on providing additional, more stable and predictable finance through an increased share of the UN's Regular Budget.

In taking these decisions, member states have perhaps internalized the sobering science in reports like UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook-5, - unveiled just before then summit - looked the worrying scenarios in the eye and collectively and courageously turned a page and opened a new chapter for this and future generations. Yet institutional reforms and additional financial resources on their own are not going to help catalyse the Future We Want: they need to be implemented in determined and practical - yet visionary - ways.

Indeed precisely how to upgrade and strengthen UNEP in order to deliver more on behalf of member states will be at the centre of the discourse and debate during the historic Governing Council.

This debate, and the resulting decisions, must also include how best to incorporate the ideas, advice and experience of civil society in delivering transformational change.

However it is achieved, the main aim is to strengthen and empower the work and the influence of ministers responsible for the environment internationally, regionally and in their differing national landscapes.

A strengthened and upgraded UNEP with universal membership and additional, predictable and stable funding is also better equipped to implement its work programme, its existing commitments and new responsibilities arising out of Rio+20. Indeed, in partnership with others, this is already under way.

Rio+20 gave the green light to multilateral work on the inclusive Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as an important tool for achieving a sustainable century. In many ways it gave UNEP a license to respond to countries' interests in further developing the concept - and, in partnership with others, to specific national requests and needs.

In some countries the paramount issue is how a Green Economy can accelerate and scale-up poverty eradication. In others - for example in the European Union, Japan and North America, - it is manifesting itself in ways that reflect such national

imperatives as resource efficiency and decoupling economic growth from environmental footprints. Thus the inclusive Green Economy will express itself as series of nationally-led processes and in an exchange of ideas where nations learn from each another in realising sustainable development. UNEP is already taking this forward, launching – for example – the Partnership for Action on a Green Economy with the International Labour Organization and others.

In Rio Heads of States also gave the go ahead for the 10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production. UNEP has been asked to act as its secretariat and to establish and administer a trust fund to support Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) implementation in developing countries. We are now putting in place the institutional architecture to take the Framework forward, including developing the Global SCP Clearinghouse as an information platform for exchanging knowledge, expertise and tools, building networks and establishing working groups around specific themes.

Rio +20's outcomes have provided an opportunity to reflect on the links and mutually supportive aspects of SCP and the inclusive Green Economy, so as to avoid duplicating efforts. In the past – for historical, political and perhaps ideological reasons – there has been a firewall between them, which makes little sense.

The International Resource Panel, supported by the European Commission and country partners, is looking to develop scientific analysis on decoupling food production and consumption from food waste and food loss. Agri-food is one of the Framework's sectors, and the issue resonates across continents, countries and communities, not least following evidence that 30 or 40 per cent of food is wasted or lost. In January,

UNEP launched an international campaign on food waste, which dovetails with existing Food and Agricultural Organization initiatives on food loss in developing nations.

Such a campaign can also support ideas and directions resulting from Rio +20s decision to develop a suite of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not least because this issue unites farmers and consumers, supply chains and supermarkets, hoteliers and restaurants, North and South. Indeed it is not just a moral and food security issue, but an environmental sustainability one – since every apple or sheaf of wheat wasted or lost also represents a squandering of chemicals, fertilizers, land, water and energy.

The SDGs represent a real opportunity to unite the agendas of developing countries with the responsibilities and impacts of developed ones. They can provide a global framework that could make every nation accountable on how the whole world moves forward to deliver a sustainable century. There are many areas where UNEP can add unique value, not least in systematically assessing the achievement of internationally agreed goals, as a result of our work on, for example, the Global Environment Outlook.

Other areas include green economy indicators - looking beyond Gross Domestic product as a measure of wealth and ecosystems through, for example, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity. Along with many other UN bodies and the World Bank, UNEP is working closely with the UN Statistical Commission to identify new approaches for measuring progress.

At Rio+20, too, over 30 governments and institutions - including Brazil, Denmark, Switzerland and UNEP - announced a new global International Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative to scale up the public spending flowing into goods and services that maximize environmental

and social benefits. Public procurement, representing between 15 and 25 per cent of GDP, offers a tremendous opportunity for green innovation and sustainability.

There is also enormous opportunity to introduce greater transparency of companies' environmental, social and governance footprints, and thus generate increased possibilities, for example, for pension funds to invest in companies reaching for far higher sustainability standards. This is not a matter of sentiment, but of the bottom line: there is increasing evidence that companies who adopt better environmental, social and governance policies are also better managed and present a smaller risk and a higher return over the medium to long term.

UNEP - through its UNEP Finance Initiative and relationship with the Global Reporting Initiative - has been supporting corporate sustainability reporting for two decades, with some success. Bloomberg estimates that around 25 per cent of the companies it surveys incorporate varying levels of sustainability reporting alongside financial accounts. But 75 per cent still do not. Rio+20 has given fresh impetus and energy to bringing more companies on board, thanks to the initiative of Brazil, Denmark, France and South Africa who, with the support of UNEP and the Global Reporting Initiative, launched the 'Group of Friends of Paragraph 47'. They aim to include more nations and deliver a road map by the end of this year.

Rio+20 may seem remote to those eking out an existence, surviving floods and droughts, fighting daily to feed themselves and their families. Yet it marked a fresh understanding that sustainable development without environmental and social improvements is itself unsustainable. Perhaps, as a result the false trade-offs between economic development and environmental and social sustainability can now be consigned to history.

People

Award-winning British conservationist **Stanley Johnson** has just published a book to mark UNEP's 40th anniversary.

"UNEP: The First 40 Years; A Narrative by Stanley Johnson", (see Book section), charts the evolution of UNEP from its inception at the landmark Stockholm conference of 1972 to its position today at the heart of the global environmental movement.

The book, which is not an official UN history, but the view of its internationally-respected author, was nevertheless undertaken with the close cooperation and participation of all key actors, including past and present Executive Directors.

The Narrative details in depth UNEP's role at the forefront of efforts to protect the environment and ranges across an extraordinarily wide front; from UNEP's early efforts to clean up dangerously polluted Oceans, promote urgent and successful action to save the Ozone layer, prevent the harmful dumping of toxic waste, protect bio-diversity and save endangered species and fauna, to today's efforts to promote a "Green Economy".

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner commented: 'Stanley was an ideal person to compile this history of UNEP. His commitment to environmental issues, his enthusiasm, diligence and downright doggedness allied to a wealth of experience and creativity has enriched the book'.

Johnson also served as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) between 1979 and 1984 where he was Vice-Chairman of the Parliament's Environment Committee. He also served as Head of the Prevention of Division in the European Commission and subsequently as adviser on environmental policy, and Director for Energy Policy. He is currently an Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP-CMS).

He won the Greenpeace Prize for Outstanding Services to the Environment in 1984 and in the same year the Richard Martin Award for Outstanding Services to Animal Welfare given by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

www.unep.org/40thAnniversary



Cutting the celebratory cake at UNEP's 40th anniversary gala dinner, Nairobi, February 21, 2012. From left to right: Achim Steiner; Donald Kaniaru, former Director and Senior Legal Advisor; Mostafa Tolba, former Executive Director; Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director; Klaus Töpfer, former Executive Director.



Stanley Johnson told Our Planet:

"I was honoured to be asked to write the story of UNEP - so far! The deadline was quite tight. I think I wrote 150,000 words in four months and that included time for basic research, and personal interviews not only with all former Executive Directors (as well as the current ED, of course) but also with numerous other people, including those who have served on the Governing Council. Strenuous though the job was, it was also immensely invigorating. When you set out to write about 40 years of UNEP, you are in a very real sense writing about some of the key issues facing the planet. And that is an uplifting experience."

"The book takes the reader behind the scenes to witness at first hand the role played by UNEP in complex and often-fraught negotiations resulting in landmark treaties such as the Mediterranean Action Plan and subsequent Regional Seas Programme, the 1983 Convention on Migratory Species, the epoch-shaping 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone layer, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Basle Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, as well as vital international efforts to deal with climate change and global warming."

Johnson, a former staff member of the World Bank, added: «Over the past four decades, I have attended - in one capacity or another - many of the key conferences or events which feature in this book, beginning with the famous Stockholm Conference in 1972 and ending with the latest Earth Summit: the International Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June last year (2012).»



There's all to play for



BRICE LALONDE
Executive Co-ordinator, Rio+20

Last summer was not the best moment to convene a conference. Some countries were in election year and most of the world was still crippled by severe economic crisis. But Rio+20 turned out to be a success nevertheless. Beside agreement on an official 52-page document, *The Future we Want*, hundreds of side events were organized, often opening paths governments are still shy of taking. Commitments from business, individual states and cities approached 500 billion dollars and, for the first time in a UN conference, inputs from Internet participants were directly conveyed to heads of state and government.

It is difficult yet to assess the conference's legacy, because declarations must be followed by implementation and international gatherings, even attended by heads of state, may not bring much direct change on the ground. The same complaint has been made about previous once-in-a-decade conferences - Johannesburg 2002, or even Rio 1992 - when more spectacular decisions were agreed, but scarcely implemented in following years. This time decisions appeared more modest. Perhaps they will be more easily implemented, leading to more fundamental changes. At the least, agreement on *The Future We Want* licenses the UN and many dedicated people worldwide to operate on sustainable development.

Alongside statements representing the shared positions of 193 countries on the state of the world and what they see – or do not see – as priorities for action, Rio+20 took major decisions applying to the UN system.

The conference invited the UN to support countries in greening their economies with the best tools and practices available – a central task for which UNEP will be responsible. It encouraged companies to improve sustainability reporting – perhaps with a view to preparing an international agreement allowing comparison between companies and countries, and evaluating progress. The UN was mandated to launch a programme of work to better measure progress in our societies.

Going "beyond GDP" would be an important step forward in taking stock of human, social and natural capital – and the services they provide, for future remuneration. The UN was also requested to work on an effective financing strategy for sustainable development.

Institutionally, the conference decided to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development – established twenty years ago by the first Rio conference - with a High Level Political Forum, yet to be created. It is rare for one conference to end an institution previously established by another one. But why did the commission fail? The idea was to get leaders to discuss sustainable development issues. Will they attend the future Forum? Perhaps they will, if it becomes the place where the real substance of economic, social and environmental trends is openly debated with representatives of civil society.

The conference also decided to strengthen and upgrade UNEP. Indeed, the international community feels guilty about UNEP, which it created 40 years ago in Stockholm, when awareness about the environment was awakening. It thought it only needed a gadfly to stimulate all the UN organizations, so didn't give UNEP the means to be strong and authoritative enough.

Nevertheless UNEP has managed to become the true political centre for the global environment, and Rio+20 began to make up the deficiency by establishing universal membership and providing adequate funding. It also made clear that UNEP must be better empowered to fulfill its coordination mandate within the UN system, to ensure a science-policy interface and to engage with all stakeholders. Last but not least, it must provide capacity building and, above all, coherence between the conventions - and a regular report on the state of Planet Earth.

Today's issue is the Planet – not just the local environment or the health of ecosystems in countries or region, but also the biosphere itself and the bio-geochemical cycles, the fundamental mechanisms supporting life on Earth. The UN system doesn't intrude in member state's affairs, but the Planet is another matter: the international community must invent planetary instruments. UNEP must be the institution for the biosphere. But the care for Planet Earth has unfortunately been cut into fragmented pieces – or conventions. Each – very important – convention only deals with one planetary issue (the ozone layer, the climate, biodiversity, etc.). Yet, of course, these are interrelated and the Planet needs a global forum to set priorities and strategies. It is absurd, for instance to combat ozone layer depletion with climate-change gases, but it is happening – because the climate and the ozone layer come under two different conventions. That's why we need a strong, coordinating UNEP. We also need to know the state of the Earth - the most important task UNEP must regularly fulfill with the international scientific community.

Rio+20 witnessed debate between a majority of scientists, who warned about "planetary boundaries", and a majority of countries, who rejected even the expression - claiming it would be unfair if there was less to eat at the very moment they arrive at the world's banquet table. This will be a very important - and sensitive - debate in coming years.

UNEP has also started embedding the economy in the environment. The Future we want agreed on the necessity of protecting the environment but did not recognise that nature is a factor of production, just as much as labor or man-made capital. Yet the side-events at Rio +20 were buzzing over natural capital and ecosystem services,

while environmental economics is the fastest growing field in university economics departments. In some of the most advanced cities, environmental services have been merged with economic services. UNEP is likely to get closer to the hubs of the global economy.

Rio +20's most spectacular decision was to ask the international community to establish a short set of sustainable development goals for humanity by 2015. This extraordinary and unexpected decision – introduced during the preparatory process by Colombia – could shape the international cooperation landscape in the next decade. The UN has normally concentrated its agenda on poverty eradication and lifting the bottom billion into development, as through the Millennium Development Goals that come under review in 2015. What will be the relation between these two sets of goals? Will they merge or keep separate? The fight against poverty naturally remains a top UN priority. Yet Rio+20 - acknowledging the tremendous successes of emerging countries in fighting poverty in the last twenty years – estimated that there could be a global middle class of more than 5 billion people in 2030. That is why the world needs sustainable development goals and why Rio+20 has called for defining sustainable consumption and production – a task for which UNEP will be the secretariat.

Obviously no conference can wave a magic wand and transform the world. But a persistent effort to implement Rio +20s main decisions, alongside those of previous conferences, would be decisive. Incremental changes can lead to major transformations. The challenges facing the world will not disappear, but increase. UNEP should become one of the international community's main instruments for coping with them.



AMINA J. MOHAMMED
Special Adviser to the
UN Secretary-General on Post-2015
Development Planning

Unique opportunity

As the Millennium Development Goals deadline approaches, the creative potential of the post-2015 development agenda is generating increasing enthusiasm. The United Nations is fully committed to an open and inclusive process, supporting many of the rich debates being initiated and led by a wide-range of actors from all sectors of society.

The inception of the MDGs spurred much achievement. Nonetheless, many targets are still to be attained, and there is a need to accelerate progress. Even if all the Goals are achieved, the underlying premise of shaping the post-2015 development agenda will be that they represent unfinished business. We cannot rest, for instance, until all people are relieved of extreme poverty and hunger. The MDGs remain relevant, both as a guide to the future as well as a record of the past. Any future development agenda must be molded on the achievements, shortfalls and lessons learned in implementing them.

The world after 2015 will be markedly different from what it was at the turn of the Millennium. The global population is projected to rise by another two billion to nine billion by 2050 – and this, more than anything else, will stretch the world's resources to the limit. Such issues as migration, increasing inequality and a changing poverty landscape, insecurity and social exclusion, strong growth in emerging economies, climate change, and a significant number of fragile and at-risk states call for a comprehensive approach to the post-2015 framework.

Demand for basic necessities remains and will continue to increase. Today some 2.6 billion people lack access to modern sanitation, despite increased access to improved water supplies. Although poverty has declined, some 925 million still suffered from hunger in 2010. By 2030, the world will need 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more energy and 30 per cent more water.

Inequality and the inadequate availability of decent work also present serious development challenges. One billion young people have been particularly affected by the attrition in labour markets,

providing the largest group among the working poor: an estimated 74.7 million youth were unemployed in 2011. Many, especially young women, have moved into part-time employment or participate precariously in the informal sector, often with poor pay and bad working conditions. Creating more jobs will be essential, but must be matched with relevant education to address the skills deficit which has left many young people either unemployable or trapped in subsistence work.

Access to clean and modern energy must continue to expand to reach the 1.3 billion people who still lack electricity and the some 40 per cent of the world's population dependent on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste to cook their food. Overall, poor or insufficient infrastructure is obstructing development – economies are growing but could grow much faster. It is estimated that sub-Saharan output is reduced by some 40 per cent due to this infrastructure shortage.

Shifts in the global socio-economic and political landscapes have seen expanding pockets of poverty in middle income countries, where three-quarters of the world's poor are now found. Almost half the poor in low-income countries are in post-conflict and fragile states. In both middle- and low-income countries poor households would benefit from improved income distribution and access to social services, food and nutrition safety nets, decent productive jobs, and a well-functioning system of justice and accountability.

Accountability and justice must also inform the post-2015 development agenda, with shared commitments and responsibilities for both developing and developed countries. The interconnectedness of global challenges demand that it must have a more holistic, cross-

cutting and rights-based approach. Common and interlinked challenges cannot be dealt with in silos. The three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social – must join hands with the rule of law and human rights. We must clearly articulate that development is not development if it is not sustainable – and that sustainability is impossible in a fragile, insecure and unstable environment.

“The benefits of information technology are being felt in areas from international trade and financial transfers to social service programme delivery and learning opportunities. New forms of flexible and multi-polar alliances, partnerships and international cooperation are emerging.”

By advocating a rights-based approach, the post-2015 agenda can focus on service delivery in health and education. It can target vulnerable groups; those who are discriminated against or whose rights are violated. It will provide the rationale for strengthening the rule of law and governance systems and it can provide key working principles such as non-discrimination, participation and accountability which can act as guidelines in implementing development policy.

The world has the tools for elaborating and implementing a bold new development agenda at its fingertips. People are more educated and better informed than ever before. There is a greater flow of technology, companies, capital and ideas to developing countries, and there have been far-reaching advances in health and agricultural sciences. The benefits of information technology are being felt in areas from international trade and financial transfers to social service programme delivery and learning opportunities. New forms of flexible and multi-polar alliances, partnerships and international cooperation are emerging.

These opportunities can and must be translated into constructing and supporting a bold new development agenda. And a robust financial framework must underpin it. Recent backsliding among development partners on their Official Development Assistance commitments could have dire consequences for Least Developed Countries and post-conflict countries, but there is little sign of the trend reversing. We will need to explore innovative financing options, especially those giving preferential access to credit for women and young entrepreneurs.

The design and construction of a post-2015 development agenda is a unique opportunity for the United Nations system, its Member States and other actors to reshape global partnerships and strengthen multilateral cooperation to tackle the most critical challenges facing humankind and the planet on which we depend. Sustainable development will need to be at the core. If we stay true to the commitment reaffirmed at Rio+20, we can deliver a development framework that will allow all people to realize their inalienable right to live a life of dignity and hope.



Time to Get Serious

"This gathering represents man's earnest endeavor to understand his own condition and to prolong his tenancy of this planet."

With these stirring words, Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister, galvanized the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. A wake-up call to the state of our planet, Stockholm gave birth to the UN Environment Programme, amid high hopes that humanity could together curb alarming trends in pollution and natural resource loss.

Hopes were high when a 43-year-old Maurice Strong took the reins of the new institution – the first UN body to be located in a developing country. UNEP's remit was simple: to be the world's lead institution on the global environment. Its mandate included compiling much-needed environmental data, coordinating international activities, developing international agreements, and providing capacity development and technical assistance, especially to developing countries.

Forty years on, UNEP has made some vital contributions. It has played a key role in creating dozens of institutions and agreements that have advanced understanding of global challenges and propelled international action. These include such game-

ANDREW STEER
President and CEO, World Resources
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chers as the 1987 Montreal Protocol, which led to a 98 per cent drop in controlled ozone depleting gases; the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), since 1988 the leading global body on climate science; the 1992 Earth Summit, and its associated global treaties on climate and biodiversity; and the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the first ever survey of the health of the world's biological resources.

And yet, as it enters its fifth decade, few can believe that UNEP is equipped for the magnitude of the task ahead.

The stakes are now much higher than at the time of its creation. Since Indira Gandhi and others raised the alarm at Stockholm, the state of our planet – despite a few bright spots such as repairing the ozone layer – has continued to deteriorate. Two billion people already suffer from water shortages; by 2030, almost half the world's population will do so. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment revealed that we have degraded or are unsustainably exploiting 60 per cent of the ecosystems services that we rely on for such basic needs as food and shelter. As population climbs, so will demand for food, water, and energy – by 35 per cent, 40 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively, over the next 15-20 years. And even the conservative World Bank now projects a 4 degree Celsius rise in average global temperatures – with massive costs to humanity, especially the poor.

At a simple level, the obstacles in UNEP's way are well known. With less than one third of member states on its Governing Council, it has lacked strong, universal backing from governments (although its membership is now set to expand). Its funding has been perpetually up in the air, due to reliance on voluntary donations from countries.

And as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly rather than a fully-fledged agency, it lacks independent decision-making authority.

These, however, are symptoms rather than causes of the problem. The root causes are deeper. Governments haven't given the level of seriousness to environmental problems that they give to economic issues, nationally or internationally. Environment ministers rarely have the clout of their economic counterparts (Ministers of Trade, Finance, Public Works, etc.) within national cabinets, and so few of these discuss global environmental challenges the way they would discuss global economic ones.

Indeed, many governments don't actually want a strong global environmental body. They are willing to give tough authority to the WTO or the IMF, since they prioritize economic growth, but have no appetite for doing the same in an area they consider less important. Our grandchildren may not forgive them.

For all these reasons – and despite good leadership from its Executive Director, Achim Steiner – the world's governments have failed to give UNEP the clout it needs properly to fulfill its mandate.

The Rio+20 Summit, however, opened the door to improvement. Governments agreed to make membership in UNEP's Governing Council universal and called for increased, stable funding from UN as well as voluntary sources.

If the call for adequate financing is realized (a big if), UNEP should use its new resources and clout to build on its core strengths. These include acting as the world's leading repository of environmental data and building developing country capacity to implement environmental laws.

UNEP should also look to lead in streamlining the 500+ multilateral environmental agreements that have mushroomed in recent decades, fragmenting global environmental action. And the UN General Assembly should beef up the Rio+20 commitments by giving UNEP greater decision-making authority.

The Rio+20 Summit offered the prospect for renewed global action to address the gathering environmental storm, but fell far short of what is required. UNEP's innovative groundwork on pathways to a global green economy, for example, failed to gain traction, instead becoming mired in political debate – even as government and private sector leaders acknowledged the unsustainability of current economic trends.

Think of the challenges of the coming half century. What sort of international governance system will be required to ensure that as well as eradicating poverty and creating decent jobs, we are protecting species, preventing climate change, and feeding 9 billion sustainably – all while addressing the aspirations of the booming global middle class, up from one billion in 1990 to two billion today, and due to reach five billion by 2030? Each of these big challenges involves managing global public goods. Yet we are lacking any serious mechanism to address those that relate to the global environment – or, indeed, any serious discussion of this issue. Can UNEP's Governing Council, supplemented with key economic and scientific leaders, help catalyze progress in this area?

Indira Gandhi ended her Stockholm speech with words that still ring true:

"It is clear that the environmental crisis which is confronting the world will profoundly alter the future destiny of our planet."

One thing, though, has changed. We don't have 40 more years to get this right.



KUMI NAIDOO

Executive Director, and **DANIEL MITTLER**,
Political Director, Greenpeace International



Time for an Upgrade

The Rio+20 summit was nothing short of an epic failure. In the face of accelerating climate change and an ever-increasing use of resources, governments failed to deliver the transformational change needed to safeguard our planet's future. There was no commitment to an energy revolution based on renewables and energy efficiency, or to urgently end deforestation. Overall, the world got just words and greenwash, not the urgent action required to provide prosperity for all without exceeding our planet's limits.

By contrast, the strengthening of UNEP has been held up as one of the summit's top achievements.

It is indeed good news that the General Assembly finally agreed in December 2012 that UNEP will receive "secure, stable and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN". It was about time to end a state of affairs where UNEP needed to pass around a 'begging bowl' each year to secure vital funds for environmental protection. And it was also excellent news that both Brazil and China used the occasion of Rio+20 to pledge significant additional sums to strengthen UNEP. This was a recognition of the important role UNEP plays in emerging economies – and a long way from the old, and false,

"environment vs. development" dichotomy that overshadowed its founding 40 years ago.

UNEP rightly aims to deliver "the environment for development", and has worked very hard since its creation to address and become relevant to the needs of developing countries. Strengthening it therefore contributes to global development efforts, rather than distracting from them: the environment is, after all, the essential base for all development. No doubt, this is one reason why African Heads of States and Governments want to see it turned into a fully fledged specialized agency.

Rio+20 should indeed have been the place where UNEP finally became a proper UN Environment Agency, as many, including the African and European Unions, demanded in the final plenary discussion session. Sustainable development governance needs a global authority for the environment, with greatly enhanced implementation, compliance and enforcement mechanisms. Yet governments failed to upgrade UNEP at the summit, another reason for saying its outcome was a failure. UNEP did at least progress on the pitiful status quo, but this progression was ruefully inadequate for a Heads of States summit.

Governments must now move urgently to complete the upgrading process started in Rio. They must put flesh on the bones of the General Assembly resolution and secure significant additional funds for UNEP's urgent and important work. They must also not shy away from more controversial subjects, such as giving UNEP the tools needed to effectively monitor implementation of multilateral environmental agreements – and to impose sanctions on those breaking the rules. As long as UNEP can only plead, coach and capacity build, while the World Trade Organization can impose punitive tariff measures on those breaking their rules, there is an unacceptable inequality of power. Environmental governance, people and the environment will continue to lose out as a result.

Yet if sustainability is to thrive, we will need much more than a strengthening and upgrading of existing institutions. As well as a UN Environment Agency with real powers, we need global rules that change power dynamics and investment incentives. Global rules on corporate accountability and liability, for example, are essential to ensure that damaging people

We must thus strive for a true transformation of global governance that puts people and planet at the centre of all decision making. As a vital first step, governments need to give real power to UNEP and upgrade it to specialized agency status as soon as possible. Our children can simply not afford any more time to be lost.

and the environment is no longer a free for all, but has real costs. At the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002, governments acknowledged the need for global rules for global corporations. At Rio+20, however, they only called for slight – and voluntary – improvements in the way that corporations report their social and environmental impacts. A binding global instrument that ensures full liability for any social or environmental damage global corporations cause must therefore remain high on any governance reform list. Indeed, it will be a fundamental test of whether

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governments want to set rules for people and the planet or abandon responsibility to a free market focussed on short-term gain.

In truth, sustainable development cannot become reality in a world in which short-term bets by financial markets are all-powerful. Strong controls of such markets are therefore an integral part of the needed reform of global governance. New fiscal instruments, such as a Financial Transaction Tax, need to be adopted to slow harmful speculation and deliver much needed finance for development and environmental protection. A complete social and environmental review of the global trade system is also long overdue.

There has been talk about strengthening UNEP for decades. Remarkably, over the last 40 years, UNEP has thrived in difficult circumstances. Its present ability to publish global environmental assessments, for example, is remarkable: even 20 years ago NGOs needed to invest a lot of resources to find and publicize the kind of information that UNEP's Global Environment Outlook , for example, now summarizes so succinctly. We are grateful to UNEP for playing this role, thus allowing us to focus even more on frontline campaigning. But, we also know that time is running out – and that every new Outlook report only underscores the increasing urgency for action.

We must thus strive for a true transformation of global governance that puts people and planet at the centre of all decision making. As a vital first step, governments need to give real power to UNEP and upgrade it to specialized agency status as soon as possible. Our children can simply not afford any more time to be lost.



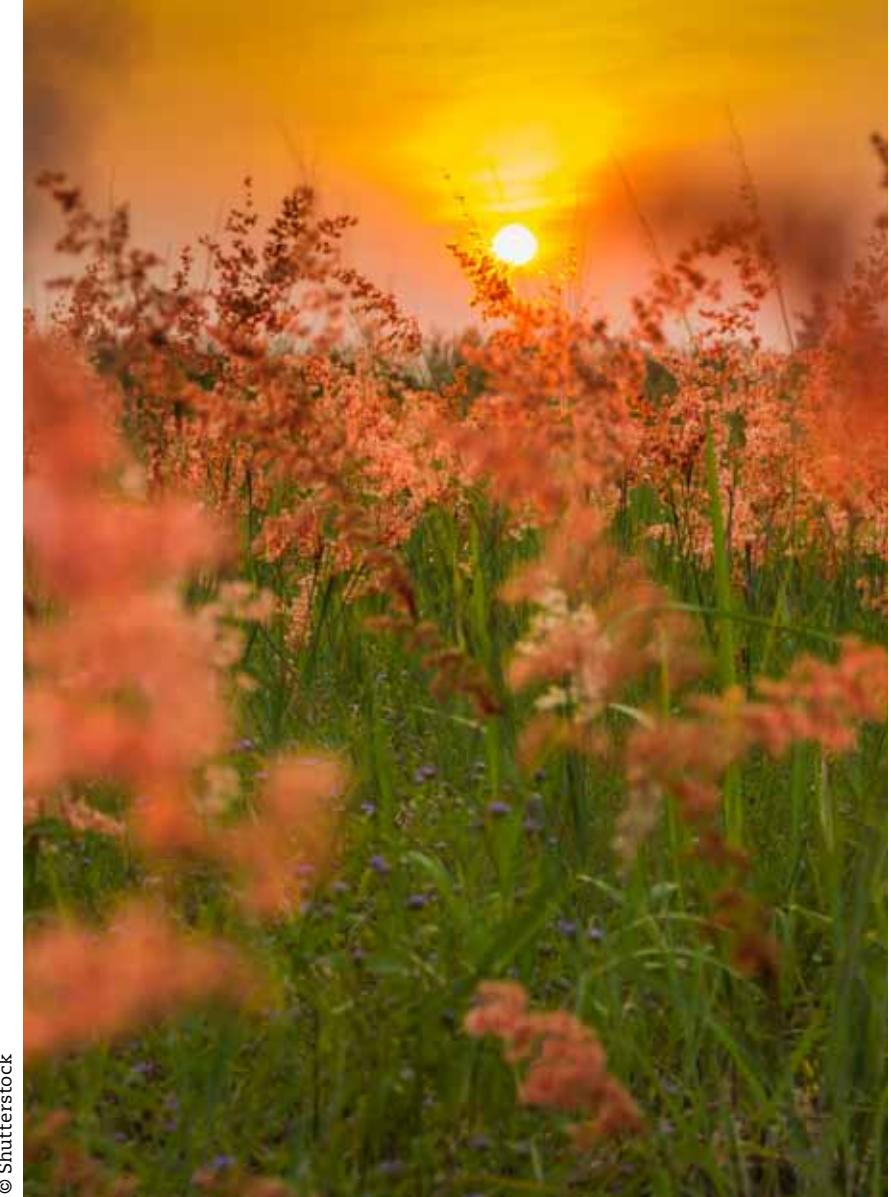
JOYEETA GUPTA

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New era

Institutionalising environmental issues took place more than two decades after that of the other two pillars of sustainable development, the economic and social ones. It finally arrived in the global arena in 1972 at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. UNEP was established shortly afterwards but its late birth, and limited status did not augur well for the effective international management of environmental issues.

As globalization and liberalization increased resource extraction, environmental pollution and global change, there was an enhanced need for greater effectiveness in the international arena. Environmental governance needed to be strong enough to help reshape and redesign development patterns, production and consumption processes. However, environmental ideas were seen as 'alternative' and environmental bodies and champions as not having the financial or political clout to influence structural change. Environmental policies were fragmented across different issue areas and different fora.



There have been many ideas for strengthening environmental governance: a hierarchical integrated model (e.g. a World Sustainable Development Organisation); a hierarchical single issue model (e.g. an Environment Security Council); a non-hierarchical focal point (e.g. a World Environment and Development Organisation); an advisory body; organisational strengthening and upgrading of UNEP; coordination through common principles (e.g. a Law of Sustainable Development); coordination through a coordination body (e.g. UN Water); or clustering of secretariats. The politics of each of these options is different. Creating new bodies is expensive and

can disturb existing relationships between established bodies, while upgrading UNEP to an organization could be seen as posing a threat to all who see environmental challenges as issues that can be easily externalized and postponed.

Following two decades of debate, the UN Rio+20 Conference in June 2012 finally decided to strengthen UNEP, supported by a follow-up resolution taken in December 2012 by the UN General Assembly, incrementally vesting UNEP with new characteristics and power.

The Resolution aims to strengthen the role of UNEP 'as the leading global environmental authority'

that sets the global environmental agenda' and as the 'authoritative advocate' for environmental issues. It establishes universal membership of the governing body with almost immediate effect. It calls for support for 'the full and effective participation of representatives of developing countries' and for additional voluntary contributions for stable and secure funding.

There are four key implications. First, by reiterating the role of UNEP as the central control tower for global environmental governance, the General Assembly strengthens the recognition of the authority of UNEP to shape it. Many UN agencies work on environmental issues, but the clear role to coordinate and promote system-wide coherence and 'lead efforts to formulate United Nations system-wide strategies' on environmental issues, is now delegated to UNEP, probably supported by the environmental management group established in 1999 for enhancing inter-agency coordination over the environment and human settlements. It may enable UNEP to have a more integrated vision on different environmental issues, and thus enhance its voice in terms of its coordination activities.

Secondly, UNEP's legitimacy has been enhanced. All 193 member nations of the UN will be represented on its Governing Council instead of the existing 58 nations. This implies that, instead of some states representing the interests of others at the Governing Council, all are entitled to participate – creating a form of direct democracy. Each state will now theoretically have an equal influence on UNEP's policy. Universal membership will, by implication, give a larger voice to developing countries as they make up a significant majority of the world's nations.

"The global community is clearly entering the fourth era of global environmental governance. The first, pre-1972, period was characterised by ad hoc decision-making. During the 1972-1992 era environmental knowledge was documented, environmental policies catalysed, and a global agenda created. In the post-1992 era, the difficulties of implementing environmental policies without questioning existing development paradigms became increasingly clear. But now, in a post-2012 era, environmental governance may be gradually coming of age."

As many states do not have the resources to participate, the global community is urged to help support them to do so. This will inevitably mean that policy processes will tend to focus more on equity issues, on the allocation of environmental responsibilities, rights and risks between countries. Continued support for UNEP's location in Nairobi will reinforce this. The Rio+20 Outcome document also empowers UNEP to engage more actively with relevant stakeholders. The greater formal link with states and the informal link with non-state actors will undoubtedly increase its overall legitimacy and ability to negotiate with other UN agencies.

Thirdly, it will enhance UNEP's ability to provide direct support to countries for capacity building, technology transfer, and other kinds of dialogue needed to help make their decisions. If undertaken as a two way learning process, both developing countries and UNEP will benefit from this, leading to institutional learning in dealing with environmental problems.

Finally, the General Assembly has supported UNEP's engagement in developing policy-relevant and

evidence-based assessments of environmental information and situations worldwide.

The combination of enhanced science/evidence and legitimacy-based authority, with the horizontal mandate to both lead and promote system-wide coherence, the vertical mandate to provide technology support, capacity building and financial assistance, and the plea for regular, stable, secure and increased funding to developing countries, gives UNEP the potential characteristics for enhanced effectiveness.

At the same time questions need to be faced. If lack of political will is the key challenge, can this be addressed through improved architecture? Was the institutional design the problem in the first place? After all UNEP has been quite successful in promoting a series of treaties on environmental issues. Strengthening UNEP may enhance its legitimacy, but may have limited impact in increasing its political power vis a vis those who exclusively espouse economic development or social issues. A more authoritative UNEP may still be lame if the most powerful countries do not ratify its treaties or support its other outputs, and if the emerging countries are unwilling to integrate environmental aspects into their development agendas.

The global community is clearly entering the fourth era of global environmental governance. The first, pre-1972, period was characterised by ad hoc decision-making. During the 1972-1992 era environmental knowledge was documented, environmental policies catalysed, and a global agenda created. In the post-1992 era, the difficulties of implementing environmental policies without questioning existing development paradigms became increasingly clear. But now, in a post-2012 era, environmental governance may be gradually coming of age.



ASTRID ZWICK
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Fig leaf – or success story?

Over the 20 years since the first Rio summit the pace of change has probably been at least as fast as in any equivalent period in history. Globalization, digital connectivity, accelerated consumption and disparate prosperity have combined with ecological decline, a lack of global sustainability governance and resource scarcity to transform the playing field for business. Meanwhile, severe incidents of environmental pollution, scandals about bad labour conditions and irresponsible behaviour in business have stirred up public mistrust of the corporate world. Clearly, environmental, social and governance issues are material to business.

Energy supply and resource scarcity pose big threats to the global economy over the next decade, and can hit most manufacturing, transportation and other resource-dependent sectors. And population growth and rapid urbanization are highly important for business when looking for growth markets.

More and more corporates get the message: actively managing material risks and opportunities while being accountable and transparent to a larger set of stakeholders reduces financial and reputational risks and even provides entry to new markets. But are companies really concerned or just seizing a fig leaf for protection against vigilant stakeholders? And is a single company strategy on corporate sustainability or corporate responsibility enough to contribute to society's sustainable development?

Whatever the motivation, progress has been made. In 2012 socially responsible investment increased to 6.7 trillion in Europe alone. Many niche providers but also mainstream investors make use of it, while pension funds

became major players. It has grown more than any other investment segment, in relative terms, since 2009. The capital market is increasingly rewarding transparency on corporate environmental, social and governance performance.

There is growing recognition that achieving sustainable development depends almost entirely on getting the economy right. Decades of creating new wealth through a "brown economy" have not substantially addressed social marginalization and resource depletion, and society is still far from delivering the Millennium Development Goals.

Again progress is visible. Thousands of companies are advancing corporate sustainability through global initiatives like the UN Global Compact, the world's largest, involving approximately 7,000 businesses from 135 countries. The Rio+20 summit witnessed

the launch of more than 200 commitments on for example energy, finance and climate change. Frameworks for public-private policy collaboration on biodiversity, on food and agriculture and on access to water for people and industry were presented there.

As the World Business Council for Sustainable Development - an industry-led organization of about 200 large international companies, - put it in 2000 "sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform against this triple bottom line."

Now more and more companies are embarking on this approach, some even partnering with civil society organizations or public authorities to identify market trends, market needs and appropriate solutions. Munich Re is one such pioneer. As the world's largest reinsurer it has been advising against the threat of global warming since the 70s and is now offering insurance solutions that buffer risks arising from such new technologies as renewable energies. It also initiated the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative which brings together insurers, climate experts, economists and independent organisations to develop insurance solutions for the ever-growing losses from weather-related extreme events, concentrating first on developing countries.

Implementing sustainable development is challenging. There are often conflicts between short-term interests and long-term objectives, sectoral thinking and holistic understanding, individual interests and the larger interests of the community and global concerns. Bringing about a paradigm shift calls for new coalitions. Change cannot come about without the necessary

infrastructure, technological adjustments, skilled labour and consumer acceptance.

The ability of the economy, politics, science and civil society to find new forms of cooperation is crucial. There is still a lot of untapped potential here, but there are already initiatives that cross corporate sectors, regions and national borders. Munich Re and the DESERTEC Foundation have together launched the Dii industrial initiative, which combines more than 50 companies and institutions and aims to construct solar thermal power plants in the Sahara Desert to supply around 15 per cent of Europe's energy needs by 2050 – thus affirming our desire to reconcile commercial interests with sustainable development and social responsibility.

The UNEP FI Principles for Sustainable Insurance, launched at Rio+20, enables a coherent industry-wide approach systematically and actively to manage environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities – an initiative potentially influencing business in other sectors. The insurance industry has a broad and diverse risk knowledge base that can enable people, business and the economy to protect themselves against environmental, social, governance and other long-term risks.

At the first Earth Summit very few companies endorsed the principles of sustainable development as part of their strategies, and it was hard to imagine how these would make their way into the business world. But during the course of my business life the principles of sustainable development have gradually taken greater hold, and the community has constantly grown as many large companies introduced management for them. My job enables me to contribute

to sustainable development, identifying and implementing good practices for corporate responsibility management and I have become confident that its principles can successfully make their way into societal behaviour and business strategies. One example is the use of our long-term experience in disease management and in efficient running of healthcare programs worldwide to address problems in regional health care systems such as the Daman National Health Insurance in Abu Dhabi. Our product and service range includes close co-operation with non-governmental organizations and micro-financing institutions in developing products ranging from health, personal accident and property policies to protection against the loss of working animals. Proper management of environmental, social and governance issues is part and parcel of holistic risk management and good governance – and stimulates innovative solutions and contributes to environmental, social and economic sustainability.

These are turbulent times. Many new technological pathways exist in parallel and the most popular ones will win. No one, for example, can be sure whether e-mobility (with battery and/or fuel cell technology) or hydrogen-based combustion will prevail. And while we will certainly double the use of renewable sources much depends on regional conditions.

Sustainability reports and corporate responsibility strategies do not do the job by themselves, but they can help make corporate responsibility transparent and comparable. The ability to form alliances with partners across civil society, public policy and business will determine change. And those who succeed will be those who understand changes early enough, and adapt.



Reporting change



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There have been extraordinary changes in the landscape of sustainability in the over 20 years in which I have been working on issues related to social justice in Latin America, during the last twelve of which I have been concentrating on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the greater context of sustainable development.

At first there was almost no local action by business or government, only, at best, a bit of philanthropy from larger and mostly foreign based companies.

Even complying with the law could easily turn a company into a champion, since it was for the most part merely aspirational.

Sustainable development in general and CSR in particular have now become normal topics, found everywhere in the press, social media, and in the conversation of the street. Many large companies, business associations, SME's, NGO's - and my own University - are acting, including sustainability in their strategy and core business. This may still be limited in scope, but it is no longer the patrimony of local subsidiaries of multinationals based in OECD countries. Instead, it is becoming a hot topic for locally based and owned organizations. The largest companies of México (Cemex), Brazil (Petrobras), Chile (Falellala) and Colombia (Ecopetrol) are all aligning their practices to ISO 26000 on social responsibility and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Meanwhile, governments are developing public policy to push CSR, inspired by countries, like Finland, which take a comprehensive approach. Regional political organizations are agreeing to recognize international instruments as Europe has already done. And CSR clauses have been included in Free Trade Agreements between Europe and Caribbean countries, Central America, Peru and Colombia.

Rio+20 may not have been a great overall success, but paragraphs 46 (public policy on CSR) and 47 (Sustainability Reporting) of its outcome, to mention just two, offer an opportunity to reinforce local actions. My own country, Chile, set up a national committee to develop CSR public policy based on paragraph 46, an indication that UN-based resolutions can trigger very concrete actions. State



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owned enterprises, public procurement agencies and economic development agencies are all explicitly being asked to act, or to reinforce their existing plans.

Principles like transparency and accountability are expanding their reach into corporations, and this is being reflected in Sustainability Reports. Brazil's stock exchange led in moving into a "report or explain" mechanism: Mexico is following. Since 2002 KPMG has been monitoring trends in reporting in companies in Brazil, Mexico and Chile. There is only anecdotal information from other countries, but it is clear that more and more, mostly large, companies are reporting, including local subsidiaries of OECD country multinationals.

Paragraph 47 provides a great opportunity to push a more proactive agenda on Sustainability Reporting, moving - as is needed - from a few thousand leading companies to millions of normal or average ones. The Governments of Brazil, South Africa, France and Denmark are playing a welcome role in leading the group of "friends of paragraph

47", a very promising move towards a "big push" approach.

Similarly, we have basically all the tools and instruments we need. Standards have been developed, most notable ISO 26000 and the GRI guidelines for reporting. So, what is missing if we are to scale up? In my view, leadership – the courage to lead in this effort, especially in taking action over the sphere of influence of companies and industries.

My strong sense is that we are finally moving from good, small-scale examples to nationwide initiatives, with extraordinary potential to scale up good practices. There is beginning to be an alignment between market-driven incentives, local political will, enlightened self-interest and leadership. After more than 20 years work in the area, I am fortunate to witness and be part of this extraordinary change of dynamics.

We are very far from GRI's goal of making Sustainability Reporting as normal as financial reporting, but it should be as normal as having ISO 14001 certification for an environmental management system. Companies with good performances over quality, safety and the environment should have no impediment to properly adopting a holistic sustainability approach to their operations, along with the principles of transparency and accountability and the practice of reporting.

My strong sense is that we are finally moving from good, small-scale examples to nationwide initiatives, with extraordinary potential to scale up good practices. There is beginning to be an alignment between market-driven incentives, local political will, enlightened self-interest and leadership. After more than 20 years work in the area, I am fortunate to witness and be part of this extraordinary change of dynamics. These may still be early days for making an evaluation, but we are strongly and clearly moving in the right direction in my country and region.



JOHN E. SCANLON
Secretary-General of CITES

Making it

and sustainable

A new era of global cooperation to conserve and sustainably use wildlife was launched on 3 March, 1973 when the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed in Washington D.C. This established a globally agreed framework to ensure that international trade in wild plants and animals is legal, sustainable and traceable – and led to the adoption of national wildlife legislation and the creation of new management, scientific and enforcement authorities worldwide.

Now 177 countries have joined CITES, which has continually evolved to meet changing conditions. Member countries have adopted new wildlife management approaches and used innovative compliance measures to ensure the legal origin - and evidence of sustainability and traceability - of species in trade. This process

continues as we prepare for March's meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Bangkok, Thailand.

The last 40 years have witnessed growing prosperity, changing consumption and production patterns, vastly enhanced scientific knowledge, phenomenal advances in technology and exponential growth in global trade. Both the pressures on wild plant and animal species, and the ability of communities and governments to conserve and use their natural resources sustainably, have also greatly increased.

Every day people consume wildlife in the form of medicine, food, clothes, high-fashion, furniture and perfume. And the world population has risen four to seven billion since CITES entered into force on 1 July 1975.



The convention now covers 350 timber species, including bigleaf mahogany, and many aquatic species, such as corals, eels, sturgeons, queen conch and sharks. In Bangkok Parties will consider listing several hundred additional trees, including various ebonies and rosewoods, together with such marine species as the manta ray and five sharks

Though such iconic species as the rhinoceros would probably now be extinct in the wild without CITES, there is no room for complacency. The number of rhino poached in South Africa has soared from 13 in 2007 to over 650 last year. African elephant poaching levels are the worst in a decade while recorded ivory seizures are at their highest since 1989, when commercial trade in the material was banned under CITES.

The illegal wildlife trade - estimated by some to be worth between US\$ 5 billion and US\$ 20 billion per year - has economic, social and environmental impacts, as the outcome document from Rio+20, *The Future We Want* recognised. It must be stopped. Enhanced efforts to tackle both demand and supply are being made at all levels.

The Future We Want also encourages Parties to Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), like CITES, to consider further measures to "promote policy coherence at all levels...and enhance cooperation."

Such synergies are often seen as limited to the secretariats that service the conventions. They should be addressed from a much wider perspective – including programmatic and financing synergies and ones within the UN-system and beyond.

The overarching, voluntary system-wide plan provided by the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity - together with the related revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), - provides a real opportunity to enhance programmatic synergies amongst the biodiversity-related conventions. CITES has embraced both the Strategic Plan and the NBSAPs, together with the other biodiversity-related conventions.

Some global conventions are supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) –but some are not – including CITES, even though it carries significant international commitments. *The Future We Want* calls for the GEF to "make resources more accessible to meet country needs for the national implementation of their international environmental commitments". This will be addressed in Bangkok, with Parties being asked if they should request the GEF to serve as a financial mechanism for CITES.

legal

CITES has protected species threatened with extinction through prohibiting commercial trade and prevented more from becoming so by regulating trade, underpinning such success stories as the South American vicuña, the queen conch, and the Nile crocodile. Their survival in the wild was assured when their wool, meat and skins, respectively, became legally and sustainably managed, with tangible benefits for local communities.

CITES regulates international trade in around 5,500 animals and 29,500 plants and produces early warning indicators of species in trade to avoid it becoming unsustainable. Its trade database holds details of 12,000,000 trade transactions and is growing by over 850,000 records a year.

Over the past decade timber and aquatic species have increasingly been brought under CITES, with new proposals being submitted at each three yearly meeting of member countries, reflecting its growing recognition as an effective tool for ensuring their legal and sustainable use.

Synergy across the UN system and beyond to enhance national level implementation is critical. We cannot implement conventions without the active engagement of implementing agencies, which is facilitated through the Environment Management Group that brings them and the MEA secretariats together.

Implementing CITES relies on active engagement by a wide range of implementing agencies within and outside the UN, such as FAO, UNEP, IUCN, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization, and non-governmental organizations such as TRAFFIC. We work directly with each of them.

Seriously tackling wildlife crime will only be advanced if customs, police, prosecutors and the judiciary accept it as part of their job. Internationally, we have integrated CITES into the work of the key implementing agencies through creating the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime - a consortium with INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization that brings together the entire enforcement chain. Through this type of synergy we will start seriously to tackle wildlife crime – and we are investing more of our effort in it.

Thus far, no CITES-listed species has been driven to extinction as a result of commercial exploitation authorised by it. World leaders at Rio+20 expressly recognized CITES' "importance as an international agreement that stands at the intersection of trade, environment and development; promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity...."

The Convention remains as relevant today, if not more so, in enabling us to continue to enjoy, and benefit from, wild plants and animals from aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational and economic points of view.

Forty years on, let us celebrate the vision and commitment of the people who pioneered this visionary Convention, together with the thousands working on the front-line to protect wildlife. It is an inspiring example of successful international cooperation and national action giving hope for a sustainable future in which humans and wildlife coexist in harmony.



"Over the past few years wildlife trafficking has become more organized, more lucrative, more widespread, and more dangerous than ever before."

"This is a global challenge that spans continents and crosses oceans, and we need to address it with partnerships that are as robust and far-reaching as the criminal networks we seek to dismantle."

Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, speaking at the Wildlife Trafficking and Conservation: A Call to Action event, November 8, 2012.

CITES is the only global convention addressing international trade in wildlife. If it were not for CITES such trade would be unregulated. Combating wildlife crime requires strengthening it."

John Scanlon, Secretary-General, CITES, at the same event.

numbers

Irrigation water used globally to grow food that is wasted would be enough for the domestic needs (at **200 litres** per person per day) of **9 billion** people - the number expected on the planet by 2050.

All the world's nearly **one billion** hungry people could be lifted out of malnourishment on less than a quarter of the food that is wasted in the US, UK and Europe.

Worldwide, **1.3 billion** tonnes – about one-third of all food produced – is lost or wasted in food production and consumption systems.

The cost of the losses is US\$ 680 billion in industrialized countries and **US\$ 310 billion** in developing countries.

Food currently lost or wasted in Latin America could feed **300 million** people.

Food currently wasted in Europe could feed **200 million** people.

Food currently lost in Africa could feed **300 million** people.

According to FAO, roughly **95 per cent** of food loss and waste in developing countries are unintentional losses at early stages of the food supply chain due to financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques; storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions; infrastructure; packaging and marketing systems.

Per capita waste by consumers is between **95-115 kg** a year in Europe and North America, while consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, south and south-eastern Asia, each throw away only **6-11 kg** a year

More than **20 per cent** of all cultivated land, **30 per cent** of forests and **10 per cent** of grasslands are undergoing degradation.

Agriculture and land use changes like deforestation contribute to more than **30 per cent** of total global greenhouse gas emissions.

Overfishing and poor management contribute to declining numbers of fish, some **30 per cent** of marine fish stocks are now considered overexploited.

Source for the above information: FAO

WWW

This page contains links to websites to help you research issues related to UNEP's work. Our Planet magazine, however, does not endorse the viewpoints of any of the groups to which we link and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information posted on these sites. Rather we hope to provide you with a broad range of opinion and perspectives.

www.thinkatsave.org

Think, Eat, Save: UNEP, FAO and Partners have launched a global campaign to change culture of food waste

www.ipbes.net

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems services

www.unep.org/ccac

Climate and Clean Air Coalition; all the information you need to know about

www.feeding5k.org

Snazzy web site of the Feeding the 5000 food waste campaign

www.thepigidea.org

The Pig Idea campaigns for the recycling of food waste for livestock feed

<http://www.raw.info/impacts/climate-change?gclid=CPms0-igprMCFQzKtAodd3QAtg>

RAW is brought to you by Compassion in World Farming. The organisation was founded over 40 years ago by a British farmer who became horrified by the development of modern, intensive factory farming

<http://www.globalchange.gov>

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) coordinates and integrates federal research on changes in the global environment and their implications for society. The USGCRP began as a presidential initiative in 1989 and was mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act of 1990

<http://www.ucsusa.org>

The Union of Concerned Scientists is the leading science-based nonprofit working for a healthy environment and a safer world. UCS combines independent scientific research and citizen action to develop innovative, practical solutions and to secure responsible changes in government policy, corporate practices, and consumer choices

www.unep.org/greeneconomy/

UNEP's Green Economy Initiative provides a range of advisory services to more than 20 governments around the world. Underpinning all dimensions of the Green Economy Initiative is a focus on robust economic research and policy analysis

www.mdgfund.org/content/environmentandclimatechange

Shows efforts contributing to achieving MDG 7 on environmental sustainability particularly the target of integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing the loss of environmental resources

www.unep.org/resourcepanel/

The International Resource Panel was set up in 2007 to develop holistic approaches to the management of global resources.



TRISTRAM STUART

Winner of 2011 Sophie Prize.
Author of *Waste: Uncovering the Global Food Scandal* (Penguin, 2009),
and founder of Feeding the 5000.

Think Eat Save

Courtesy: Feeding the 5000



John Locke, the 17th century English philosopher, argued that if someone took more food than they needed and wasted it, "he took more than his share, and robbed others." If, on the other hand, he consumed, traded, or even gave away his surplus food "he did no injury; he wasted not the common stock; destroyed no part of the portion of goods that belonged to others, so long as nothing perished uselessly in his hands."

In a globalised food supply chain, the people who depend on the same 'common stock' of resources may live many thousands of miles away: So how do we in developed countries answer for the fact that most countries in Europe and North America waste between a third and a half of their total food supplies from field to fork? Whether it is fresh fruit and vegetables rejected by supermarkets for failing to meet arbitrary cosmetic standards, or manufacturers forced to discard millions of slices of good fresh bread because supermarkets don't like their sandwiches made from the loaf's outer slices, or the waste we all daily witness in our own homes – it represents land, water and other resources that could be put to better use than filling rubbish tips with food.

The connection between food profligacy in rich countries and food poverty elsewhere is neither simple nor direct, but is still real. Cynics will argue that there is no connection between food wasted in rich countries and lack of food on the other side of the world; that famines have more to do with local conditions – such as war or natural disasters – than global shortages. But there has long been a connection, and the 2007-2008 food crisis and more recent price-spikes – partly caused by global shortages of cereals – have made this even more evident. Fluctuations in consumption in rich countries affect food's global availability, impacting directly on the less wealthy's ability to buy enough to survive.

This is most easily demonstrated by cereals – principally wheat, rice and maize – whose global prices determine the cost of food in African and Asian markets, just as in the shopping aisles of the United States



and Europe. The amount that rich countries import and export depends on how much they use – and throw away. If Western countries divert millions of tonnes of cereals into their rubbish bins, there will be less available on the world market. If they stop doing so, there will be more, and it is more likely to be affordable. Particularly when demand outstrips supply, putting food in the bin is equivalent to taking it off the world market and out of the mouths of the starving. Wasting food also uses up the world's limited available agricultural land. If so less food was wasted, the land and other resources used to grow it could be used to grow something else, or not used at all and left as forest or other natural habitat.

There are legitimate objections. Rich countries' demand for food, it is argued, can stimulate production and contribute to the economies of poor nations - and throwing it away increases this. In some circumstances growing a surplus can be necessary, and desirable, to prevent food shortages. But creating surplus food involves a trade-off in terms of land use, resource depletion and stretching supplies – so when ecological or production limits are reached, the costs of waste outweigh the potential benefits.

It is true, too, that the food liberated by reducing waste might merely be bought by other relatively affluent people, for example to fatten more livestock, rather than being eaten by the poorest. But overall, pressure on world food supplies would decrease, helping to stabilise prices and thus improve the condition of the vast majority of poor people.

Millions of people in affluent countries also do not have enough to eat, even while supermarkets throw away millions of tonnes of quality food. One potential solution is for the surplus to be given to organisations like food banks and delivered to people who need it while it is still fresh.

At present all wealthy nations in Europe and North America provide their populations with between 150 and 200 per cent of their nutritional needs - so their shops and restaurants contain up to twice as much food as is absolutely required. If all nations reduced waste and unnecessary surplus so that none supplied its people with more than 130 per cent of its requirements - my book, *Waste: Uncovering the Global Food Scandal* (Penguin, 2009), shows - 33 per cent of global food supplies could be saved, enough to provide for the entire nutritional requirements of an extra 3 billion people. The more recent FAO study, *Global Food Losses and*

Food Waste (2011) comes to similar conclusions using different methods.

Even these staggering figures do not include the savings that could be made if Westerners ate a smaller proportion of cereal-fed livestock products, thus liberating grain inefficiently fed to animals rather than people. Nor do they include: the potential savings from agricultural products wasted in rich nations before they enter the human food supply chain, like potatoes rejected on cosmetic grounds; the diversion of food crops into other non-food uses; the millions of tonnes of fish discarded by fleets each year; or the massive savings that could be made if Europe used its gargantuan piles of food waste to fatten pigs and chickens instead of outlawing this ancient recycling process under misguided animal by-products legislation.

The affluent world is doing on a global scale what Locke warned against in seventeenth-century England, sequestering the world's land and other common resources to grow food that is wasted. In the philosopher's view, this annuls the right to possess both the land and the food grown on it.

A survey in Australia found that 60 per cent of people felt guilty about buying and wasting things like food, while only 14 per cent said they were not much – or not at all – bothered. But rather than getting bogged down in guilt, we should regard the squandering of resources as a magnificent opportunity to reduce our environmental impact, whilst increasing food supplies - and feel empowered by the sense of responsibility. It is a relief, in many ways, that we can enhance the lives of the world's hungry and reduce pressure on land by doing things as easy as buying only the food we eat, and eating whatever we buy.

UNEP at work

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

THE PROBLEM

Kenya is experiencing a steady five per cent annual growth rate. That's the good news. But with that comes an increasing demand for energy, specifically electricity. According to the country's Ministry of Energy, in 2011 electricity demand was at 1,191 megawatts and this is expected to jump to 2,500 megawatts by 2015 and 15,000 megawatts by 2030.

To date, 32 per cent of the energy is generated by fossil-fuelled (diesel) thermal power plants that produce large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the reliance on thermal generation has not only caused negative impacts on the atmosphere but has also increased the cost of electricity in Kenya. So, how to create a balance between meeting the energy demands of a growing nation while protecting its environment?

THE SOLUTION

'Cogen in Africa' is a multi-year initiative that aims to demonstrate the commercial, technical, economic and environmental benefits of an efficient biomass-fuelled cogeneration system. The initiative takes its lessons from Mauritius, where over half of the nation's electricity supply comes from cogeneration facilities. Today, Cogen is helping the privately-owned agro-processing industries across East Africa reduce dependence on fossil-fuel powered stations and carbon emissions.

While cogeneration has for the last 40 years been a reality in a number of agro-industries in Africa, most of them have been operating inefficiently with low-pressure boilers generating low volumes of power and with a limited ability to sell to the national grid.

Cogen's success in cogeneration technology and policies in Mauritius has served as a model for the large-scale deployment of cogeneration in Kenya. The initiative has assisted James Finlay Kenya Limited (JFKL), the largest tea estate in East Africa, to operate a biomass-fired cogeneration facility to reduce electricity consumption from the grid. The JFKL cogeneration plant uses biomass from eucalyptus trees grown on the tea estate to generate both heat and electricity. Cogen is also helping JFKL assess the feasibility of a larger cogeneration plant so that the facility can become grid-independent.



Photo: Cogen

Kakira Sugar Limited (KSL) in Uganda has also benefited from the Cogen in Africa project. Located in Jinja District, KSL is the largest sugar company in Uganda. Cogen has been involved in the expansion of KSL's cogeneration capacity by upgrading the machinery by adding a new more efficient boiler and an additional 30 megawatt turbine.

WHAT UNEP DID?

UNEP and the Global Environment Fund (GEF) engaged in the project through the "Poverty Alleviation through Cleaner Energy from Agro-industries in Africa" (PACEAA), an initiative by the European Commission. UNEP and the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) are the over-arching implementing agencies. UNEP and GEF co-financed the feasibility study for WEKSCOL's cogeneration expansion, thus reducing the financial risk of the project and enhancing the company's willingness to participate.

UNEP played a key role in coordinating an international consortium of partners, who helped to identify, administer, finance and implement the project, which has become an example of South-South Cooperation. The case study has also been published on UNEP's South-South Exchange Mechanism which features cases studies and hosts online discussions and forums on South-South Cooperation specifically related to the environment and sustainable development.

LESSONS LEARNED

There were several challenges to overcome. One was the investment in feasibility studies. Companies are more willing to invest in feasibility studies if the financial risk was shared by international institutions or other partners. Successful feasibility studies can lead to the broad adoption of a technology once it is proven feasible within at least one factory in the region.

Links

Cogen in Africa Initiative: <http://cogen.unep.org/home>
UNEP South-South Exchange Mechanism: <http://www.unep.org/south-south-cooperation/case/>
AFREPREN/FWD, contact Steven Karekezi, Executive Director at afrprepren@africaonline.co.ke or stephenk@africaonline.co.ke

UNEP at work

PROMOTING CLEAN AIR

THE PROBLEM

Finding a taxi in Cairo – Egypt and Africa's largest city -- is never a problem. Totaling 80,000, they are easy to spot. But their vast numbers also contribute to the daily gridlock and their fumes leave driver, passengers and the city struggling for clean air. The taxis are part of the more than 1.5 million vehicles polluting this ancient city of over 17 million people. The transportation sector alone emits 26 per cent of the total greenhouse gases in the country.

Upgrading these taxis, most of which are over 15 years old and suffer from frequent breakdowns, is far too costly for individual drivers.

THE SOLUTION

With the aim to expand Egypt's access to the global carbon trading market as a way to reduce the burden of government subsidies in the energy sector and mitigate climate change, the Egyptian Government targeted the transportation sector where old vehicles were a significant source of carbon emissions.

The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) had at first targeted the country's polluting taxis in a pilot project in 2005 when 763 taxis were upgraded, resulting in a reduction of nearly 26,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent over a 10-year period.

The Egyptian Government, working with the UN Joint Programme of the MDG-F, helped to strengthen the reduction of greenhouse gases by establishing a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Awareness and Promotion Unit within the EEAA to expand the CDM project registration.

As a result, the CDM Awareness and Promotion Unit supported the registration of the 'Vehicle Scrapping and Recycling Programme' – the first CDM transport project in the world—with the goal to reduce CO₂ emissions by replacing old inefficient vehicles with new ones and the scrapping of the old vehicles. After three years in the registration process, the CDM Awareness and Promotion Unit succeeded to formally register the programme with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a carbon credit initiative, making it the first CDM-registered transport project worldwide. In



Photo: UNEP

2012, over 40,000 taxis were replaced with new energy-efficient cars.

WHAT UNEP DID?

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is the technical advisor on environmental issues in the UN Joint Programme in Egypt which incorporates the expertise of FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIDO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The UN Joint Programme recognized that in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Egypt's natural resources had to be protected from the increased pressures of rapid population growth and climate change.

The Joint Programme is combining mitigation and adaptation under one integrated Climate Risk Management (CRM) banner.

LESSONS LEARNED

A major lesson learned is that energy efficient programmes are most successful when there is centralized technical support, like the CDM Awareness and Promotion Unit, within Government. This unit was a key player, able to act as a networking agent to promote carbon trading and at the same time provide a high-level of expertise in obtaining the approval of registration by the UNFCCC.

SUPPORT

The Environment and Climate Change Joint Programmes under the MDG-F are taking place in 17 countries around the world.

For more information on the Joint Programme in Egypt, please see: www.unep.org/drc

People

Lewis Pugh knows oceans. As an ocean advocate and pioneer swimmer he's been to the world's most inaccessible places.

Lewis was the first person to complete a long distance swim in every ocean.

He was the first person to swim across the icy waters of the North Pole and the first to swim across a glacial lake under the summit of Mount Everest. To date, he has pioneered more swims around famous landmarks than anyone else in history.

Says Lewis: "Oceans are a bit like people. Every ocean is different, and to me they have distinct personalities. The Arctic is the black ocean – literally like an inkpot. You put your arm in and your hand just disappears. The Pacific is a rich, royal blue. The Indian Ocean is the most benevolent; it's warm and kind and turquoise. The Atlantic can be rough and cold."

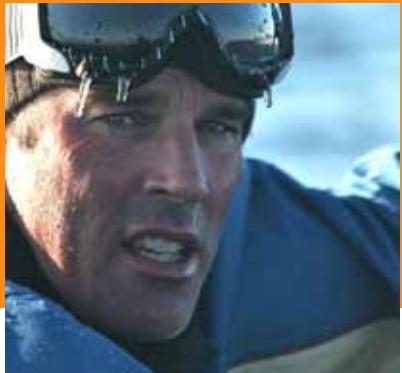


Photo: www.lewispugh.com

His next expedition, the details of which have not yet been made public, will take three years during which he will be campaigning for the oceans - and supporting UNEP's goal of having 10 per cent of the world's oceans designated as Marine Protected Areas.

He told Our Planet: "I know how very privileged I am to have swum in all five oceans. In each one I have seen evidence of how our actions are impacting them. That part is not a pretty sight. I'll never forget the beach of plastic debris in the middle of the Arctic. Thousands of miles (km) from the nearest town, there were sheets of red plastic, pieces of rope, tangles of thrown-away plastic junk.

"But it's the Southern Ocean that gives you a glimpse of what the oceans must have been like before man touched them. It's like an aquatic Garden of Eden, just teeming with penguins and seals and killer whales.

"Wherever you are in the world you will find evidence that we have impacted our oceans. The one thing they all have in common is that they are under threat. But I believe we can change this. I hold fast to my dream of restoring our oceans to their former splendour."

Lewis read law at the Universities of Cape Town and Cambridge before working as a maritime lawyer in London. In 2003, he left to follow his dream: to protect our oceans.

And as a great communicator, he is constantly campaigning on protecting our oceans. Millions have viewed his talks at TEDGlobal. In 2010, the World Economic Forum named him a Young Global Leader.

For more information, see www.lewispugh.com.

Video of North Pole swim: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNmY_EAoXnU



There can't be many top fashion models who have published peer-reviewed scientific papers on contamination of sewage sludge, who will – given a chance - talk a blue streak about nonylphenols and mycorrhizal fungi, and who are developing an interest in a standardized framework for business analysis of environmental externalities. But Summer Rayne Oakes has, does and is. Whereas other models and celebrities have developed concern about the environment after becoming famous figures, she has done things the other way round.

Brought up in Northeastern Pennsylvania in a house surrounded by fields and forest she always had, as she puts it, "an innate passion for nature". For her first show-and-tell she brought a half gallon can of live caterpillars to her kindergarten and tipped them out on her desk, to the "horror" of her teacher and delight of her classmates. At 13 she became the youngest-ever member of the local Scott Township Environmental Advisory Council, and three years later joined her County Conservation District to lead tree planting and restoration of a 5.4 square mile watershed devastated by coal mining. That job also brought her into contact, as it were, with 'biosolids' (a.k.a. sewage sludge) then being encouraged for use on agricultural land: she consulted experts at Cornell University about their suitability, and discovered that the practice was highly controversial. Later matriculating into Cornell, she worked closely with the Waste Management Institute, co-authoring two papers before graduation - but began to feel "more and more suffocated by the insularity of environmental science in academia."

She was concerned above all, she told Our Planet, with "how to effect change". She continued: "I had published very early and was trying to change federal regulations, but realised that very few people would ever read what I had written. And my friends did not understand why what I was doing should matter to them."

Though she had never before been interested in fashion, she decided it could provide the vehicle she needed "to disseminate environmental awareness" explaining: "it seemed so far removed from environmental issues, yet had such a mediagenic platform. If you could make a change in that industry – then you could probably change others". She had the height, and looks, to be a model, and so that seemed to be the place to start, though she chose only to work with companies aligned with her values. As a result of her determination to "trail-blaze values-based modelling" her career took longer to take off: "I was not going to compromise. If you are looking to change the existing system then sometimes it makes sense to take the harder path and stand for something that you believe in". Unlike celebrities whose interest in the environment is "something they do on the side" in addition to their jobs she set about "building it into a career and a way of life."

Similarly, she says: "I don't want to retrofit the industry, but to change the existing system." She wrote a book, Style, Naturally and founded a business, Source4Style, which connects designers with suppliers of sustainable materials in 76 countries. And while appearing in the pages of Elle, Vanity Fair, French Vogue, GQ and other magazines, she has promoted sustainable brands, and worked as an environmental activist to campaign against the exploitation of Canada's Sacred Headwaters, with the Rainforest Action Network in Indonesia, and on the board of Mozambique's Mezimbite Forest Centre.

She recently produced an award winning short environmental film, eXtinction and has been named one of the "Top 10 Green Business Entrepreneurs" by CNBC , one of the "Top Environmental Activists" by Outside magazine, a "Global Citizen" by Vanity Fair, and a "Young Person who Rocks" by CNN.

She went to Rio+20 for an accompanying Fashion Summit, but attests that she is becoming increasingly interested in "the intersection of business and sustainability" and especially in corporate sustainability reporting. "Disclosure of environmental externalities needs to happen for all the millions of businesses in the world. But voluntary disclosure hasn't proven to move the dial. It needs to become mandatory."

A tall order? Maybe. But Summer Rayne Oakes is not short of determination. "If you really want something, the world does not say 'NO' to you unless you let it", she says.

*"Disclosure
of environmental
externalities needs to happen
for all the millions of businesses
in the world. But voluntary disclosure
hasn't proven to move the dial.
It needs to become mandatory."*

Summer Rayne Oakes





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