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Update for the United Nations Environment Assembly

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), has continued to work to implement the objectives set forth during UNEA-2 in the latter half of 2016.¹ UNEA's visions were integrated into several side events of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, which took place in Mexico from 2-17 December 2016 and focused on how to incorporate land, ecosystem, and biodiversity management and protection into the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).² As encouraged by UNEA resolution 2/24 (2016) on "Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands," the Conference held a side event, titled "World's Grasslands and Rangelands at risk: the Role of Pastoralists and Livestock to Conserve Global Biodiversity," to endorse the usage of pastoralism as a means to promote biodiversity conservation.³ As a result of the side event, participants from 27 countries and 44 organizations signed and endorsed the *Cancun Statement* "for increased investment in sustainable pastoralism as a sustainable land-use and livestock-production system."⁴ Furthermore, in light of UNEA resolution 2/13 (2016) on incorporating natural capital to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and monitoring of sustainable development, the Conference also highlighted the importance of sustainable management and mainstreaming of natural capital in Africa to improve ecosystem productivity and resilience.⁵

In addition, the importance of UNEA's participation and contribution to environmental action within the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was recognized by the General Assembly Second Committee.⁶ For instance, during the General Assembly's 71st session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/231 on "Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme."⁷ This resolution draws attention to the role of UNEP in increasing capacity-building, technology accessibility, marine conservation, and analyzing and reporting on global environmental impact.⁸ In addition, it also called for an increase in voluntary funding for the Environment Fund.⁹

In anticipation of the third session of UNEA (UNEA-3) that will take place in December 2017, the UNEA Bureau and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held a preparatory retreat in October 2016 to discuss UNEA's environmental plan and theme for UNEA-3.¹⁰ Proposals for the theme revolved around cleaning the earth from pollution, building future resilient societies, and improving our relationship with nature and restoring ecosystems.¹¹ As a result, based on the input of more than 100 Member States on the proposed themes, the CPR and UNEA Bureau agreed that the theme for UNEA-3 session will be pollution.¹² Currently, the theme is based on the general concept of pollution, and UNEP is encouraging Member States and the international community to concentrate on sharing and submitting suggestions on how to address pollution and on a full title for the theme.¹³ In addition, the retreat encouraged Member States to submit draft resolutions in expectation of the UNEA-3 session based on the chosen theme, pollution, and for those draft resolutions to be "global in focus and actionable."¹⁴

¹ Mwangi, UN Biodiversity Conference Side Events Reaffirm SLM-Biodiversity Synergies, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ FAO, *Sustainable pastoralism key to conserving biodiversity of rangelands and grasslands*, 2016.

⁵ Mwangi, UN Biodiversity Conference Side Events Reaffirm SLM-Biodiversity Synergies, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/71/231)*, 2016, p. 1.

⁷ UN DPI, *General Assembly Takes Action on Second Committee Reports by Adopting 37 Texts (GA/11880)*, 2016.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/71/231)*, 2016, pp. 3-4.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UNEP, *Summary of the 2017 Environment Assembly Preparatory Retreat*, 2016.

¹¹ UNEP, *Discussion Paper for Session 1: Proposed Themes for third Session of the UN Environment*, 2016.

¹² UNEP, *Proposed Themes for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly*, 2017.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UNEP, *Summary of the 2017 Environment Assembly Preparatory Retreat*, 2016. p. 3.

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The United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Cancun, Mexico, focused on environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism. The Conference's objective was to strengthen political and financial efforts to mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It also recognizes the need to ensure the environmental framework is incorporated into social, economic, and cultural policies. These objectives align with UNEA's main themes to protect biodiversity, marine life, and safeguarding our ecosystems.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2017). *Proposed Themes for the 2017 Environment Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://web.unep.org/about/cpr/proposed-themes-2017-un-environment-assembly>

This resource is a portal for delegates to access further information submitted by Member States and stakeholders on the proposed themes for 2017 UN Environment Assembly. The members of the UN Environment Assembly's Bureau together with the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) met in October 2016 to identify UNEA-3's theme and agenda, increase partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and to enhance the role of UNEA in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The theme for UNEA-3 is pollution and the resources found in this source will help delegates gain a greater understanding on the direction that Member States would like the theme on pollution to focus on.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/71/231)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.7). Retrieved 4 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/231>

To ensure environmental stability, the UN General Assembly Second Committee recognized the importance of financing for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and it reaffirmed the commitment by UNEA to mainstream sustainable development in the United Nations system and in the work of civil society and financial stakeholders. The Second Committee also urged Member States to provide financial support for UNEP and to provide access to technology and capacity-building to developing states. The resolution was adopted by the General Assembly and will be critical for delegates to understand the current direction and focus of UNEP and UNEA.

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United Nations Environment Programme. (2017). *Proposed Themes for the 2017 Environment Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://web.unep.org/about/cpr/proposed-themes-2017-un-environment-assembly>

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/71/231)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.7). Retrieved 4 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/231>

I. Combating Illegal Trade in Wildlife

Recent Developments

In recent months, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has actively engaged civil society organizations, the private sector, and representatives of Member States and regional organizations to address the issue of illicit trade in wildlife.¹⁵ Significant recent events include the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES), the Hanoi Conference on Illegal Trade held in Vietnam, and the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) held in Cancun, Mexico.¹⁶

In September 2016, the first Global Partnership Coordination Forum convened in Johannesburg, South Africa.¹⁷ This was organized by the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, in cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), CITES Secretariat, the World Bank, and the World Customs Organization (WCO).¹⁸ Key outcomes of the meeting included commitments to provide training to enhance collective law enforcement mechanisms and capacity building to combat transnational organized wildlife crime.¹⁹

During the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17) from 24 September through 5 October 2016, 3,500 participants representing 152 Member States and civil society agreed to strengthen sustainable management strategies and adopt new measures to protect wildlife.²⁰ CoP17 also acknowledged the emerging challenges posed by rapid advances in technology used for animal poaching.²¹ The use of information and communications technology (ICT) by transnational crime organizations makes it more difficult to trace or intercept illegal trade in wildlife.²² Participants agreed to produce a framework to fight wildlife cybercrime through the establishment of a working group on traceability.²³ This working group will provide guidance and recommendations to organizations producing tracing mechanisms to ensure they generate standardized data that is accessible to all.²⁴ Other notable outcomes of CoP17 include an agreement to close domestic markets in ivory and stricter regulation of hunting trophies.²⁵

In November 2016, 41 Member States and the European Union met during the Hanoi Conference on Illegal and Wildlife Trade to combat illegal trade in wildlife.²⁶ Participants agreed that there is an urgent need to eliminate the demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.²⁷ In order to accomplish this goal, Member States agreed to adopt or amend domestic laws to make illegal trade in wildlife a more serious criminal offence.²⁸ This measure is in line with the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime* (2004), which recommended designating the illicit trafficking of endangered species of flora and fauna as serious criminal activity.²⁹ Further, the Conference highlighted the importance of development efforts, such as ecotourism and engagement of local community groups, to conserve wildlife.³⁰

Another event that occurred in November 2016 was the publication of a portfolio review spearheaded by the World

¹⁵ UN DPI, *UN launches unprecedented #WildforLife campaign to end illegal trade in wildlife*, 2016.

¹⁶ CoP17, *Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in effect after its 17th meeting*, 2016.

¹⁷ CITES, *CoP17 hosts first ever wildlife crime partnerships forum*, 2016.

¹⁸ CITES, *Largest ever World Wildlife Conference hailed as a game changer*, 2016.

¹⁹ CITES, *Wildlife enforcement networks meet to further strengthen collaboration to combat 'industrial scale' crime*, 2016.

²⁰ CoP17, *Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in effect after its 17th meeting*, 2016.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ ICTSD, *CITES hosts largest-ever meet, takes key wildlife trade decisions*, 2016.

²⁴ CoP17, *Draft Decisions on Traceability*, 2016.

²⁵ CITES, *Largest ever World Wildlife Conference hailed as a game changer*, 2016.

²⁶ Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, *About*, 2016.

²⁷ Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, *Hanoi Statement on Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2016.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UNODC, *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto*, 2004.

³⁰ Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, *Hanoi Statement on Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2016.

Bank.³¹ The World Bank document entitled *Analysis of International Funding to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade* aims to assess financing trends and existing funds designated to combatting illegal wildlife trade.³² This analysis will help donor agencies to distinguish critical funding gaps.³³

During the 13th Conference of the Parties to the CBD in December 2016, participants agreed to strengthen efforts to address the over-exploitation of natural resources and the illegal harvesting and trade of endangered species.³⁴ The International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN) also released an update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.³⁵ In December 2016, China committed to ban all ivory trade by the end of 2017.³⁶ This pronouncement was viewed by conservation groups as a "game-changer" in the campaign to protect elephants, since China is the world's largest market in ivory trade.³⁷

Illicit financial flows and corruption in wildlife trade were included for the first time in the agenda of the 17th International Anti-Corruption Conference, which was held in Panama in December 2016.³⁸ Discussion focused on the connection of illegal trade in wildlife to anti-poverty and sustainable development initiatives.³⁹ The conference also emphasized the growing acknowledgement by the international community that illicit trade in wildlife is deeply connected to transnational organized crimes.⁴⁰ On 3 March 2017, the United Nations system will celebrate World Wildlife Day under the theme "Listen to the young voices," which aims to empower and engage youth in wildlife conservation.⁴¹

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In December 2016, 190 Member States adopted the Cancun Declaration, which was named after the Mexican city where the 13th Conference of Parties to the CBD was held. This outcome document highlighted the important role different sectors, such as fisheries, agriculture, forestry, and tourism, have in protecting and conserving biological diversity. The outcome document also explores possible approaches to address the illegal harvesting and trade of wildlife products.

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Seventeenth meeting. (2016). *Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in effect after its 17th meeting*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/dec/valid17/E17-Dec.pdf>

This is the outcome document of the 17th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2016. The conference is a triennial meeting with 152 participating Member States that aims to regulate the international wildlife trade. The outcome document emphasizes the need to strengthen sustainable management strategies and adopt new measures to protect wildlife animals.

Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade. (2016). *Hanoi Statement on Illegal Wildlife Trade*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: [http://iwthanoi.vn/wp-content/themes/cites/template/statement/Hanoi%20Statement%20on%20Illegal%20Wildlife%20Trade%20\(English\).pdf](http://iwthanoi.vn/wp-content/themes/cites/template/statement/Hanoi%20Statement%20on%20Illegal%20Wildlife%20Trade%20(English).pdf)

³¹ World Bank, *New Analysis Shows Scale of International Commitment to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade: Over \$1.3 Billion Since 2010*, 2016.

³² World Bank, *Analysis of International Funding to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2016.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ COP 13, *The Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being*, 2016.

³⁵ IUCN, *New bird species and giraffe under threat – IUCN Red List*, 2016.

³⁶ *China announces ban on ivory trade by end of 2017*, Al Jazeera, 2016.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ TRAFFIC, *Wildlife crime makes debut at International Anti-Corruption Conference*, 2016.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ CITES, *Engaging and empowering the youth is the call of next year's UN World Wildlife Day*, 2016.

The outcome statement of the Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade aims to formulate an action plan that will call for unified action against illegal wildlife trade. The conference is the third of a series of global conferences to address illegal wildlife trade. The action plan on this outcome statement is divided into four areas: eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products, ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents, strengthening law enforcements, and implementing sustainable livelihoods and economic developments for local community groups.

International Anti-Corruption Conference. (2016). *Shared planet, shared responsibility: creating multi-stakeholder alliances to combat wildlife, forest and fisheries crime*. Retrieved 26 January 2017 from:

http://schr.ws/hosted_files/17iacc/15/17th%20IACC_Short%20Session%20Report%20Shared%20Planet.pdf

This is one of the outcome reports in the 17th International Anti-Corruption Conference held in Panama in December 2016. The conference tackled the nexus between the illegal wildlife trade and the illicit financial flows and unsustainable resource exploitation. The report emphasizes the growing acknowledgement by the international community that illicit trade in wildlife is deeply connected to transnational organized crime.

World Bank. (2016). *Analysis of International Funding to Tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25340>

This World Bank portfolio review aims to trace the investment trend and assess the current flow of funding to combat illegal wildlife trade. This portfolio review will serve as a reference to identify future donor commitments and can be used to coordinate future funding initiatives. As emphasized by the World Bank, a global understanding of existing financial contributions, donor trends, and possible investment areas can initiate collaboration to address the emerging challenges of illicit wildlife trade.

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II. Implementation of the Paris Agreement

Recent Developments

In recent months, parties to the 1992 *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and other expert stakeholders in the international community have held events and published multiple reports relating to the implementation of the 2015 *Paris Agreement*; these outcomes will provide a foundation for the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) to build capacity for the successful implementation of the *Paris Agreement*.⁴² The *Paris Agreement* is a universal agreement aimed at diminishing the negative effects of climate change.⁴³ It was the outcome of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the UNFCCC in December 2015.⁴⁴ The 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22), also referred to as the Marrakech Climate Change Conference, convened in November 2016.⁴⁵ Additional relevant developments include consultations for the development of a legal toolkit by international legal experts to support the implementation of the *Paris Agreement* and the publication of the seventh edition of the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) *Emissions Gap Report*.⁴⁶

The 44th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC-44) convened 17-20 October 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand.⁴⁷ Created in collaboration with UNEP, IPCC provides assessments to Member States on the impacts, risks, and options of science related to climate change.⁴⁸ With relation to the *Paris Agreement*, IPCC-44 discussed the relationship between rural and urban areas emissions output and called for a greater understanding of urban development to understand how emission mitigation mechanisms can be implemented effectively across all geographical areas of a Member State.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Panel calls for the development of scientific mechanisms to measure emissions in large cities in order to monitor, report, and verify that Member States abide by obligations under the *Paris Agreement*.⁵⁰

The seventh edition of the UNEP's *Emissions Gap Report* was published on 3 November 2016.⁵¹ The report found that current intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) under the *Paris Agreement* could lead to a global increase in temperature of 3.2 degrees Celsius by 2100.⁵² Therefore, the report calls for an accelerated rate of agreed-upon objectives under the *Paris Agreement* by 2020.⁵³ Building on the previous *Emissions Gap Report* published in 2015, a key finding is that ambitious short-term action is vital for the success of the long-term goals of the *Paris Agreement*.⁵⁴ The report also concludes that there is room for INDCs to be strengthened through non-state actor initiatives.⁵⁵

COP 22 was held in Marrakech, Morocco from 7-18 November 2016.⁵⁶ This meeting also served as the 12th session of the Parties to the *Kyoto Protocol* (1997) and first session of the Parties to the *Paris Agreement* (CMA 1) with each conference adopting its own decisions.⁵⁷ COP 22 adopted two decisions specific to the *Paris Agreement*.⁵⁸ The first decision welcomes the *Paris Agreement*'s entry into force, congratulates Member States on their

⁴² COP 21, *Taking the Paris Agreement forward: Tasks arising from decision 1/CP.21*, 2016.

⁴³ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UNFCCC, *Marrakech Climate Change Conference - November 2016*.

⁴⁶ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁴⁷ IPCC, *Decision adopted by the Panel*, 2016.

⁴⁸ IPCC, *IPCC Factsheet: What is the IPCC?*, 2013.

⁴⁹ IPCC, *Decision adopted by the Panel*, 2016, p. 62.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UNEP, *Emissions Gap Report*, 2016.

⁵² Ibid., p. xii.

⁵³ Ibid., p. xiv.

⁵⁴ Jungcurt, *Emissions Gap Report: We Are on Track for Warming of 3.2°C*, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁵⁵ UNEP, *Emissions Gap Report*, 2016, p. xix.

⁵⁶ UNFCCC, *Marrakech Climate Change Conference - November 2016*.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

accomplishment, and highlights the Agreement's specific calls to action.⁵⁹ The second decision formally establishes the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) with the mandate of making capacity-building efforts more effective and coherent with the needs of the *Paris Agreement*.⁶⁰ Due to the continuously evolving nature of climate change, this Committee is designed to adapt to the emerging needs and issues of Member States implementing capacity building measures that may not be evident at the present time.⁶¹ The Committee work plan for the period of 2016-2020 outlines nine points of action.⁶² Most importantly, the Committee will focus on increased coherence to reduce the duplication of projects, identify gaps and needs of Member States, and promote international cooperation.⁶³ The Committee will be composed of 12 Member States that will meet annually alongside specific representatives of other mechanisms established by the *Paris Agreement*, such as the Financial Mechanism.⁶⁴ CMA 1 decided that the Adaptation Fund (AF) should serve the *Paris Agreement* as a method of financing projects.⁶⁵ The AF was established to finance projects for Member States party to the *Kyoto Protocol*, with a primary focus on climate change.⁶⁶ Expanded to serve the *Paris Agreement*, the AF will finance projects and programs in developing Member States that are easily susceptible to the negative effects of climate change.⁶⁷ Although the AF has specific origins of funding, article 9 of the *Paris Agreement* calls for a global effort to help finance climate change projects.⁶⁸ Furthermore, articles 9 and 10 specifically calls for developed Member States to provide sufficient financial and technological resources to developing Member States in order to promote the implementation of the Agreement.⁶⁹

From 1-2 December 2016, a group of legal experts met in the United Kingdom to consult on the development of a legal toolkit for Member States to use and follow when implementing the *Paris Agreement*.⁷⁰ This toolkit will address how Member States, United Nations (UN) entities, civil society organizations, individual experts, and the private sector can collaborate on the legal needs and climate change priorities of Member States in relation to the obligations of the *Paris Agreement*.⁷¹ This consultation was a stepping-stone to strengthening policy and regulations to ensure specifics of the *Paris Agreement* are abided by.⁷² An example of a specific regulation called for in the Agreement is ensuring that global temperatures do not rise above 1.5 degrees Celsius.⁷³ Furthermore, this legal toolkit will help ensure Member States national needs and capabilities are taken into consideration when facilitating the implementation of the *Paris Agreement* outlined in article 15.⁷⁴ From a legal perspective, implementation through legislation provides accountability and certainty while tailoring to the specific needs of individual Member States.⁷⁵

Annotated Bibliography

The Commonwealth. (2016, December 2). *Global collaboration on climate change legal toolkit*. Retrieved 9 January 2017 from: <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/global-collaboration-climate-change-legal-toolkit>
This press release summarizes the collaboration shown by the international community in creating a legal toolkit to aid Member States in implementing the Paris Agreement. This collaboration is a fundamental example of various actors pooling knowledge and resources to explore the legal needs of Member States under the Paris Agreement. It is important for delegates to understand the

⁵⁹ COP 22, *Preparations for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (-/CP.22)*, 2016.

⁶⁰ COP 22, *Paris Committee on Capacity-building (-/CP.22)*, 2016.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² COP 21, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015 (FCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1)*, 2016, p. 11.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ COP 22, *Paris Committee on Capacity-building (-/CP.22)*, 2016.

⁶⁵ CMA 1, *Matters relating to the implementation of the Paris Agreement (-/CMA.1)*, 2016, p. 2.

⁶⁶ UNFCCC, *Adaptation Fund*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁷⁰ The Commonwealth, *Global collaboration on climate change legal toolkit*, 2016.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, p. 19.

⁷⁵ The Commonwealth, *Global collaboration on climate change legal toolkit*, 2016.



way policy can be strengthened at the national and international level and this proposed toolkit exemplifies how such collaboration can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-first session. (2016). *Taking the Paris Agreement forward: Tasks arising from decision 1/CP.21* [Report]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/cop/application/pdf/overview_1cp21_tasks_.pdf

This document neatly displays all of the tasks that need to be completed following the adoption of the Paris Agreement. The document outlines what entity is responsible for completing each task and an estimated timeline for completion. Furthermore, it links each task to a paragraph in the Paris Agreement, so delegates are easily able to navigate between documents when conducting their research. It is important for delegates to understand the depth and complexity of implementing a universally-agreed upon treaty; this document highlights such complexities and allows delegates to research what entities their Member States are associated with and what tasks the current timeline is calling for.

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-second session. (2016). *Paris Committee on Capacity-building (-/CP.22)* [Decision]. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/marrakech_nov_2016/application/pdf/auv_cop22_i13_pccb.pdf

The Paris Committee on Capacity Building is a newly established mechanism to address current and future needs of Member States in continuously evolving capacity-building efforts. This decision outlines the mandate, structure, and powers of the Committee. Furthermore, this document recalls previous decisions that outline a work plan for the Committee. It is important that delegates understand not only the structural importance of capacity building as it relates to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, but also what the international community has already established as a plan of action for this Committee.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *The Emissions Gap Report 2016*. Retrieved 10 January 2017 from: <http://web.unep.org/emissionsgap/>

This new edition of the Emissions Gap Report includes updated calculations, figures, and projections based on scientific data collected since the publication of the previous report in 2015. Due to the continuously changing nature of emissions outputs and the need to acknowledge whether obligations under the Paris Agreement are having an effect on emission rates, this updated report is important for delegates to retrieve updated data and statistics. Divided into six chapters, the report highlights key trends, the role of non-state actors, and the role of energy efficiency while including statistical data and analysis throughout.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *Marrakech Climate Change Conference - November 2016* [Website]. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: http://unfccc.int/meetings/marrakech_nov_2016/meeting/9567.php

This website links delegates to all the adopted decisions at the Marrakech Climate Change Conference, which includes both the 22nd session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first session of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. Since a formal outcome document has not yet been published, it is necessary for delegates to research individual decisions to draw conclusions and trends across the three conferences. This website also provides links to past conferences and individual press releases and statements from Member States to further their research.

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Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-first session. (2016). *Taking the Paris Agreement forward: Tasks arising from decision 1/CP.21* [Report]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/cop/application/pdf/overview_1cp21_tasks_.pdf

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Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-second session. (2016). *Preparations for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (-/CP.22)* [Decision]. Retrieved 8 January 2017 from: http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/marrakech_nov_2016/application/pdf/auv_cp22_i4_eif.pdf

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Jungcurt, S. (2016, November 7). Emissions Gap Report: We Are on Track for Warming of 3.2°C. *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 10 January 2017 from: <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/emissions-gap-report-we-are-on-track-for-warming-of-3-2c/>

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III. Sustainable Use of the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources

Recent Developments

Since September 2016, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has adopted several resolutions pertaining to the sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources. General Assembly resolution 70/303 established the agenda and structure of the upcoming high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Ocean Conference), which will be held from 5 to 9 June 2017 in New York.⁷⁶ General Assembly resolution 71/123 encouraged Member States to effectively implement the 1995 *United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks*.⁷⁷ General Assembly resolution 71/124 designated 2 May as World Tuna Day, confirming the world's appreciation of the value of tuna as not only a fish, but also a source of livelihood.⁷⁸ The General Assembly also adopted resolution 71/257 on "Oceans and the law of the sea."⁷⁹

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) held its 31st General Meeting from 2-4 November 2016 in Paris, France, and decided upon its action plan for the next two years.⁸⁰ ICRI decided to place an emphasis on how important coral reefs and other related ecosystems are in combatting climate change, which will be achieved by focusing on engaging local communities and civil society actors through educational programs.⁸¹ ICRI will also focus on communication and knowledge sharing with the international community by sharing the negative effects that mechanical destruction can have on coral reefs, as well as monitoring the state of coral reefs to provide and develop better management systems for coral reefs.⁸²

Other notable developments include the "Roadmap 2017 for Healthy and Productive Oceans," which was agreed on by the European Commission and the UN Environment Programme in December 2016.⁸³ The roadmap acts as a pivotal step as it organizes joint activities and support for the implementation of marine policies to address pressures such as pollution and marine litter.⁸⁴

Looking to the future, the Ocean Conference will take place in June 2017 and will coincide with World Oceans Day.⁸⁵ The President of the General Assembly held a two-day preparatory meeting on 15-16 February 2017.⁸⁶ World Oceans Day is a global day to celebrate the ocean and raise awareness of conservation efforts.⁸⁷ World Oceans Day is organized by the Ocean Project, which noted that although 2016 brought various challenges for ocean sustainability, there were also several triumphs.⁸⁸ The Ocean Project recognizes that youths make up 40% of the world population and sees them as an integral part of sustaining the oceans for now and the future.⁸⁹ In order to engage youth in this process, the World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council was created.⁹⁰ The Council's aim is to

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Modalities for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (A/RES/70/303)*, 2016.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (A/RES/71/123)*, 2016.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *World Tuna Day (A/RES/71/124)*, 2016; Parties to the Nauru Agreement, *United Nations vote confirms World Tuna Day*, 2017.

⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Oceans and the law of the sea (A/RES/71/257)*, 2016.

⁸⁰ International Coral Reef Initiative, *Action plan on the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat (2016-2018)*, 2016.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ European Commission & UNEP, *Roadmap 2017 for Healthy and Productive Oceans*, 2016.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ UNCTAD, *Briefing on the United Nations high-level oceans conference 2017: The trade and development perspective*, 2017.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ World Oceans Day, *About Us*, 2017.

⁸⁸ Mackiewicz, Youth Making Waves for Ocean Conservation, *The Ocean Project*, 2016.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

produce culturally appropriate information and materials in a number of languages to help spread the message to other youths in an accessible way about the importance of ocean sustainability.⁹¹

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http://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/pdf/world_oceans_roadmap.pdf

This Roadmap is pivotal as it highlights a partnership between the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme on issues pertaining to oceans and marine resources. This roadmap will act as a key resource for delegates as it will guide them through the objectives of this initiative for Healthy and Productive Oceans, which is noted as contributing to partnerships needed to achieve stronger global commitments. The roadmap focuses heavily on policies pertaining to marine pollution.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2017). *Briefing on the United Nations high-level oceans conference 2017: The trade and development perspective* [Website]. Retrieved 11 February 2017 from:

<http://unctad.org/en/Pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=1260>

The Ocean Conference will take place June 2017 and focus on SDG 14. The Conference will bring together key stakeholders with the aim of advancing and building upon the work already undertaken by the international community to address SDG 14, but also to identify new ways in which UN Member States, intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations, as well as the scientific community can address and implement Goal 14. This website provides a succinct and clear overview of the events leading to the Ocean Conference and the current preparatory conference. Of particular use for delegates is that this source provides a look into how other UN organizations prepare for the conference through briefings and support.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments (A/RES/71/123)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.24 and Add.1). Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/123>

This resolution focuses on the sustainability of fisheries and the fishing industry. It provides delegates with a good insight into the work of Member States to date both on a national and international level. It also recognizes the urgency for states to implement the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, especially when it comes to areas with depleted stocks and the need to replenish them. In addition, the resolution will give insight for delegates into the shift of reliance of the international community to more scientific advice in adopting, developing and implementing conservation and management measures for fisheries, which highlights the importance for communication and database creation.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Oceans and the law of the sea (A/RES/71/257)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.26). Retrieved 2 January 2017 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/257>

This resolution further highlights the need for Member States to effectively implement the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982). This will be useful for delegates as the resolution identifies a number of areas which need to be addressed by the international community such as capacity building and providing support by a number of means to developing Member States so they can effectively work to implement the conventions. The resolution also emphasizes the need to focus on strengthening South-South cooperation as an additional way to build capacity as a cooperative mechanism to further enable countries to set their own priorities and work to addressing this issues.

⁹¹ Ibid.



United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *World Tuna Day (A/RES/71/124)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.27 and Add.1). Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/124>

2 May has been designated by the UN General Assembly as World Tuna Day. This resolution is significant to note for delegates due to highlighting the important role that tuna and fishing have in global society. In particular, the resolution recognizes that tuna acts as a vital resource both for nutrition and subsistence to Pacific Small Island Developing States. The adoption of this resolution provides an insight into the importance of tuna to our economies, and will help delegates to address challenges to its long-term sustainability.

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