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Policy issues: state of the environment

South-South cooperation in achieving sustainable development

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

By its decision 25/9, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme requested the Executive Director to report on progress made in promoting South-South cooperation in achieving sustainable development. The present report has been prepared in response to that request. It summarizes the activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme, the progress achieved and proposed activities in the context of the implementation of the decision.

* UNEP/GC.26/1.

I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. The Governing Council may wish to consider the adoption of a decision along the lines suggested below:

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 25/9 of 20 February 2009 on South-South cooperation for achieving sustainable development,

Recalling also the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013, as welcomed by its decision SS.X/3 of 22 February 2008 on the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013,

Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on South-South cooperation in achieving sustainable development,¹ which summarizes the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme to implement decision 25/9 and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

II. Background

2. The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building establishes South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for the implementation of capacity-building and technology support activities in response to well-defined country priorities and needs. Specifically, it underscores the importance of South-South cooperation and stresses the need to intensify efforts directed towards institutional capacity-building, including through the exchange of expertise, experiences, information and documentation between institutions of the South, in order to develop human resources and strengthen the institutions of the South.

3. The medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also emphasizes the need to ensure that capacity-building and technology support run through the implementation of all priority areas and constitute an integral part of the UNEP programme of work. Specifically, the strategy calls for enhanced implementation to be pursued through a number of processes and partnerships, including facilitation of South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for implementing capacity-building and technology support projects on the ground, which will entail engaging with a wide range of partners and organizations.

4. In keeping with these policy provisions, UNEP Governing Council decisions 24/12 and 25/9, relevant General Assembly resolutions and commitments made under various global and multilateral frameworks, UNEP is committed to promoting South-South cooperation as a means of supporting capacity-building efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition through systematic partnership-building and the exchange of expertise, experiences, best practices and knowledge between experts and institutions of the South.

5. Chapter III below provides summaries of activities by UNEP in implementing Governing Council decision 25/9.

III. Progress and current status

A. Implementation of South-South cooperation activities in the context of the programme of work

6. In implementing its programmes of work for 2008–2009 and 2010–2011, UNEP has progressively employed a range of South-South cooperation approaches in the delivery of capacity-building and technology-support activities. While the scope, focus and expected outputs of these activities vary by subprogramme, the overall thrust of the approaches employed reflects deliberate efforts to use expertise, knowledge and network resources available in countries of the South to deliver the capacity-building objectives of these activities.

7. In particular, and in direct response to the operative paragraphs of decision 25/9, UNEP initiated consultations with a broad spectrum of organizations, institutions and networks to forge new strategic partnerships and alliances to support the delivery of planned capacity-building activities. Those consultations also focused on building on and strengthening existing partnerships, especially for

1 UNEP/GC.26/9.

continuing project activities that were initiated in the programme of work for 2008–2009, including in terms of planned expansion and follow-up work.

8. Formal cooperation arrangements with potential partners, including United Nations agencies, regional and subregional organizations, national institutions and the scientific community, were established as part of the development and implementation of capacity-building project activities in the UNEP programme of work for 2010–2011. While the entry points and scope of the individual contributions of the partnerships vary by project, the value of the partnerships is reflected in the range of outputs generated in the form of specialized data support, training and related capacity development, education, expertise (including tools and methodologies), outreach materials and network resources (including mechanisms for sharing knowledge, information and experiences). Details of the partnerships and their contributions to the process can be found in document UNEP/GC.26/INF/14.

9. In addition, since 2006 UNEP has maintained and strengthened its interaction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, which is mandated to coordinate United Nations inter-agency policy dialogue to advance South-South cooperation in the United Nations system. In 2009 and 2010, UNEP held regular consultations with the Special Unit, particularly focusing on the UNEP contribution to and participation in relevant global South-South cooperation processes and events and, more specifically, on the input of UNEP to meetings of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation. UNEP provided substantial inputs to the report of the Secretary-General to the High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation,² which was held in Nairobi from 1 to 3 December 2009. UNEP also participated in the conference, with a representative delivering a keynote statement during the high-level segment. Furthermore, UNEP made substantive inputs to a publication on small island developing State success stories, which was published jointly by the Small Island Developing States Unit of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

10. In addition, UNEP co-organized a climate change and environment forum as part of the Global South-South Development Expo, held in Washington, D.C., in December 2009. For the 2010 Expo, which took place in Geneva in November, UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization were designated to co-organize the same forum, including with regard to the identification and presentation of high-profile demonstrable initiatives or programmes that had provided successful solutions to climate change and environment problems through effective leadership, innovation and partnerships, keynote speakers, panel members and presenters of innovative South-South solutions.

11. Other key global events in which UNEP has participated include a United Nations inter-agency meeting on South-South cooperation held in New York in February 2010, and a High-level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development held in Bogotá in March 2010. These events and processes provided a forum for UNEP to strengthen its interaction and cooperation with United Nations agencies and other relevant regional and subregional organizations, and also to explore opportunities to establish new cooperation arrangements in support of its South-South cooperation work.

12. As part of efforts to establish formal cooperation agreements with existing mechanisms and centres of excellence active in South-South cooperation such as the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation, UNEP representatives visited the Centre to explore the potential for concluding a formal cooperation agreement. Although the Centre enjoys a broad regional mandate in promoting South-South cooperation in social and economic development, its current operational capacity is not sufficient for it to deliver its mandate effectively and, more specifically, to generate and sustain technical support programmes. UNEP therefore did not deem it appropriate to establish formal arrangements with the Centre at this juncture but could cooperate on a project-by-project basis to make use of the Centre's facilities for hosting regional workshops and conferences supported by UNEP.

13. The paragraphs below highlight select examples of some South-South and triangular cooperation activities undertaken by UNEP divisions and regional offices. They illustrate the range of partnerships and cooperation arrangements developed to deliver capacity-building activities.

1. Supporting action on climate change through a network of national climate change focal points in South-East Asia

14. The overall objective of this activity is to support South-East Asian Governments in meeting their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The network's specific objectives include: improving the development and exchange of knowledge; fostering interactions and exchange of experiences, information and best practices among climate change professionals; providing means to climate change professionals to conduct joint analysis of climate change issues and options of particular interest or concern; expediting the development of good policies; and accelerating the transfer of climate-friendly technologies.

15. The activity, which began in 2009 and is scheduled to be completed in 2011, has resulted in the establishment of cooperation arrangements with 10 national Governments in the region (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) and partnerships with regional and national centres of excellence (e.g., the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Centre for Energy and the Asian Institute of Technology).

16. Through the network, member countries have gained a better understanding of new climate change developments and the perspectives of other countries in the region. The network has also strengthened regional cooperation in the context of the continuing climate change negotiations. South-East Asia is one of the world's fastest growing regions, with a rising demand for energy driven by economic and demographic growth; accordingly, its global share of greenhouse-gas emissions is likely to increase. In this context, the network's primary focus is on raising awareness and strengthening understanding of the benefits from taking on mitigation and technology issues, both in terms of economic and social returns and of the potential reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions. Targeted training sessions have sought to fill some of the related capacity gaps in order to support the region and its countries in tackling climate change sustainably. Considering the key role that energy institutions and professionals play in climate change mitigation activities, especially in promoting low-carbon technologies and implementing energy efficiency and conservation initiatives, the network is strengthening dialogue, synergies and collaboration between energy institutions and professionals and climate change offices at the national and regional levels.

17. Key activities of the project that have incorporated specific South-South cooperation approaches include:

- (a) Providing training on and exchanging experiences in devising and implementing national measures for responding to mitigation opportunities, e.g., energy efficiency auditing, efficiency standards and labels;
- (b) Examining opportunities to expand the scope of the Clean Development Mechanism;
- (c) Forming subnetworks at the national and subregional levels on thematic priorities such as energy efficiency and power quality;
- (d) Developing a broad range of promotional and awareness-raising communication and outreach materials;
- (e) Supporting studies and/or analyses that enable countries better to participate in the Framework Convention on Climate Change discussions and negotiations;
- (f) Analysing and translating the implications of relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change into national actions.

18. Some of the network's achievements are:

- (a) Organization of three meetings in 2009 and 2010 to bring together national and international experts to provide information and knowledge on topics of common concern at the national and regional levels;
- (b) Development and dissemination of several knowledge products, including an in-depth analysis of the status of and barriers to Clean Development Mechanism projects in South-East Asian countries; three introduction briefs on specific Framework Convention on Climate Change terminologies and concepts (sectoral approach; nationally appropriate mitigation actions, energy service company); an analysis of South-East Asian countries' energy data; a stocktaking of South-East Asian energy institutions; and an assessment of existing capacity to conduct impact, vulnerability and adaptation assessments in the region;

(c) Organization of a capacity-building workshop in Chang Mai, Thailand, in May 2010 focusing on energy-efficient technologies for climate change mitigation. The main objectives were to disseminate information on new mechanisms to mitigate climate change; to highlight potential greenhouse-gas emission reductions through the implementation of energy-efficient technologies; to demonstrate the application of these technologies in multiple areas; and to create awareness among policymakers and professionals of member countries;

(d) Designing of a first-generation website³ that went live in February 2010. The website supports the dissemination of information on climate change and technology transfer and on activities carried out by the network and other stakeholders in the region. It also includes a section dedicated to network members, with an online discussion forum specifically to facilitate discussion on topics of common concern (e.g., strengthening the Clean Development Mechanism in the region and the climate change negotiations).

19. The network will continue to support climate change focal points in the three priority areas (exchange of information and experiences; generation of knowledge to support mitigation activities; and targeted capacity-building).

2. Strengthening national capacities for sustainable resource management in Latin America and the Caribbean

20. The overall goal of the project is to enhance understanding and strengthen the capacities of key Latin American stakeholders for coordinated sustainable resource management in response to identified priority needs. The project, which began in October 2009 and will conclude in September 2011, also aims to support the development and replication of good practices in the region. It is part of the UNEP subprogramme on resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production.

21. While the overall management and administration of the project lie with UNEP, a number of cooperation arrangements and partnerships have been established with United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Cooperation arrangements are also being made with regional and national partners, particularly national Governments, the scientific community, private organizations, non-governmental organizations and other experts in the region. The overall project partnership, which comprises some 110 stakeholders drawn from 30 countries in the region, also includes international experts serving as members of the project's technical advisory committee.

22. The project is being implemented through an approach that employs South-South cooperation modalities in the delivery of key activities. Some activities include: broadening the scope and focus of public consultations on relevant components, especially on such issues as the importance of current extraction and use of scarce natural resources in the region; implementing capacity-building activities using expertise drawn from the region; conducting assessments of critical resources; undertaking reviews of assessment findings by local experts; implementing pilot projects; conducting training activities for national experts and trainers; formulating recommendations on existing and potential sustainable resource management initiatives for Governments; and disseminating results to various target audiences at the national, regional and global levels.

23. Key outputs to be generated by the project include networks of relevant stakeholders with increased awareness, knowledge and the necessary skills for sustainable resource management; access to tools, and policy design; opportunities for application and scaling-up of sustainable resource management in the region; recommendations with specific follow-up action lines incorporated into national plans.

24. The outputs and lessons learned from the current phase of the project will feed into the formulation of a follow-up phase with a focus on the implementation of additional pilot projects; the development of training materials specific to each critical resource; the incorporation into national action plans of the recommendations arising from the first phase; and the establishment of linkages with similar initiatives from other regions to enhance methodological approaches through shared experiences and good practices.

3 www.unep.org/climatechange/sean-cc.

3. Cooperation programme on environment

25. Since 2008, UNEP has worked with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China in a partnership to enhance South-South cooperation between Africa and China. A cooperation agreement was signed by the two partners in November 2008 to build the capacity of African countries in the fields of ecosystem management, disaster reduction, climate change adaptation and renewable energy.

26. Under this programme, four demand-driven projects are being implemented in Africa. They focus on enhancing the capacity to monitor the shared water resources of Lake Tanganyika (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia); reuse of wastewater for forest plantations (Egypt, Kenya and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya); a drought early-warning and adaptation system (the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Zambia); and rainwater harvesting in Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania).

27. The key partner in this programme is the Ministry of Science and Technology of China and associated institutes: the Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology; the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Tongji University in Shanghai; the Institute of Soil Science and Fertilizer, Shanxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences; and the Gansu Research Institute for Water Conservancy.

28. The objectives of these projects are accomplished through training workshops, a visiting scholar programme, on-the-job training and demonstration pilot projects. The programme is a platform for African and Chinese experts to exchange and share knowledge, ideas and experiences. The projects, funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, are jointly implemented by the technical institutes in China and the participating African countries. The role of UNEP is to coordinate, facilitate and provide technical support for the implementation of the projects in partnership with the national teams and Chinese institutes.

29. Through project activities, and with the involvement of five Chinese institutions, more than 200 experts from 12 African countries have been trained in various aspects of water management. Four African experts received short-term scholarships (between two and three months) and two long-term scholarships (more than one year). Laboratory equipment will be sent to Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania to enhance the capacity of their laboratories monitoring water quality.

30. Priorities identified in the UNEP programme of work for 2012–2013 will be incorporated into the next phase of projects. A steering committee for the programme will be established to improve communication between the Ministry of Science and Technology of China and UNEP and harmonization between continuing and planned projects.

4. Global technology needs assessments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change

31. With Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding of \$9 million, UNEP launched a global technology needs assessment project in November 2009 to assist developing-country parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to identify and analyse technology needs as the basis for building portfolios of environmentally sound technology projects and programmes. The project, which is expected to be completed in April 2012, is currently providing targeted financial and technical support to an initial group of 15 developing countries, enabling them to carry out in-depth analyses and prioritization of technologies, identify potential barriers hindering the transfer of prioritized technologies, assess potential market opportunities at the national level and explore and realize prospects for South-South cooperation in technology transfer. An additional 21 countries eligible for support were selected in September 2010, bringing the total number of project beneficiaries to 36. National technology action plans will be prepared as a follow-up to the technology needs assessments in all countries.

32. The key project partners include GEF, the Government of Norway, the Expert Group on Technology Transfer under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, national Governments, the UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development, and regional centres (ENDA-Tiers Monde (Senegal), Fundación Bariloche (Argentina), Libélula (Peru) and the Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand)).

33. With the support of the UNEP Risoe Centre and the regional centres, the first group of 15 countries has initiated and largely completed preparatory actions. Specifically, formal institutional structures for project implementation have been established in all countries; operating guidelines to govern activities and inter-agency relationships between national stakeholders engaged in technology needs assessment work have been agreed upon, documented and disseminated in several countries; awareness of technology needs assessments has been raised by coordinators through direct and indirect engagement with relevant stakeholder groups through workshops and other mechanisms; and

technology needs assessment workplans have been finalized in the initial set of countries, mainly by national technology needs assessment teams in consultation with national stakeholders.

34. Building on the institutional foundation established in the 15 initial countries, technical support activities have been launched, including the completion and dissemination of a technology needs assessment guidebook and wiki software, both of which were developed jointly with UNDP. The project website⁴ and intranet are operational and the preparatory work has been initiated to create a multi-country network whose key functions include facilitating experience-sharing, information flows and professional relationships and catalysing the development of viable South-South cooperation agreements on technology transfer. Regional centres are currently delivering the necessary capacity-building and information dissemination services for network members, covering technology development, transfer, acquisition and deployment with regard to efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

35. During September 2010, regional capacity-building workshops were held in Dakar, Bangkok and Lima for African, Asian and Latin American country technology needs assessment teams, respectively. The main objective was to build the country teams' capacity to conduct high-quality technology needs assessments and develop technology action plans using the guidebooks and tools. Topics covered included methodologies and tools to prioritize technologies, multicriteria analysis, financial assessments of technologies and the facilitation of effective stakeholder consultation.

36. By the end of the project, all 36 beneficiary countries are expected to have identified and prioritized through country-driven participatory processes technologies that can contribute to the achievement of mitigation and adaptation goals, while national sustainable development goals and priorities continue to be met (technology needs assessment); identified barriers hindering the acquisition, deployment and dissemination of prioritized technologies; and developed technology action plans specifying activities and enabling frameworks to overcome barriers and facilitate the transfer, adoption and dissemination of selected technologies in the participating countries.

5. Caribbean Biological Corridor

37. The overarching goal of the project is to establish a cooperative platform for all initiatives being developed or that could be developed for the Caribbean Biological Corridor, thereby boosting the long-term integration of conservation actions among the three small island developing States of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, with Jamaica as an observer, and ultimately contributing to biodiversity preservation at the global level. The corridor represents a first step in establishing a conservation alliance in the Caribbean based on a human-nature relationship. A tripartite political agreement has been concluded between the three Governments and key partners in the implementation of the project include national Governments, the World Food Programme, UNDP, the European Union, cooperation agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities and the private sector.

38. The project in itself is a trinational South-South programme that actively promotes and facilitates collaboration between the three participating States. Some key activities include the establishment of a network of protected areas for the Dominican Republic and Haiti; the creation of livelihood options as a means of contributing to poverty alleviation; the development of human resources; and the establishment of a regional institutional mechanism for planning and managing shared resources between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

39. A ministerial meeting was held in July 2010 in the Dominican Republic, at which the ministers of the participating States agreed on various issues, including the upcoming launch of the project office in the Dominican Republic and the establishment of a training centre in Haiti. Cuban and Dominican experts will work closely with their Haitian counterparts in evaluating technical aspects relating to the establishment of the centre.

40. The project will, among other things, build the participating countries' capacity to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes; establish a cooperative multinational platform for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity through environmental rehabilitation and the development of alternative livelihood options; and facilitate dialogue on the sustainable management of national and transboundary natural resources. Some outputs include:

(a) Conclusion of agreements between the participating States and Jamaica, as observer, including the declarations of Barahona and Santo Domingo;

4 www.tech-action.org.

- (b) Leveraging of complementary resources and contributions from the participating countries, the concept of the Corridor is regarded as a framework for environmental and natural resources management in the insular Caribbean;
- (c) Adoption in August 2009 of an action plan that serves as the overall framework for the development of the Corridor, including for resource mobilization;
- (d) Approval by the European Commission of €2,774,805 for the implementation of a project on the Corridor;
- (e) Establishment of the trinational project office;
- (f) Convening under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment of the Dominican Republic of meetings of cooperation agencies and donors of the resident agencies in the Dominican Republic in support of the Corridor;
- (g) Convening of national consultations for the Corridor for Cuba (May 2010) and the Dominican Republic (July 2010)
- (h) Convening of the first technical advisory meeting and the first ministerial meeting for the Corridor in July 2010.

6. Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative

41. The overall objective of the initiative is to launch and promote transboundary biodiversity and cultural conservation, ecosystem management, sustainable development and climate change adaptation within the Kailash sacred landscape in China, India and Nepal. It is part of the UNEP climate change and ecosystem management subprogrammes. The preparatory phase of the initiative began in August 2009 and will be completed in January 2011.

42. In line with the UNEP strategic and operational guidelines to integrate South-South cooperation into continuing UNEP activities, through the initiative strategic partnerships have been established with key institutions in the Himalayan transboundary landscape and strong institutional linkages for capacity development for transboundary biodiversity conservation in China, India and Nepal have been forged. The initiative is jointly implemented by UNEP and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, with funding support from the Government of Norway. More recently, new support has been provided directly to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation for the monitoring component of the project. Key national partners include the Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development and the Ministry of Environment and Forests in India; the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development China Committee and the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences in China; and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation in Nepal.

43. Key outputs of this implementation phase include a regional cooperation framework agreement bringing together the member countries; a comprehensive ecological monitoring plan; and an assessment of community-based adaptation and co-management options. The project's key achievement to date has been the bringing together of the three countries to resolve a shared ecological, social, economic and cultural issue and in preparation for the inevitable impacts of climate change.

44. The initiative is envisaged as a long-term scheme based on regional transboundary cooperation and ecosystem management approaches, and has been designed according to a phased implementation cycle. It is in its preparatory phase (August 2009–January 2011), which is laying the groundwork and enabling policy environment for the ensuing start-up phase (February 2011–July 2012). The first implementation phase will take place from August 2012 to July 2017 and the second from August 2017 to July 2023. The scope of the follow-up phases will be expanded to include other contiguous countries in the Kailash sacred landscape region.

7. Enabling a paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

45. The UNEP-GEF project on enabling a paradigm shift on monitoring and assessment under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, is a capacity-building initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of the Convention. The implementation of the project and, more specifically, the delivery of capacity-building activities at the regional, subregional and national levels are a collective effort by UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention, the UNEP World Conservation

Monitoring Centre and a wide range of partners with recognized mandates in sustainable land management and extensive experience in the implementation of the Convention.

46. The key partners include 14 regional and subregional reference centres in Africa (the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, the Agrhymet Regional Centre of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa, the Climate Prediction and Applications Centre of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia), Asia (the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, the secretariat of the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics and the Centre for People and Forests), Latin America and the Caribbean (the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute) and the Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe (the Joint Research Centre). The reference centres facilitate and supervise the capacity-building activities in their respective regions using South-South cooperation modalities and provide technical support to parties for the implementation of the Convention.

8. Capacity-building support for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity

47. This is a global capacity-building support activity focused on the development of legal, administrative, technical and related institutional measures to meet the obligations of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also provides support for the implementation or operationalization of national biosafety frameworks.⁵ The key outcome of these interventions is the rapid ratification of the Cartagena Protocol by parties to the Convention. The major partners in this activity are the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, GEF and its implementing agencies, national Governments and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, which provides specific inputs to the development of training materials on the Biosafety Clearing House.

48. These interventions have generated useful and innovative materials and systems that are used extensively by countries of the South as public goods and services to help meet their obligations under the Cartagena Protocol. They include toolkits, case studies, peer review documents, technical instruments and the highly innovative regional advisory system for the Biosafety Clearing House. Future plans and interventions will continue to support the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol guided by the new Strategic Plan of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2011–2020), with its specific guidance and workplans on key thematic interventions to facilitate decision-making; requests to extend Biosafety Clearing House support to all eligible parties; and the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

9. Support for the new Asian-African strategic partnership to promote Asian-African cooperation in the field of environmental law

49. The objective of the project is to build the capacities of developing countries in Asia and Africa to develop, implement and enforce environmental law and build the necessary institutional structures and arrangements. It is also aimed at building capacities for legislative and administrative actions further to mainstream environmental protection into national development policies and processes in a sustained manner in order better to address environmental problems of global significance while pursuing sustainable development. A key component concerns the establishment of cooperation networks comprising Government bodies and officials, the judiciary, legal practitioners, academics and other relevant stakeholders in Asian and African countries to share experiences and good practices, including in environmental law and policies. It is guided by the Bandung Roadmap for Advancement of Environmental Law.

50. The project, which was scheduled for completion in 2010 is funded by the Government of Japan and is being implemented by UNEP in partnership with Governments, regional development banks, regional networks for judiciary and enforcement, international centres of excellence (such as the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation), expert and research institutions, universities, networks of lawyers and law professors, relevant United Nations bodies (such as UNDP and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), intergovernmental organizations (such as the International Criminal Police Organization and the World Customs Organization), and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

51. The main activities of the project are divided into two clusters. The first included the provision of advisory services and technical assistance to several developing countries in Asia and Africa to develop and strengthen environmental law further and support its implementation and enforcement. The creation of hubs that can accumulate experience through such activities is an important component of this cluster. This action is specifically aimed at promoting the sharing of experiences, good practices, success stories and lessons learned with other developing countries. The second cluster focuses on networking through capacity-building activities targeted at government officials and other stakeholders, including the exchange of practical environmental law information and experiences and information accumulated through the first cluster of activities.

52. The combined efforts of these two clusters will catalyse cooperation between Asia and Africa to strengthen their capacities and competence to make informed decisions on the development of effective implementation and enforcement of national legislation and the achievement of internationally agreed environmental objectives.

10. Mainstreaming environment and sustainability in African universities partnership programme

53. The main objective of the programme is to promote the integration of environment and sustainability concerns into teaching across disciplines, research, community engagement and management in universities and other tertiary institutions. Established in 2004, the programme is operational in 90 universities across 42 countries in Africa.

54. The programme, in line with the Bali Strategic Plan, focuses on engaging with universities to influence policy by building competencies and providing technology support at the global, regional and national levels. It also contributes to the promotion of the environment component of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) and the implementation of the UNEP programme of work as part of the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013. The initiative is being replicated in the Caribbean under a partnership programme on mainstreaming environment and sustainability in Caribbean universities that brings together universities in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago and has similar objectives but themes tailored to suit the Caribbean.

55. The programme will also be replicated at the global level through the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability. In particular, UNEP, in conjunction with the Tongji Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development at Tongji University, convened in Nairobi in November 2010 a consultative meeting with the member African universities of the mainstreaming environment and sustainability in African universities partnership programme to share experiences and develop a mechanism for collaboration in the area of education for sustainable development to fast-track sustainable development in Asia and Africa. The Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability aims to achieve the following outcomes:

(a) Expanded network of universities on South-South and North-South modalities that integrate ecosystem management systematically into a wide range of disciplines, faculties, programmes and courses in universities, focusing on the integration of these concerns into university policies, management practices, community engagement and student activities;

(b) Knowledge networks to inform and support key stakeholders in the reform of policies and the implementation of programmes for renewable energy, energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse-gas emissions;

(c) Multidisciplinary scientific networks strategically connected to policymakers and development practitioners to integrate environment into development processes. National and regional information networks will be established and used as demonstration projects to support regional-level actions on chemical-related priority issues.

11. Triangular cooperation exchange programme to strengthen institutional capacities for integrated environmental assessment and reporting

56. Through a triangular cooperation exchange programme jointly supported by UNEP and Fredskorpset a reciprocal exchange of young professionals between Norway and African organizations was facilitated. This South-South/North-South triangular cooperation was intended to strengthen institutional capacities for integrated environmental assessment and reporting within the framework of the Africa Environment Information Network.

57. The institutions involved in this exchange programme in 2009 and 2010 were the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, based in Harare; the Ugandan National Environment Management Authority; the Environmental Council of Zambia; Environmental Information Systems

Africa, based in Pretoria; the Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe, based in Cairo; and UNEP/GRID-Arendal. The last-mentioned also acted as the overall coordinator of the exchange programme. The cooperation arrangements included the engagement of Norwegian institutions specifically to provide specialized technical support to participating institutions in Africa. The exchange activities ran for 12 months (primary programme), and six months (young people's programme).

58. Within the primary programme:

- (a) One National Environment Management Authority staff member was seconded to GRID-Arendal in a South-North arrangement to gain skills in project planning, the development of graphics for environmental reporting and the use of desktop research tools to support report preparation processes in the context of integrated environmental assessment and reporting;
- (b) One National Environment Management Authority staff member was seconded to the Environmental Council of Zambia to gain skills in field-based monitoring related to the implementation of environmental impact assessment regulations and practices;
- (c) One Environmental Council of Zambia staff member was seconded to the National Environment Management Authority in a South-South arrangement to acquire on-the-job training in desktop publishing and outreach material design in the context of integrated environmental assessment and reporting;
- (d) Environmental Information Systems Africa received one staff member from GRID-Arendal in a North-South arrangement to support the development of a network database and the design and preparation of a newsletter, and to assist with preparations for the Environmental Information Systems Africa Conference that took place in Kampala in October 2009.

59. For the young people's programme component:

- (a) Five young people attached to GRID-Arendal spent time with participating African organizations to gain skills in working in a multicultural environment and to develop products for young people in the context of integrated environmental assessment and reporting. Thus, two spent time with the National Environment Management Authority of Uganda, one with the Environmental Council of Zambia, one with the Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe, and one with Environment Information Systems Africa. Along the same lines, one young person from Africa was posted to GRID-Arendal;
- (b) Ten young people participated in exchanges between the six participating institutions to gain skills in working in multicultural environments and to develop products for young people in the context of integrated environmental assessment and reporting.

60. The next phase of the programme is planned for 2010–2011 and will focus on four subregional centres collaborating in the Africa Environment Outlook process.

61. Through the triangular cooperation exchange programme and building on the cumulative capacity generated through this approach, UNEP, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal, is undertaking the following work in Africa:

- (a) Producing the publication "Zambia: Atlas of Our Changing Environment" with financial support from Norway;
- (b) Producing the publication "Zambezi River Basin: Atlas of Our Changing Environment" with financial support from Norway;
- (c) Providing support to the Ethiopian Environment Information Network (GRID-Arendal). An assessment of national capacity to establish and operate the network has been undertaken, followed by a national stakeholder workshop to agree on data exchange protocols.
- (d) Providing support to the Rwanda Environment Information Network (GRID-Arendal). An assessment of the national capacity to establish and sustain the operations of the network has also been undertaken and a national stakeholder workshop to agree on data exchange protocols is being organized.

62. Detailed descriptions of the full range of continuing and planned UNEP South-South cooperation activities including the above examples are contained in document UNEP/GC.26/INF/14.

B. Development of policy guidance and updated operational guidelines on South-South cooperation

63. In response to paragraph 2 of Governing Council decision 25/9, UNEP has developed policy guidance and updated its operational guidelines to facilitate and enhance the systematic integration of South-South cooperation into the UNEP programme of work in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan.

64. The policy guidance was developed and operational guidelines updated on the basis of extensive documentary research, consultations and analysis of major events and processes relevant to South-South cooperation. Interviews were conducted with UNEP staff members at headquarters in Nairobi, at the six regional offices and at several UNEP outpost and liaison offices (Paris, Geneva and New York). Permanent representatives to UNEP and experts on South-South cooperation were also consulted. Extensive research was conducted into relevant trends in South-South cooperation at the global, regional and subregional levels and into current developments within the United Nations system and intergovernmental entities, including the Group of 77 and China.

65. The policy guidance and updated guidelines are also informed by Governing Council decisions, the medium-term strategy and the continuing United Nations system-wide reforms, including what is known as the “Delivering as one” initiative, which is intended to promote greater coordination and coherence in the delivery of services by the United Nations. An expert group meeting was convened by UNEP to review and help refine the draft guidance document and updated guidelines.

66. The guidance provides direction for:

(a) Stronger policy and programming support for South-South cooperation, specifically in determining how South-South cooperation as a key delivery mechanism is to be integrated into each thematic priority in the new matrix approach to programming, as described in paragraph 71 below;

(b) Strengthening and facilitating opportunities for exchanges between countries through the regional offices and in close collaboration with the United Nations country teams;

(c) Strengthening engagement in United Nations country team processes to enhance the integration of environmental sustainability into United Nations country programming processes, including United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks;

(d) Working to initiate and sustain South-South cooperation approaches in the UNEP programme of work with adequate resources that will be built into the biennial programming processes;

(e) Strengthening the coordination structures and capacities for South-South cooperation at UNEP headquarters and in the regional offices, including the provision of relevant training, awareness-raising and incentives for enhanced delivery on South-South cooperation;

(f) Establishing strategic partnerships and participation in multilateral forums to promote South-South cooperation on environmental matters and to leverage synergies and complementary technical expertise and resources for identified South-South cooperation activities;

(g) Adopting and implementing comprehensive communication and outreach tools to ensure coherent and effective information exchange within UNEP and among other relevant stakeholders on, among other things, expertise, experiences, knowledge, methodologies and tools, technologies, best practices, opportunities and resources.

(h) Consistent follow-up and reinforcement through the design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of South-South cooperation activities in the UNEP programme of work to ensure that stated commitments are duly delivered.

67. The policy guidance is currently being revised to make it more practical following a review by the senior management team in October 2010. The updated guidelines are also currently being reviewed internally in UNEP and will undergo further iterations of internal review and refinement. The finalized policy guidance and updated operational guidelines will be ready in time to guide and facilitate the development and implementation of capacity-building and technology-support project activities in the context of the UNEP programme of work for 2012–2013 and beyond.

C. South-South exchange mechanism

68. In response to Governing Council decision 24/12, UNEP embarked on a phased approach to developing an exchange mechanism as a critical component of efforts to advance South-South cooperation in the work of the organization and among key partners. The proposed mechanism is intended to facilitate the identification, development and promotion of opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between countries and regions of the South in support of their environment and

sustainable development work. The mechanism will also facilitate South-South-North triangular cooperation.

69. In particular, the mechanism's key function is to facilitate and promote the exchange of a wide range of capacity-building information on available technologies, expertise, experiences, methodologies, tools and toolkits, guidelines, best practices, advisory services, training opportunities and appropriate networks, particularly in countries and regions of the South. The mechanism will therefore serve to match available South-specific solutions to priority capacity-building needs identified in countries of the South.

70. The current phase of development of the exchange mechanism has generated significant outputs. A detailed analysis of system requirements has highlighted identified linkages with relevant UNEP databases and systems. Interoperability with other databases, systems and mechanisms has been built in to automate information access and exchange, and functional applications have been designed that address the priority modules (such as organizations, technologies, expertise, experiences, opportunities, networks and events) including a facility for partners and other identified users to query the database and produce reports for various uses. The next phase will focus on identifying data sources, developing content and enlarging envisaged partnerships; developing an operating and user manual to facilitate further development and use of the mechanism; conducting staff training on various aspects of the system; and developing a strategy to operationalize and promote the use of the mechanism.

IV. Tackling challenges

71. UNEP has adopted a matrix approach to programming that is intended to foster and enhance greater coherence in the development of the UNEP programme of work. In particular, this approach will tackle the residual internal coordination difficulties that have often impeded a coordinated approach to developing and implementing coherent packages of capacity-building initiatives. Traditionally, individual UNEP divisions have implemented programmes at the regional and national levels, often in a top-down manner, which has in turn posed challenges to the systematic integration of South-South cooperation modalities into identified capacity-building projects.

72. The operationalization of the South-South cooperation policy guidance and updated operational guidelines in early 2011 will also tackle this challenge and ensure that the implementation of South-South cooperation activities incorporates systematic approaches to follow up on results achieved and lessons learned and that the impacts of such results and lessons are fed into subsequent programme of work processes.

73. In addition, UNEP has instituted measures to strengthen its regional presence and the capacities of regional offices, something that will be instrumental in the accelerated implementation of South-South cooperation work. These efforts will be supported by the formal designation of existing regional office staff to coordinate and provide oversight for the coordinated delivery of South-South cooperation activities that have been or will be incorporated into relevant subprogrammes and projects. While the actual implementation of South-South cooperation activities will be carried out by the regional offices, UNEP delivery on its global South-South cooperation obligations will continue to come from UNEP headquarters. Coordinated UNEP inputs to and participation in relevant global South-South cooperation processes and conferences, the organization of a solution forum on climate change and environment as a key component of the annual Global South-South Development Expo, the production of the Secretary-General's biennial report on South-South cooperation for the General Assembly, and UNEP inputs to the United Nations inter-agency South-South cooperation meetings and initiatives are some key tasks that will continue to be coordinated from UNEP headquarters.

74. UNEP will continue to develop the South-South exchange mechanism specifically to enhance its ability to meet requests to facilitate the matching of available South-specific expertise and knowledge to expressed needs. Specifically, UNEP will continue to leverage support from internal resources and extrabudgetary sources for the further development, operation and maintenance of the exchange mechanism.

V. Conclusion

75. The UNEP South-South cooperation policy guidance and operational guidelines, which are expected to be finalized and become operational in early 2011, will serve as agency-wide reference tools for, and substantive inputs into, UNEP efforts systematically to apply South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for the delivery of the objectives laid down in the Bali Strategic Plan. They will provide clear direction for addressing, in the short and medium terms, the challenges that have hitherto impeded the swifter coordinated and coherent integration of this delivery mechanism into the UNEP programme of work. The translation of the provisions of these reference tools into specific actions will be supported by a combination of policy directives and the systematic application of the practical step-by-step tools and modules articulated in the operational guidelines.

76. Future versions of the guidance document and operational guidelines will be informed by future trends in the UNEP programme of work processes, iterations of the medium-term strategy, relevant decisions of the Governing Council, emerging trends in global processes, synergies and benefits accruing from strategic partnerships with key South-South cooperation initiatives, together with lessons learned from and the impacts of continuing practical applications of South-South cooperation approaches in the organization's work. The combined results of these initiatives will progressively lead to coordinated and coherent approaches systematically to integrate South-South cooperation modalities into the work of UNEP.
