

UNEP 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



United Nations Environment Programme

The Mission of the United Nations Environment Programme is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

The UNEP 2008 Annual Report is also available online at www.unep.org.

Published January 2009

© 2009 UNEP

ISBN: 978-92-807-2007-9,

Job number: DCP/1133/NA

Produced by the UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information

Director of Publication: Satinder Bindra

Writer/Project coordinator: David Simpson

Layout: Jennifer Odallo-UNON/Publishing Section Services/Nairobi

Pre-press: UNON/Publishing Section Services/Nairobi

Cover photo: © Robert Postma

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UNEP in 2008

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UNEP Governing Structure

The UNEP Governing Council was established in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1975 (Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation). The Governing Council reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. Its 58 members are elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. Full information on the composition, functions and responsibilities of the UNEP Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, formally established and strengthened as a subsidiary organ to the Governing Council by decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997, is available at www.unep.org/governingbodies.

Bureau Members of the UNEP Governing Council

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H.E. Mr. Jan Dusik
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Members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2008–2011

A. Breakdown by alphabetical order (indicating terms of office)

Algeria *	Croatia **	Mali **
Angola *	Cuba **	Mauritius **
Antigua and Barbuda *	Czech Republic *	Mexico **
Argentina *	Democratic Republic of the Congo *	Monaco **
Australia *	Fiji **	Netherlands **
Austria *	Finland **	Niger **
Bahamas **	France *	Pakistan *
Bangladesh **	Germany *	Republic of Korea *
Belarus **	Guinea **	Romania *
Belgium *	Haiti *	Russian Federation *
Benin **	Hungary ***	Saudi Arabia **
Botswana *	India **	Somalia **
Burundi *	Indonesia *	South Africa *
Canada *	Iran (Islamic Republic of) **	Spain **
Chile *	Israel **	Thailand *
China *	Italy **	Tunisia **
Colombia **	Japan *	Tuvalu **
Congo **	Kazakhstan **	Uganda *
Costa Rica **	Kenya *	United States of America *
		Uruguay *

* Members whose terms expire on 31 December 2009.

** Members whose terms expire on 31 December 2011.

*** On 23 July 2008 at the 115th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Hungary announced its intention to relinquish its seat on the Governing Council as from 31 December 2008, in favour of Serbia, in accordance with the rotation agreement within the Eastern European group. An election was conducted at that same meeting, as a result of which Serbia was declared to have been elected a member of the Governing Council for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2011.

Message from the United Nations Secretary-General

As we look back on a year of multiple crises, it is striking to note how strongly environmental themes feature. Soaring food prices brought intense focus not just on the issues of agriculture and trade but on the inflationary role of biofuel production. Wildly fluctuating crude oil costs illustrated once again our dependence on the fossil fuels that are causing climate change. Finally, the short-sighted economic vision that has precipitated the current financial turmoil is also bankrupting our resource base.

We are devouring our natural capital at ever increasing rates. Future prosperity and stability means rethinking how we exploit the planet's natural assets. Just as governments are calling for tighter regulation in the finance sector, and at the same time digging deep into their pockets to prevent further instability, so a growing number of political and business leaders are advocating innovation and investment in a new 'green' economy.

The defining issue for many is climate change – not just because it presents a multitude of very real threats, but because it provides tangible opportunities to make progress on a wide range of sustainable development issues. By pursuing a green economy based on efficient and equitable resource use we can not only cut down greenhouse gas emissions and protect essential ecosystems, but reinvigorate national economies, improve human well-being and achieve many of the targets agreed by the international community at the turn of the Millennium.

Nobody claims this will be easy, or that it will happen overnight. But neither is it unrealistic. Wherever one looks in the world, one can



see industrial innovation and political leverage being applied in the cause of environmental sustainability.

The United Nations Environment Programme is playing an increasingly significant leadership role in this movement. This annual report shows how UNEP is building partnerships and momentum to build a global Green New Deal that can combat climate change and address the many interlinked environment and development challenges of the 21st century.

I commend the organisation and its hard-working staff for another year of achievement and I look forward with confidence to its contributions in 2009, a year in which we must make significant progress in putting in place the essential elements for tackling the underlying causes of climate change.

Rapid reform, unmasking myths and challenging the status quo

By Achim Steiner



2008 was a year in which UNEP made serious and significant progress on several broad fronts, set against a backdrop of tumultuous events in the global economy to which the organisation responded creatively and courageously in launching its Global Green New Deal and Green Economy initiative. These two concepts crystallise the best current thinking on how to translate sustainable development into an actionable agenda, putting environment fairly and squarely at the centre of global affairs.

Before looking out, however, one needs to look in. Since 2007, UNEP has embarked on wide-ranging reflection and reforms to equip the institution for the challenges and opportunities that are unfolding. In 2008 this gathered pace and maturity with several important developments and milestones reached.

The adoption of a Medium Term Strategy for 2010–2013 underpinned by six priority areas is among those, and one which was achieved with a new level of transparency and cooperation between UNEP, Member States and other stakeholders. It will make UNEP a stronger and

better focused organisation, able to deliver more effectively on behalf of governments and in support of the ‘One UN’ system as a whole.

The mainstreaming of UNEP’s ability to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan for technology support and capacity building, not least in the area of poverty alleviation and via the organisation’s enhanced partnership with UNDP, also defined 2008.

UNEP’s work with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements has also been strengthened and streamlined this year, including a recruitment drive in the regional offices – one among many tangible outcomes of a stronger strategic presence in the regions.

These and the wide range of other institutional reform achievements, highlighted in more detail on pages 8 and 9, have not come a moment too soon. The food, fuel and financial crises of 2008, which have turned into a full-scale economic crisis as we enter 2009, have brought into sharp focus the vulnerability of the structures this century has inherited from the 20th, and the sharp gulf that has emerged between what is value and what is speculation.

In many ways they have also exploded some well-entrenched myths – myths that have all too often perpetuated the status quo in terms of policy planning, and which have stifled or arrested creative thinking and innovative responses. For example, in the space of less than 12 months oil prices soared to nearly \$150 a barrel and then collapsed to under \$50. If the global economy can withstand such dramatic price swings, it can surely withstand the more modest costs of combating the far greater threat of economic disaster that unchecked climate change will bring.

Indeed, one wonders why a simple \$10 or \$20 climate change levy on a barrel of oil might not be the way to slice through the current complexity of the UN climate change negotiations and assist in securing a serious deal in Copenhagen in 2009. The OECD consumes around 60 per cent of 18 million barrels of oil sold annually. A levy of \$10 to \$20, up to an oil price of perhaps \$100, could raise \$180 billion to \$360 billion a year – money that could be invested in averting and adapting to global warming while also bringing stability to the clean technology and renewable energy markets.

Perhaps this could be eventually matched with another \$300 billion – the sum invested in energy subsidies, much of which is on fossil fuels and spent by developing economies. An assessment by UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch published in 2008 underlined that, contrary to popular belief, these subsidies rarely reach the poor but benefit the better off, the energy companies and the suppliers of equipment. Not only would a progressive cancelling of such subsidies boost the global economy by 0.1 per cent, but it would also

reduce greenhouse gas emissions by perhaps 6 per cent annually.

During the last climate negotiations in Poznan, Poland, another myth was challenged. The heads of three major renewable companies – First Solar, Suntech and Solar Century – announced that solar power would be grid-competitive not in 20 or 30 years but in as little as between three and five years.

According to the International Energy Agency, wind power is already more competitive than coal in many locations. And a new study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is suggesting that, for less than the price of a new generation 'clean-coal' power station, the United States could commercialise geothermal power, setting the stage for 100 gigawatts of base-load electricity from hot rocks under North America.

A UNEP-Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, which has been testing advanced drilling and seismic systems in East Africa, was also completed in 2008. It has demonstrated that geothermal wells in the Rift Valley are capable

In February 2008, the UNEP Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum convened in the Principality of Monaco. The focus of the gathering, which brought together some 150 governments, was Mobilising Finance for Climate Change. The UNEP Finance Initiative convened a roundtable on Harnessing the Power of Private Finance.



REWARDING EXCELLENCE – THE UNEP BAOBAB AWARDS

Launched in 2008, the UNEP Baobab Awards celebrate the most committed and dynamic members of staff from across the UNEP family. There are five categories:

- Environmental Service Award, open to all staff
- Managerial Service Award, open to staff at levels P3/L3-USG supervising at least two professional staff
- Professional Service Award, open to staff from P1/L1 to P5/L5 and UN Volunteers
- Support Service Award, open to staff from G1 to G7
- Team Award, open to any team of two or more individuals working on a specific project.

The 2008 UNEP Baobab Staff Awards winners were:

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE: CHRISTIAN LAMBRECHTS
Christian is from Belgium and has been in UNEP for 15 years. Currently he works in the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA). Outside UNEP, he is involved in a number of trusts and NGOs, including the Elephant Research Fund of the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Forests Working Group and Kipini Wildlife and Botanical Conservancy Trust.

MANAGERIAL SERVICE: ELIZABETH MREMA
Elizabeth Mrema is from Tanzania and this is her 14th year with UNEP. She is currently a Senior Legal Officer and Chief of the Biodiversity and Land Law and Governance Unit in Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELG).

FINALISTS: Cristina Boelcke, Director of the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC); Ahmed Djoghlaif; Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Fanina Kodre-Alexandre, Head of the Internet Unit in the Division of Communications and Public Information (DCPI); Asif Ali Zaidi; Programme Manager for the Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, National

Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Afghanistan.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE: CHIZURU AOKI
Chizuru Aoki, from Japan, first joined UNEP as Junior Professional Officer in 1993. She currently works in the Shiga (Japan) Office of the International Environmental Technology Centre within the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE). She coordinates the Iraqi Marshlands project and other water and technology related initiatives.

FINALISTS: Nelson Kimanzi, a UN Volunteer in the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI); Naomi Poulton, Editor, DCPI; Ashbindu Singh, Regional Coordinator for DEWA in Washington, DC., USA; Onesmus Thiong'o, Fund Management Officer for DRC and the Regional Office for Africa (ROA).

SUPPORT SERVICE: ROY KANAI
Roy Kanai is Kenyan and works in DCPI. Since 2006 he has been the Personal Assistant to the Director.
FINALISTS: Mary Mbugua, Administrative Assistant, DCPI; Grace Mogaka, DEPI; Jacinta Obonyo, Strategic Implementation Team (SIT); Sylvio Oodoomansail, Administration Service, DTIE.

TEAM AWARD: UNEP KABUL TEAM
Since 2003, the close-knit UNEP Kabul Team has been responsible for the implementation of the UNEP's institutional development and capacity building programme for environmental management in Afghanistan. The Kabul office is part of the DEPI Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch.
FINALISTS: Billion Tree Campaign Team, DCPI; GEO Team, DEWA; CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) Team; West Asia Compliance Assistance Programme Team;



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