



REPORT OF THE

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

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Executive Summary:

UNEP is the principal UN body in the field of the environment, assisting governments to address global, regional and national environmental challenges. Its mandate was reinforced at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and through the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want” and respective paragraph 88. As a follow up to the Rio+20 Conference, UNEP has been actively engaged with stakeholders in numerous events and online discussions to discuss the development of new mechanisms to promote transparency and effective engagement of Civil Society including Indigenous Peoples. First proposals will be discussed in multi-stakeholders dialogues during the First Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council which will take place from 18-22 February 2013 in Nairobi.

Following the UN-PFII recommendation to UNEP in 2006 and a process of external and internal discussions within the organization, UNEP has endorsed its Indigenous Peoples Policy Guidance in November 2012, which will support UNEP staff in its engagement and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their issues in its Programme of Work in an effective manner.

In addition, this year’s report to the UNPFII provides an overview of UNEP’s most relevant projects and programmes in relation to Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Peoples’ issues. It focuses on the suggested themes of education, health and culture as well as the African continent as well as introducing new activities at global or regional level. The report provides updates of projects and relevant recommendations made to UNEP individually or as a partner UN agency.

A. UNEP Activities as They Relate to the 2013 Proposed Thematic Priorities of the UN-Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Health, Education and Culture as well as Other Environmentally Related Topics of Interest:

1. Education for Sustainable Consumption

As an effort to address issues of equitable, sustainable consumption and production in its work with governments and other relevant stakeholders, UNEP is working towards ensuring that education for sustainable consumption (ESC) respects the importance of indigenous knowledge and recognizes alternative lifestyles. Through activities on ESC, UNEP encourages the act of listening to, learning from and caring for knowledge and ways of living which are different from our own. UNEP promotes ESC that is aimed at finding viable solutions built on both innovation and traditional knowledge.

2. Environmental Management of the Iraqi Marshlands

In southern Iraq, the Iraqi Marshlands, surrounding the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, constitute the largest wetland ecosystem in the Middle East. But in spite of being of enormous environmental, historical, and socio-cultural significance, they have been damaged extensively since the 1970s.

By 2003, the Iraqi Marshlands had been almost entirely destroyed, with over 40,000 indigenous Marsh Arabs displaced. In response, UNEP's Support for Environmental Management of the Iraqi Marshlands Project commenced in August 2004. Priorities included addressing marshland water quality and management needs to protect human health, livelihood and the ecosystem. Sound environmentally interventions were required to meet the needs of Indigenous People returning to an area of damaged ecosystems. The UNEP project facilitated strategy formulation, monitored marsh conditions, raised the capacity of Iraqi decision makers, and provided water, sanitation and wetland management options.

Following the short-term intervention during the post-conflict period, UNEP and UNESCO jointly implemented a project to develop a long-term and sustainable preservation and management plan in accordance with criteria for the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The project aims at protecting the outstanding values of the Iraqi Marshlands, their rich biological diversity supported by the vast wetland ecosystem as well as the culture of the indigenous Marsh Arabs, whose unique tradition and lifestyle have closely interacted with the surrounding environment for millennia. Further info on the initiative can be found in "Fresh Water for the Future – A synopsis of UNEP activities in water": www.unep.org/pdf/Water_Report_2012.pdf. Project Website: <http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/IraqWH/index.html>

3. Harmful substances and Hazardous Waste - Minimizing Impacts of Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste on the Environment and People:

The Quick Start Programme (QSP) of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) encourages African Countries to submit proposals to promote sound management of chemicals. UNEP's Regional Office for Africa (ROA) has initiated programs in the region to increase access to and sharing of information, lessons learnt and best practices within the continent, on the management of harmful and hazardous chemicals. It also supports capacity building activities in the negotiation of legally binding instruments to reduce risks to

human health and the environment and helps the member states to strengthen their legal and regulatory frameworks in addressing national priorities. Activities and pilots in the management and disposal of hazardous waste have been initiated in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and in Kenya.

4. Health and Environment in Africa

Concerned that over 23% of deaths in Africa (more than 2.4 million each year) are attributable to avoidable environmental risk factors, with particular impacts on the poorest and the most vulnerable, African Ministers of Health and Ministers of Environment adopted the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa in 2008. It represents today the umbrella framework upon which African countries and their development partners address coherently, the environmental determinants of human health and ecosystems integrity. The implementation of the Libreville Declaration has started to yield clear results at the policy, programmatic and institutional levels and has brought a new and dynamic impetus for inter-sectoral coordinated actions. It has created new possibilities for a more rapid and effective response to national and continental environmental threats. To leverage the necessary institutional arrangements, ministers created the Health and Environment Strategic Alliance (HESA) in Luanda in 2010. Under the HESA more than 22 Country Task Teams (CTTs) were established. They have been so far the new driving force for health and environment inter-sectoral action at country level. The CTTs reflect representation from all interested ministries, academia and research institutions, development partners and civil society. As such, it provides an opportunity to Indigenous Peoples to engage effectively in this process to agree on the national and continental priorities on health and environment. Please see <http://www.unep.org/roa/hesa/Default.aspx>

5. Heavy Metals and Indigenous Populations

Mercury is a global environmental, health and social issue, spanning over many areas including products and wastes, Chlor-alkali industry, coal, non-ferrous metals mining, artisanal and small-scale gold mining, healthcare settings and dentistry, and cultural uses. Once released into the environment, mercury travels long distance, persists, biomagnifies and bioaccumulates in the food chain. Artisanal and small scale gold mining is the most common sector using mercury that could impact on indigenous populations. Women and children are most vulnerable to the health impacts of mercury. The recently adopted text of the Minamata Convention on Mercury pays special attention to indigenous communities because of the biomagnification of mercury and contamination of traditional foods. The Minamata Convention on Mercury has provisions for control of mercury in artisanal and small scale gold mining, trade and supply, products and processes, emissions and releases, storage and waste. Once implemented, these control measures could contribute to protecting indigenous populations from the hazards and risks of mercury. <http://unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2702&ArticleID=9373&l=en>

6. The Environment and Climate Change Window under the MDG-F initiative

UNEP is the convenor for the Environment and Climate Change window under the MDG-F initiative and has worked with all UN agencies on 17 UN Joint Programmes that tackle climate change impacts in Afghanistan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal and Turkey. The MDG-F initiative, which was funded by the Spanish Government, seeks to address the impacts of climate change worldwide on poor communities and find solu-

tions that ensure sustainable development at the country level. Rural indigenous communities in the southern Andean highlands of Peru's Cusco and Apurímac regions have been hit hard by climate change. Endemic poverty has meant that these remote communities cannot afford a bad harvest. Yet, in recent years, sudden changes in weather are impacting traditional crops like potato, maize and quinoa - a grain high in proteins and other valuable nutrients. The communities depend heavily on the radio as a source of information. With this in mind, the UN Joint Programme on Environment and Climate change launched a radio broadcast popularly known as "Pachamanchista Munakusun" ("Nurturing Our Land") to build awareness about climate change and adaptation measures. The show airs daily in Quechua and Spanish, to encourage families and farmers to identify local problems and propose ways for adapting to the new living conditions climate change brings. The broadcasts also motivate farmers to implement adaptation measures such as water harvesting, reforestation with native species, protection of biodiversity and prevention of forest fires and overgrazing.

People share successful experiences in using adaptation measures such as crop diversification; traditional knowledge regarding indigenous plants and crops that are more resistant to the changing climate and higher temperatures; shifting planting to match changing rain patterns; and growing crops in different ecological niches to test their resistance. The solutions to the identified problems, the lessons learnt as well as the replication options and recommendations regarding this initiative can now be found in Seeds of Knowledge, a booklet that compiles 24 solutions, or lessons learned, from the Joint Programmes, which was launched at COP18, Doha. To download the booklet please use: <http://i.mp/KnowSeeds>

7. Resource efficiency - Promoting Resource Efficiency and Reducing Adverse Impacts of Consumption and Production

Through the scientific Panel for Sustainable Resource Management independent scientific assessments on sustainable use of natural resources will be conducted to inform policies on the sustainable use of scarce resources and the benefits of efficient, clean and safe industrial production methods. Work is ongoing in collaboration with UNIDO and UNDP in strengthening the capacity of the National Cleaner Production Centres and RECP activities with Industries in four countries. The support to regional and national processes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) through various programmes under the Marrakech Task Forces and the 10 year Programme of Action is also progressing well with projects related to Eco-labeling, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Procurement, Buildings and Construction. The Private sector is mobilised to stimulate the demand for resource efficient goods and services, setting appropriate market signals to remove market distortions, advancing unified and credible tools and certification schemes i.e. the Africa Eco-labeling mechanism and the African Beverage Industries Water Savings Initiative (ABIWSI). Tools are developed to advance the RESCP and Green Economy agenda in the region. The Africa Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ARSCP) has scaled up awareness SCP in Africa by facilitating the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences on SCP initiatives in Africa.

8. Engagement with Indigenous Communities on the Impacts of Environmental Contamination on Public Health: Ogoniland Assessment (UNEP, 2011)

Beginning in 2009, UNEP undertook a 14 month assessment of the environment and public health impacts of oil contamination in Ogoniland in the Niger Delta. Community engagement with indigenous populations occurred

throughout the assessment process. Local knowledge concerning areas of contamination by oil as well as consent to land and waterways proved to be vital to the study. Between November 2009 and January 2011, more than 23, 000 people participated in 264 formal community meetings. Meetings were followed up with a series of sensitization sessions or secondary meetings and a Community Consultation Committee was composed to foster open discussion with community members. In addition to assessments of oil contamination of groundwater, surface water, sediment, fish, and vegetation, an assessment of the impacts on air pollution and public health were also undertaken. Prior to the collection of medical records, the public health team participated in a series of focus group discussions to understand community concerns about the effects of oil. Oral interviews were also conducted with health care workers and other key informants. Responses from the community members and medical professionals helped to guide selection of the communities in which an exposure and health survey was conducted. Such engagement was critical for identifying key hotspots of pollution and collecting appropriate data to ensure robust results. Imminent health threats stemming from the contamination and subsequent recommendations were communicated to indigenous communities following the completed assessment. For more information please consult the following links:
<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2692&ArticleID=9241>

<http://www.unep.org/nigeria/>

9. The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) was established in Bahrain through an agreement that was signed by Bahrain and UNESCO as a category 2 Center under the auspices of UNESCO, aiming to promote the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab States Region. The scope of the ARC-WH has been developed along three main axes: information, assistance and logistics and financial support for WH sites in the region. The Ministry of Culture in Bahrain is spearheading a number of activities for the centre including organizing in collaboration with the UNEP-Regional Office for West Asia, a series of national environmental fora during the month of October 2012 and a Regional Workshop on Traditional Knowledge to engage stakeholders from the region in showcasing success stories about community participation and Traditional Knowledge and their role in the protection of cultural and biological diversity. Recommendations from this workshop furthered the development of a network amongst stakeholders to share indigenous and traditional knowledge.

10. Other Related Activities within UNEP

Although many of UNEP/ DTIE (Division of Technology, Industry and Economics) projects and activities do not focus exclusively on Indigenous Communities, many of the DTIE projects on climate mitigation and clean energy largely benefit rural communities, including Indigenous Peoples.

Examples of such projects and activities are as follows: the Partnership on Clean Fuels and Vehicles (<http://www.unep.org/transport/pcfiv/index.asp>) and the promotion of renewable energy, including access to end-user financing and enterprise development in rural areas (<http://www.ared.org>), have contributed to providing access to modern energy services to rural communities.

Carbon finance projects like *Carbon Finance for Agriculture, Siviculture, Conservation and Action against Deforestation* (CASCADe) help project developers make climate change mitigation projects a reality in rural Africa, by enhancing expertise in generating carbon credits through Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) and

bio energy projects in Benin, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Mali and Senegal (<http://www.unep.org/energy/Activities/CASCADE/tabid/79470/Default.aspx>). The bio energy sustainability criteria developed together with FAO under UN-Energy (<http://www.bioenergydecisiontool.org/>) provide tools for the environmentally sound production of bio energy, which otherwise often has adverse impacts such as the displacement of Indigenous Peoples.

Furthermore, forthcoming activities under the Climate and Clean Air Coalition on short-lived climate pollutants (<http://www.unep.org/ccac/>), and under the Clean Technology Centre and Network on climate mitigation and adaptation will contribute to preserve the ecological integrity of ecosystems globally and address air pollution related health problems, benefitting Indigenous Communities.

REDD+ Reducing Emissions from Deforestations and Forest Degradation. REDD attempts to create financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. REDD+ goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

To achieve the multiple benefits, REDD will require the full engagement and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities. The UN-REDD Programme to which UNEP is a partner is working towards the participatory engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Programme. <http://www.un-redd.org>

Food waste and loss. Simple actions by consumers and food retailers can dramatically cut the 1.3 billion tons of food lost or wasted each year and help shape a sustainable future, according to a new global campaign to cut food waste launched in January 2013 by UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and partners. The Think.Eat.Save. Reduce Your Foodprint campaign is in support of the SAVE FOOD Initiative to reduce food loss and waste along the entire chain of food production and consumption - run by the FAO and trade fair organizer Messe Düsseldorf - and the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge. The new campaign specifically targets food wasted by consumers, retailers and the hospitality industry.

There is a need for concrete action among governments, private sector, civil society, media and advertising industries, and consumers to address the issue of food waste, and the present unsustainable consumption patterns as a whole, including the impact of these on food security, agro-ecological resource base and related socio-economic concerns. Reducing food waste will decrease environmental/ecosystem impact both upstream and downstream of the supply chain. Any resulting decrease in the demand for food through improved efficiency in food consumption will eventually translate to reduced pressure on natural resources and will support organic and sustainable food production which will also become economically sustainable and address some of the challenges faced. <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2702&ArticleID=9377&I=en>

UNEP's Regional Office for North America, working through GRID-Arendal, is undertaking outreach to engage Arctic Indigenous Peoples on the issue of short-lived climate pollutants, with the goal of strengthening their involvement on these issues, both within regional institutions as well as through linkages with UNEP's work in this area, most prominently, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). The work will include outreach on the relevant science, graphics, and policy implications, and opportunities for institutional engagement. Based on con-

sultations with indigenous groups in the Arctic, the work will also develop outreach products for a wider audience, showing the impact of climate change and short lived climate pollutants on Arctic peoples which will be used to brief non-participants in CCAC and build support for this network.

Many Strong Voices (MSV- www.manystrongvoices.com), a GRID-Arendal programme, brings together the peoples of the Arctic and Small Island Developing States to meet the challenges of climate change. There are a number of associated projects under MSV:

- Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) to Climate Change: Integrating Scientific and Traditional Knowledge to Reduce Community Vulnerability – The objective of this project is to reduce vulnerability to climate change and build adaptive capacity in vulnerable regions by promoting and supporting a methodology for EbA that integrates scientific and local/traditional knowledge. The first phase of this project aims to conduct pilot studies in two Small Island Developing States, Belize and Seychelles. Meetings with potential partners and funders and site visits to candidate communities in Belize took place in September and November 2012. Similar activities are planned for Seychelles in 2013. In support of this project, the paper Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Caribbean Small Island Developing States: Integrating Local and External Knowledge was published in the journal Sustainability (<http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/4/8/1908>).
- Climate Change and Community-based Relocation: Connecting the Arctic with Small Island Developing States – The aim of this project is to research and analyze the human rights implications of the displacement and relocation of vulnerable communities due to climate-related impacts. Using case studies from the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), it will develop proposed principles and guidelines that will serve as a model for community-based relocation of islands, low-lying and coastal communities, and other vulnerable communities that are forced to leave their traditional homes as a result of climate change. A workshop was held in Papua New Guinea in September 2012 between the Indigenous Communities of Newtok, Alaska and the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea to: (1) document the experiences and lessons learned from these two communities' relocation efforts; (2) identify the needs and challenges faced by these communities as they plan their relocations; and (3) begin to develop appropriate tools and resources to assist these and similarly situated communities in their relocation efforts.
- Portraits of Resilience – The “Portraits of Resilience” youth photography project was expanded to include new schools in the South Pacific and Caribbean. The associated photo exhibit showing the work of young people from several indigenous communities in the Arctic and SIDS countries was displayed at the Durban Natural History Museum Research Centre from December 2011 to April 2012 and at the Smithsonian Institution during the Inuit Studies Conference in October 2012.
- Impact of climate change on food security in two Q’eqchi’ communities in the Southern Moho Region, Toledo, Belize – This new project started in December 2012 aims to collect the observations of indigenous peoples to investigate how climate change is impacting traditional and wild harvested foods. Interviews will be conducted to determine how these changes are seen to affect their food security and food sovereignty.
- Outreach – MSV continued its outreach and lobbying efforts on climate change at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) 18 in Doha, Qatar. It works with partners such as the Caribbean Community Cli-

mate Change Center and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. As an observer to the IPCC, MSV was also present at the 35th Plenary Session of the IPCC in May 2012. The MSV network includes many authors and reviewers of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). The main goal for MSV at the IPCC is to support the inclusion of indigenous knowledge from the Arctic, Small Island Developing States and other regions into the AR5 to be released in 2014.

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an international science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystems, set up to assist governments and civil society to better understand the state, trends and challenges faced by the natural world and humanity in the 21st century, which has put in place in January 2013 – during its first plenary session many of the administrative and staffing structures needed to implement its important work.

IPBES-1 also decided that UNEP will provide the Secretariat for the Platform, which will operate from Bonn, Germany and requested UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an institutional link with the Platform through a collaborative partnership arrangement for the work of IPBES and its Secretariat. The six biodiversity related conventions have expressed strong interest to collaborate and partner with IPBES on common objectives. The meeting also requested the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy for IPBES. It is expected that the scientific community, civil society, the business and industry sector, as well as representatives from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, will act both as contributors and end users of the Platform. The IPBES plenary has adopted the definition of observers which includes Indigenous Peoples. The rules and procedures for the admission of Observer to the IPBES plenary are yet to be finalized. <http://www.ipbes.net/>

Following a high-level expert meeting on the New Future of **Human Rights and Environment: Moving the Global Agenda Forward**, UNEP and OHCHR collaboratively developed a discussion paper for a OHCHR-UNEP Joint Side Event at RIO +20 Summit in June 2012. In following up on this initiative and its out-comes, UNEP plans to strengthen the capacity of policy makers and legal professionals to understand and apply the human rights and environment nexus at the international level and in selected countries, by addressing existing normative, awareness, knowledge and capacity gaps and promoting policy coherence and synergies at both the international and national levels. Several meetings are planned in this context during the upcoming UNEP Governing Council in February 2013 in order to inform and sensitize participants on the importance of the nexus between

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