Objective: *Countries increasingly prevent and reduce the environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts, while building resilience to future crises*

The overall objective of the programme, as written in the Medium Term Strategy and the Programme of Work, is that *"Countries increasingly prevent and reduce the environmental impacts of disasters and conflicts, while building resilience to future crises"*

In this presentation we'd like to discuss the overall rationale for our work on the environmental dimensions of natural disasters, industrial accidents and armed conflicts, and our vision for what we hope to achieve with the programme over the course of the Medium Term Strategy and to 2030.

We also would like to describe how the programme operates, we aim to give the Committee a sense of the sort of activities that keep our colleagues busy, and the results they have achieved in 2016. We want to be very open about some of the challenges we face in this work and look forward to your advice and guidance on how we can be more effective in future.

There are four main reasons why UN Environment has a dedicated results area to address the environmental dimensions of natural disasters, industrial accidents and armed conflicts.

1/. Impact of crises on the environment – direct, indirect and institutional
> The first is that crises such as natural disasters, industrial accidents and armed conflicts can have extremely severe environmental impacts. These impacts can be direct, in terms of pollution (such as from Deep water Horizons), disaster waste (such as the 4 million tons of waste created by the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal), indirect in terms of the coping strategies people adopt in times of crisis (such as 95% deforestation in parts of Afghanistan as a partial result of decades of conflict) or institutional, if experts flee and institutions cease to function. These can combine to create concentrated environmental crises that exacerbate the human cost and complicate recovery.

2/. Natural resources and environmental degradation amplify conflicts and disasters
> Environmental degradation such as deforestation makes landslides, avalanches and floods more likely to happen and more serious when they do. Poor environmental management in industrial or extractive sites can lead to serious pollution events. Resources such as diamonds, oil and timber can finance conflicts, buying weapons and altering the strategic objectives of combatants. Since 1990 at least 18 conflicts have been financed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources and over the past 70 or so years around 40% of civil wars have have a link to natural resources.

3/. Better environmental management can reduce the risks of industrial accidents, and the impact of natural disasters.
> The converse is also true. Standing mangroves reduce the impact of storm surges and hurricanes. Better planning and chemical storage avoids dangerous spills, better tailings management in mines avoids the impact of tailings dams failures. Fair and transparent management of natural resources, with effective grievance mechanisms in place, can avoid tensions boiling over into violence.

4/. Natural resources and the environment can be a platform for peace, recovery and sustainable development
> Countries coming out of crisis need to get their economies going again, often need to exploit their resources to do so, but need to do so in a sustainable way. Countries emerging from crisis need to urgently address toxic legacies to avoid compounding the human misery and begin a process of recovery and reconstruction.
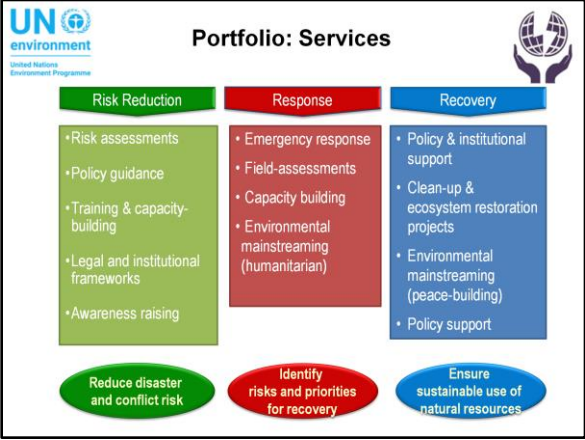
The ultimate aim by 2030 is to build the necessary resilience among communities vulnerable to natural disasters, industrial accidents and armed conflict in order to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the goals on poverty, sustainable cities and communities, climate change, peaceful societies and partnerships.

The programme aligns closely with the SDGs –Goal 1 on poverty (in particular target 1.5 on building resilience to climate related extreme events), Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities (in particular targets 11.5 on reducing the number of people killed and affected by natural disasters, and 11.c on resilient buildings), Goal 13 on climate change (target 13.1 on societies that are resilient to climate change), Goal 16 on Peaceful societies (in particular targets 16.1 on violence, 16.7 pm inclusive and representative decision making, and 16.a on national institutions).

The idea is that successive Medium Term Strategies build up over time to deliver more resilient societies that are able to respond to and bounce back from external shocks.
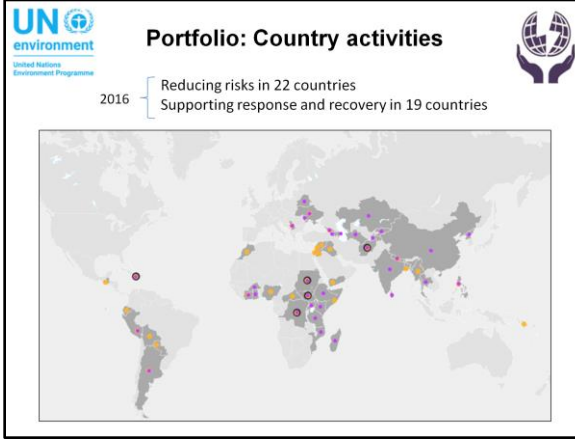
The overall vision of the work is three-fold. In essence we want to work with affected countries and international partners to ensure that:

> 1/. Countries use natural resource and environmental management to prevent and reduce the risks of disasters and conflicts.
>
> 2/. Countries and the international community respond to emergencies in a robust and environmentally sustainable way.
>
> 3/. Post-crisis countries have robust and effective environmental institutions and policies in place.
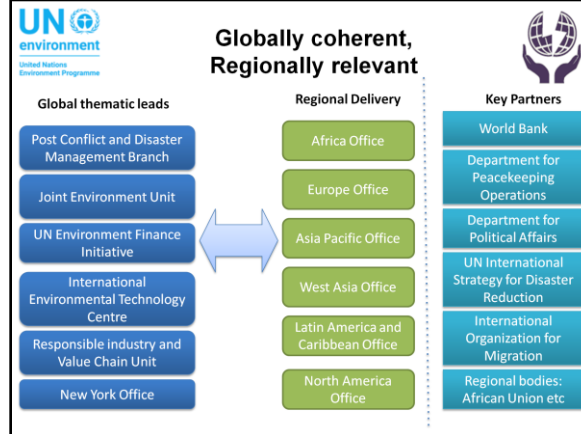
Our services in this area fall into three categories: Risk reduction, Response and Recovery. In the next Medium Term Strategy these will be set out as three distinct expected accomplishments – in this Medium Term Strategy response and recovery have been treated as a combined result/accomplishment.

Under each area we provide a range of services which are tailored to the specific request from the country or international partner. These services range from proactive interventions to build resilience and preparedness, through more reactive responses to environmental emergencies, to longer term but still time bound work on recovery from crisis.

Portfolio: Country activities

2016 — Reducing risks in 22 countries
Supporting response and recovery in 19 countries

The Disasters and Conflicts programme is active in areas vulnerable to, or recovering from, environmental emergencies across the world.

- In 2016 UN Environment supported risk reduction in 22 countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, Serbia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Ukraine).
- On this map (which shows all work from 2014-2016) risk reduction activities are shown with purple dots.

- In 2016 UN Environment supported response and recovery activities in 19 countries (Afghanistan, Bolivia, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen).
- On this map response and recovery activities are shown with yellow dots and long-term recovery programmes are shown with black dots (please note that the Democratic Republic of Congo no longer hosts a country recovery programme, but is still shown here as the map collates work from 2014-2016).

The Disasters and Conflicts programme endeavours to be both globally coherent and regionally relevant by providing services that respond to national and regional needs, are aware of the specific context surrounding particular countries and events, but that still can draw lessons and expertise from experiences across the world.

There are thematic leads on particular issues that then work closely with regional offices to deliver locally appropriate services.

Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, based in Geneva
-   Post Crisis Needs Assessment; Post Crisis Environmental Assessments; Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding; Natural resource management in situations of fragility (g7+ states); Threat financing (in collaboration with the Law Division and the work on environmental crime); Long term country recovery programmes (currently in Afghanistan, Haiti, South Sudan and Sudan)

Joint Environment Unit, is a joint unit shared with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, based in Geneva
-   Emergency Response; Emergency Preparedness; Mainstreaming environmental issues within Humanitarian Affairs

International Environmental Technology Centre, based in Osaka
- Disaster Waste

UNEP Finance Initiative, based in Geneva
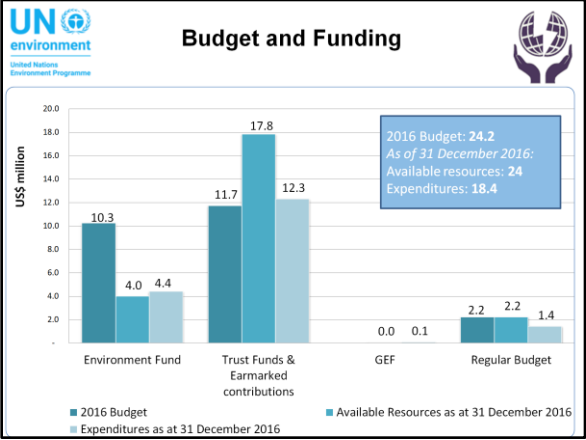- Sustainable insurance initiative

Responsible industry and Value Chain Unit, based in Paris
- Industrial and chemical accident prevention

New York Office
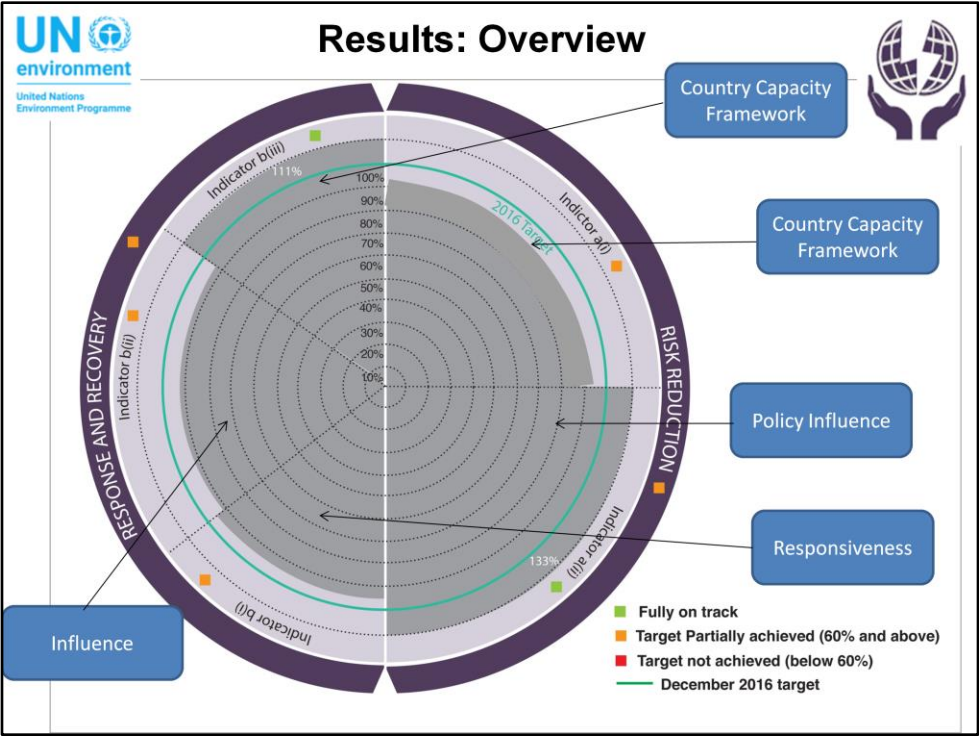-   On-going policy processes on disaster risk reduction and peace and security at UN headquarters

Collectively we work with a wide range of partners in the development, humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and security fields. Particularly important partners have been forged with the World Bank, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Field Support, the Department for Political Affairs, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the International Organization for Migration and a variety of regional bodies, in particular the African Union.

The programme is one of the smaller ones with a total annual budget of 24.2 million, available resources of just a little bit less than that and expenditures, as of 31st December 2016, of 18.4 million.

Historically the work has been very reliant on earmarked, extra budgetary funding, which can be a challenge given that the nature of the work is often very difficult to plan around – both unpredictable but also highly time sensitive.

In essence there is a 'golden period' in the aftermath of a crisis within which time interventions have the most value. After that initial period closes, whether it is one week or several months, early poor choices can be locked in and toxic legacies of crisis can be even harder to address.