



Untreated effluent flows from the Assalaya sugar factory into the White Nile, Sudan.

Catalyzing Action on Sound Chemicals Management

Chemicals are an integral part of daily life in today's world. Millions of people throughout the world lead richer, more productive and more comfortable lives because of the thousands of chemicals on the market today. At the same time, sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle is essential in order to reduce and avoid impacts on human health and the environment as well as to avoid substantial costs to national economies.

Numerous Governments worldwide, jointly with UN agencies and specialized agencies, have supported the development of international policies and commitments on sound chemicals management. Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) – such as the ILO conventions on chemical safety, the Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants – have been adopted and ratified by numerous States.

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Managements (SAICM) was developed as a voluntary mechanism to fill in some of the gaps not covered by legal instruments. Established by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) in 2006, SAICM was conceived as a policy framework to guide efforts to achieve the goal set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that, by 2020, chemicals would be produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. It is a unique governance mechanism

for achieving sound management of chemicals involving all relevant sectors and stakeholders – Governments, civil society networks, academia and the private sector – through a transparent and open decision-making and implementation process.

The ICCM established the Quick Start Programme (QSP) Trust Fund in 2006 to support capacity-building for sound chemicals management in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The QSP is intended to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities related to risk reduction, knowledge and information, governance, capacity-building and technical cooperation, and illegal trafficking.

The three identified strategic priorities include: (i) development or updating of national chemical profiles and the identification of capacity needs; (ii) development and strengthening of national chemicals management institutions, plans, programmes and activities building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives; (iii) undertaking analysis, interagency coordination, and public participation activities directed at enabling the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including mainstreaming.

The QSP Trust Fund supports projects of up to two years duration with grants of USD 50,000 to 250,000 for project proposals developed by Governments and civil society networks of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Since its establishment in 2006, the QSP has provided resources to 146 projects implementing activities in 105 countries, including 54 least-developed countries and/or small-island developing states.

To date, 26 QSP projects amounting to USD 5.9 million have been supporting the implementation of the MEAs in 39 countries worldwide. Nine of these projects are being funded by the European Union which provided EUR 1.95 million -USD 2.5 million- in 2009 to enhance the capacity of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to implement MEAs. The activities undertaken under these projects have benefited 19 ACP countries, including 15 least-developed countries and/or small island developing states.

All of the projects are playing a role in strengthening multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participation in consultation processes and training activities related to chemicals management. Strengthened consultation processes are seen as key for enhancing implementation efforts of MEAs as well as for improving the coordination of efforts toward the protection of human health and the environment from chemicals generally. While many of the projects are still ongoing, some important results achieved to date include:

- Enhanced chemicals management practices in Africa: In Mali and Senegal working together with civil society organizations, the capacity to monitor pesticides health impacts in cotton growing systems has been strengthened through awareness raising and training. In agricultural communities in Uganda, a preventative approach towards health problems arising from exposure to agricultural chemicals among workers and children has been supported.
- Important efforts on poison management in a Pacific region project focused in Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Island and Cook Islands have been initiated. Through this project, these small island developing states have been able to consolidate available information on poisonous chemicals and have enhanced the regional capacity to manage poisonous chemicals through developing a shared information network. This project is supporting activity five of the SAICM Global Plan of Action: to build capacities of countries to deal with poisoning and chemical incidents.
- In Saint Lucia, in the Caribbean region, project activities aim to enhance the policy and institutional framework to address chemicals of concern, manage stockpiles and wastes in relevant sectors, and educate stakeholders and the general public about risk exposure and mitigation.

Results from the other projects are expected throughout 2013. Following the decision of ICCM3 to extend the period for receiving contributions into the QSP Trust Fund until 2015, the SAICM secretariat will soon launch the 13th application round of the QSP. The deadline for submitting applications will be March 30, 2013. Applicants are encouraged to send their applications early to allow the secretariat to provide feedback on the proposals.



Plenary session of the ICCM3 in Nairobi, 17-21 September 2012.

Overall, the SAICM secretariat is very pleased to note the increased interest from the Governments of all regions, including ACP countries, in the sound management of chemicals. Amongst other things, the QSP is recognized for its important role in the implementation of SAICM by providing a boost to many countries in their efforts to prepare national chemicals management profiles. The enhanced capacity developed through QSP projects is clearly supporting the implementation of MEAs and other instruments at both country and regional levels. However, it is clear that achieving the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals will require further, more concerted efforts by international agencies, national and local governments, businesses and civil society organizations. For more information, visit our web-site: www.saicm.org.

Ms. Luz Romero, QSP Officer, SAICM secretariat.

African Hub (AUC)

An AUC expert for strategic planning participated at the 23rd SPREP Annual Meeting in September 2012. The south-south cooperation exchange focused in particular on evidence-based decision-making, resource mobilization and results-based planning. From 3-5 October 2012, the Hub in collaboration with the Government of Botswana held an awareness-raising workshop for MEA focal points in Gaborone on enhancing information exchange and on MEA implementation and communication strategies. As a result of the June 2012 Parliamentary Colloquium on MEAs-mainstreaming, a network of African parliamentarians called "Green Bird Africa" was launched to promote environment and sustainable development issues in Africa. The 14th AMCEN session of September 2012 adopted a decision for parliamentarians enabling them to work with the executive branch to develop and implement MEAs. The same AMCEN also adopted a decision urging member states to use the AUC strategy on the promotion of ratification and implementation of the Maputo Convention developed under the ACP MEAs

Project. In collaboration with UNEP the Hub supported the African Negotiators of the Mercury International Negotiating Committee (INC) in holding a preparatory meeting in Tunisia, November 2012 for the last INC5 and the first COP to finalize their common position. Finally, training for UNCCD negotiators was organized in collaboration with the UNCCD Regional Coordinating Unit and UNEP in Burkina Faso in November 2012 to enhance their diplomatic skills in the use of available MEA-mechanisms and to better prepare the African group for UNCCD negotiations.

For further information, please contact the African Hub Coordinators: Ms Fatoumata Ndoeye (fnjallow@yahoo.com) and Mr Livingstone Sindayigaya (sindayigaya@yahoo.com).



MEA Focal Points Workshop in Botswana, 3-5 October 2012.

Caribbean Hub (CARICOM)

In September 2012, the Caribbean Hub held a preparatory meeting to discuss key issues and formulate Caribbean regional positions in advance of COP11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The meeting was attended by country representatives and participants from the ABS Capacity Building Initiative, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, the CBD Secretariat, and the University of the West Indies. In November, the Hub, in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat's Regional Statistics Programme, held national meetings in Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Jamaica to review national and regional systems, including the CARICOMInfo online database, for the compilation of biodiversity-related environmental statistics. The Hub also held a national workshop in Kingstown, St. Vincent on the use of integrated environmental assessment tools for the mainstreaming of biodiversity-related MEAs into national development policies and strategies. The workshop was facilitated by the International Institute for Sustainable Development. In addition, the Hub funded internships in Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The internships allow young graduates and professionals to learn about MEAs

and environmental management while working on projects that contribute to national and regional implementation of MEAs such as the Basel, Stockholm, and Climate Change Conventions.

For further information please contact the Caribbean Hub coordinator Dr. Thérèse Yarde (tyarde@caricom.org).



Participants at National MEAs Mainstreaming Workshop in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, November 2012.

Pacific Hub (SPREP)

At the 23rd SPREP Meeting held in New Caledonia, 4-6 September, the regional reporting framework was endorsed by SPREP Members. Work is now in progress to create and populate the database, in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Fiji has initiated the process to develop a national integrated environment policy followed by a state of the environment review, building on earlier experiences delivered under the ACP MEAs project in Kiribati, Cook Islands and Samoa. Samoa's state of the environment process continues, with the analysis of habitat data for the technical report. Guidelines for including gender in the mainstreaming process have been completed with assistance from the regional UN Women office. Pacific hub representatives attended four MEA COPs to support the Pacific delegations, two regional (Noumea and Waigani) and two international (CBD and UNFCCC). Stories from the international COPs are posted on the Bionesian blog www.bionesian.blogspot.com and Climate Pasifika blog <http://www.climatepasifika.blogspot.com/>. The Pacific clearing house mechanism is now available online at <http://www.sprep.org/Multilateral-Environmental-Agreements/pacific-regional-clearinghouse-mechanism>. In support of the UNCCD, training on PRAIS and the 5th national reporting has been given to Samoa, Kiribati, and FSM. The second draft of the aligned NAP has been completed for Fiji. Two south-south exchanges have been achieved between the hubs: An African Hub representative attended the 23rd SPREP Meeting, and the Pacific Hub coordinator attended an African Hub planning meeting. An ACP MEAs project side

event was held at the 23rd SPREP Meeting, in partnership with UNEP. Finally, the Pacific Hub has a high profile in the Sustainable Development Working Group which is developing the post-Rio+20 activities for the region.

For further information please contact the Pacific Hub coordinator Dr Jill Key (Jillk@sprep.org).



Pacific Hub project delivery team and UNEP Project Coordinator.

UNEP Risoe Centre (URC)

URC supported a delegation of 12 representatives from Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea to participate in the Carbon Expo Australasia 2012 on 7-9 November 2012 in Melbourne, Australia. The Pacific delegation and URC conducted a workshop and organized exhibitions in 6 booths. Under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) component of the ACP MEAs Project 24 CDM Project Idea Notes (PINs) for the Pacific countries have been developed, eligible both for the regulatory and the voluntary markets. The delegation's participation aimed at promoting these potential GHG emission reduction projects at this major regional carbon market event, where a number of carbon market stakeholders from Australia and New Zealand were brought together. Both countries, Australia and New Zealand, are in the process of setting up their national carbon



Participants from the Pacific and URC at Carbon Expo Australasia in Melbourne 2012, 7-9 November 2012.

With the current prices of CERs low on the global carbon market as well as in the EU Emission Trading System, traditionally the main buyer for CERs from CDM projects, the carbon markets in Australia and New Zealand could become major buyers and investors for the CDM projects in the Pacific, given the fact that both countries are geographically close and are main suppliers of donor funding to the Pacific Island Countries.

For further information please contact URC Coordinator: Miriam Hinostroza (milh@dtu.dk).

FAO

On 3-7 December, FAO convened a high-level joint meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso for officials of CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA. Under the umbrella of the regional FAO GEF programme on disposal of obsolete pesticides, the three institutions already collaborate to strengthen pest and pesticide management in the region. The main purpose of the meeting was to further extend the existing programme to include additional countries in Sahel and West Africa (from 9 to a total number of 17 countries). In the Pacific, a hands-on training on ecological management of vegetable crops was conducted at the Sigatoka Research Station. Thirty participants from 16 localities throughout Fiji Islands participated. The training aimed to develop knowledge and skills of agricultural researchers and extension officers on pesticide risk reduction and good agronomic practices.



Training of Trainers on Brassic crops – participants during a field exercise.

As a result of the collaboration established with regional institutions (e.g. SPREP) under the ACP MEAs programme, FAO and UNEP are about to initiate a new GEF-funded programme on POPs release reduction through Improved Management of Solid and Hazardous wastes in the Pacific.

For further information, please contact Coordinator Mr. Mark Davis (mark.davis@fao.org).

UNCCD Global Mechanism (GM)

In November 2012, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD unveiled a revamped web-based platform for South-South partnership and resource mobilization for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in ACP countries. The platform - www.slmfinance.net - was showcased during a workshop co-organised by the GM to validate the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI) Partnership and Knowledge Management Platform (Tunis, 6-7 November 2012). For the 21st session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), the Global Mechanism and FAO co-organised a side-event chaired by UNCCD Executive Secretary Mr Luc Gnacadja, to showcase the GGWSSI achievements and explore new partnerships (Rome 24 September 2012). In the Caribbean, Haiti and the Dominican Republic agreed, with GM support, on a bi-national preliminary programme for SLM including the design of resource mobilization strategies and innovative local financing mechanisms (September 2012). In the sub-region, the GM also co-organised a workshop on innovative finance in support of the Partnership Initiative for SLM in the Caribbean (PISLM), which took place in Grenada (24-27 October 2012). The GM and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) released a feasibility study for Integrated Financing Strategies for Fiji and Samoa.



COFO side-event on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative in Rome, 24 September 2012.

The study underlines the regional synergies regarding the analyse of external and innovative funding mechanisms in addition to countries' internal resources analysis, as well as suggests the development of a sub-regional Integrated financing strategy for SLM to be developed in 2013.

For further information, please contact Coordinator Ms Inès Chaâlala (i.chaalala@global-mechanism.org).

UNEP

3rd ACP Secretariat Open Day, 11 October 2012, Brussels

UNEP and the ACP MEAs project participated at this year's "Open Day" of the Department of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade of the ACP Secretariat. Under the theme "Sustainable Economic Development Dynamics in ACP Regions", the event brought together representatives from the ACP Regions, the ACP Embassies, Missions and Regional Organizations based in Brussels as well as representatives from the Project Management Units and other Facilities under the department. Participants discussed the concept of a Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and in light of the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012. As the implementation of MEAs directly contributes to the realization of sustainable economic development UNEP used the occasion to present and update the participants on the implementation of the ACP MEAs project.

For further information please contact Mr. Daniel Nixdorf, UNEP Associate Program Officer (daniel.nixdorf@unep.org).



ACP MEAs information stand at the ACP Open Day, 11 October 2012.

This newsletter is published quarterly and includes opinion pieces by the programme partners as well as an update of latest developments. For more information on ACP MEAs please contact:

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The ACP MEAs is a joint EU-UNEP partnership project. This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or official opinion of the European Commission, UNEP or contributory organizations.

