

Dear reader,

As 2025 draws to a close, global environmental governance has experienced a decisive quarter. Just days after the 7th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), the world's highest-level environmental decision-making body, convened in Nairobi (8-12 December), and only weeks after world leaders gathered in Belém, Brazil, for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), momentum for environmental multilateralism remains strong despite rising geopolitical tensions. These are just two of several major milestones this quarter, alongside other COPs and international fora advancing global environmental action.

COP30 placed climate finance, emissions reductions, and resilience at the center of negotiations, guided by science-based insights from UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2025 and Adaptation Gap Report 2025. UNEA-7 reinforced this trajectory under the theme *"Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet,"* focusing on accelerating practical, science-based responses to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and chemicals and waste. The Assembly emphasized building a safer, more inclusive world through cooperation and innovation, with outcomes including new strategies for resource efficiency and strengthened multilateral agreements.

In this issue, we bring you highlights from our Brussels Office over the past three months, advocacy with EU policymakers and stakeholders, hands-on initiatives, and more.

Our Executive Director, Inger Andersen's words at the close of UNEA-7 resonate strongly: *"The beacon of environmental multilateralism that rises above the fog of geopolitical differences today shines a little brighter."* This affirmation reminds us that, even amid global challenges, cooperation and innovation continue to drive progress. As we look ahead, let us carry this momentum forward, turning commitments into action and building a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable world together.

I wish you a joyful holiday season and a wonderful start of the New Year.

Warm greetings,

Veronika
Head of UNEP Brussels Office

Hunt

Safrankova

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In Focus

UNEA-7: Global Commitments for a Resilient Planet



On 12 December, UNEA-7 concluded in Nairobi with 186 countries adopting 11 resolutions, three decisions, and a Ministerial Declaration to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Over 6,000 participants advanced commitments on coral reef protection, sustainable minerals management, chemicals and waste, AI use, and wildfire prevention, alongside UNEP's new Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work.

The session launched the seventh Global Environment Outlook, showing that investing in nature and a pollution-free planet can deliver trillions in GDP and lift millions from poverty. UNEA-7 also hosted youth and city summits, civil society dialogues, and celebrated Champions of the Earth. H.E. Matthew Samuda was

elected President of UNEA-8, set for December 2027, pledging inclusive, practical action to accelerate global environmental solutions.

The EU, represented at UNEA-7 by the EU Presidency, Danish Minister Magnus Heunicke and Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, Jessika Roswall, alongside several ministers and vice-ministers from EU Member States and senior officials from the European Commission (EC), was actively engaged in negotiations, supporting other countries, working toward key resolutions from artificial intelligence for sustainability, tackling environmental crimes, promoting sustainable metals and minerals use, to strengthening chemicals and waste management or, enhancing youth participation in environmental governance. The EU hosted a Ministerial Breakfast on plastics. Several high-level meetings with EC representatives and ministers/vice-ministers from EU member states took place in the margins of UNEA-7. EC representatives took part in UNEA-7 and MEAs Day leadership dialogues, many side events or associated events to UNEA. The Global Environment Outlook-7 (see in reports), co-funded by the EC, was launched, and a dedicated side-event on GEO-7 took place with the participation of Deputy Director General of DG Environment, Patrick Child. Moreover, the EU-funded project (DG INTPA) on Enforcing environmental treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP-MEAs) was formally concluded in the margins of UNEA with a dedicated side event with the participation of Deputy Director General of DG INTPA Marjeta Jager.

Learn more about UNEA-7 outcomes, stories and highlights [here](#), and the EU at UNEA [here](#).

Environmental Multilateralism: Strategic Cooperation for Sustainability and Innovation



Against the backdrop of ongoing international negotiations on key environmental agreements, the UNEP Brussels Office convened a high-level event at the European Parliament on 14 October 2025, hosted by Mr. Antonio Decaro, Chair of the Environment Committee. The discussion reaffirmed the role of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as a foundation for global cooperation, sustainable competitiveness, and resilience and health.

The event opened with a video message from UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen and featured interventions from Executive Secretaries of major conventions on chemicals and waste, mercury, ozone, and illegal wildlife trade, alongside EU policymakers and industry representatives. Closing remarks by EU Environment Commissioner Jessika Roswall underscored the EU's commitment to collective, science-based action.

Moderated by Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of the UNEP Brussels Office, the event underscored how global norms and standards drive positive impacts on health, economy, and resilience. These frameworks, agreed upon by all UN Parties, including the EU, provide a solid basis for business and industrial activities and open new opportunities for global partnerships.

Find a summary article of the event [here](#).

Effective and inclusive instruments of international cooperation for a healthy, resilient and long-term competitive future for people and planet.

What are Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)?

MEAs are international legal instruments, negotiated and ratified by countries that are Party to them, to address the most urgent global environmental issues of our time.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are instruments of multilateral cooperation that address environmental challenges which individual countries or bilateral efforts cannot effectively resolve. These include issues of transboundary nature—such as the movement of environmentally sensitive goods, the conservation of species and ecosystems that span national borders—as well as matters requiring harmonized rules or collective action on issues of global concern, such as climate change.

Why do they matter?

Implementing the MEAs is critical to tackling the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, nature, land and biodiversity loss, pollution and waste. MEAs advance science-based solutions at the global, regional and national levels that can result in transformative shifts across economies and societies, such as:

- Improving the **sustainable use and management of natural resources** to benefit human well-being and economic resilience and long-term competitiveness.
- Shifting **consumption and production patterns** and creating a level-playing field globally for all countries in their transition towards a green and circular economy.
- Enhancing **environmental governance and legal frameworks** to support long-term policy coherence and compliance and sustainable investments.
- Reducing pollution across air, water, and soil systems—leading to **improved public health, lower healthcare costs, and increased economic productivity**, while at the same **enhancing time industrial efficiency and increasing agricultural productivity**.
- Driving **innovation and green technologies** through common standards and cooperation.
- Fostering international solidarity, technical cooperation, and capacity building, particularly for developing countries.

- Supporting early warning systems and coordinated responses to environmental risks and emergencies.

How can they help decision-makers?

MEAs can empower decision-makers to strengthen governance, shape coherent policies across sectors and assert environmental priorities at the heart of national development agendas – involving the whole-of-government and whole-of-society.

But the success of MEAs ultimately depends on their implementation at both national and regional levels. Their effectiveness hinges on how countries **translate international commitments into concrete laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks**.

Implementing MEAs through national policies, strategies and legislation can embed environmental priorities across all sectors and ensure **long-term resilience for economies, ecosystems, and communities**. For both the private sector and civil society, the implementation of MEAs can influence business environments, shaping risks and opportunities globally. MEA implementation contributes to informing stakeholders about sustainability and setting national standards that can benefit present and future generations.

Learn more about UNEP's work on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and their role in shaping a sustainable future: this paper explains what MEAs are and how they address the most urgent global environmental challenges. It also provides numerous examples across UNEP's areas of work.

Download the paper from [here](#).

Environmental Multilateralism: A Cornerstone for Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade



Earlier in September, UNEP spotlighted environmental multilateralism at a high-level event in the European Parliament: *“On the Way to the 20th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP20).”* Nicolas Galudec, Senior Policy Advisor at UNEP Brussels, underscored the critical need for stronger political will and cross-sector collaboration to ensure global agreements like CITES remain effective and relevant. He emphasized how CITES is not only vital for curbing illegal trade in endangered species but also for promoting sustainable wildlife trade, safeguarding biodiversity, and influencing industry practices in ways that support economic competitiveness.

Hosted by the MEP Group on Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development, the event brought together Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission, and organizations including the Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), showcasing the collective commitment needed to protect species and ecosystems through robust multilateral action.

More information [here](#).

Turning Nature Goals into Action: UNEP at Pre-COP17 Event in Brussels



Complementing our advocacy on environmental multilateralism, the UNEP Brussels Office joined a high-level event on 28 November ahead of the United Nations Biodiversity Convention COP17. The event was hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Mission of Armenia to the European Union. The meeting, *“Towards 2030: Turning Nature Goals into Action,”* gathered governments, EU institutions, UN agencies, international financial institutions, civil society, and the private sector to accelerate implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). In her concluding remarks, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of the UNEP Brussels Office, summarized key areas of action, with a strong focus on implementation and delivery, particularly on reporting and monitoring, the operationalization of the Cali Fund, and the mobilization of financing for biodiversity action.

Learn more about how UNEP delivers nature finance [here](#).

[Other Recent Events](#)

UNEP at EU Raw Materials Week

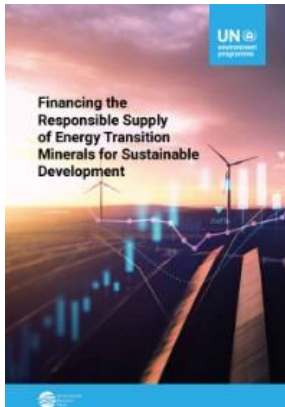
UNEP took part in the EU Raw Materials Week in Brussels, an annual forum that brings together policymakers, industry leaders, academia, and civil society to shape Europe's raw materials strategy. This year's edition focused on implementing the Critical Raw Materials Act, advancing strategic projects, and promoting circularity to secure sustainable supply chains. With mineral demand surging and threatening ecosystems and livelihoods, UNEP stressed that circularity is key to reducing pressure on natural resources, by designing products for durability, reuse, and recycling, and recovering minerals from existing stocks and waste streams.



On 18 November, Djaheezah Subratty, Head of UNEP's Sustainable Consumption and Production Unit, spoke in the session “(Re)defining Raw Material Security” hosted by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). She highlighted the urgent need to balance growing demand with sustainable supply and underscored the UN system's role in ensuring globally equitable access to critical minerals, which is essential for protecting nature and enabling a just transition.

Find the outcomes of the session [here](#).





On 19 November, during the Panel "Critical raw materials for greener future," Ms Joanna Kulczycka, member of UNEP's International Resource Panel (IRP), shared key insights on resource use and sustainability. She emphasized that developed countries consume six times more resources than developing ones, and stressed that decoupling resource use from economic growth is essential for building a greener future. She also observed that the financial system, governance, and regulation of mineral exploration and mining must be reformed to ensure greater capital flows and a clean energy transition, as concluded in the [IRP report: Financing the Responsible Supply of Energy Transition Minerals for Sustainable Development](#). The report analyzes demand, production, trade, and financing of key minerals, highlights high-concentration regions such as Africa, China, and South America, and presents recommendations for driving finance and investment into responsible mining.

UNEP Driving Circular Economy Action Across Europe and Globally

UNEP is strengthening its role as a global convener for circular economy solutions, bridging EU and international efforts to accelerate systemic change.



Joining the EU Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP)

On 14 November, UNEP officially became an observer of the ECESP, a "network of networks" uniting businesses, civil society, and policymakers to advance Europe's

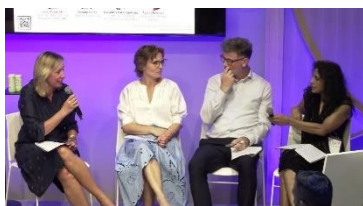
circular transition. UNEP called for stronger links between EU and global dialogues to foster circular value chains and ensure a just transition worldwide.



PAGE Annual Meeting in Brussels

At the UN House in Brussels, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) -co-hosted by UNEP- explored circularity alongside sustainable finance, green jobs, and just transitions. With 22 partner countries and five UN agencies (UNEP, UNDP, ILO, UNIDO, and UNITAR), PAGE supports national strategies for green and circular economies, aligning policies with SDGs and building capacity for systemic change. The programme is co-funded by the EU.

Find out more about the [UN PAGE - Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#)



Global Expo Osaka: Circular Economy Days

UNEP joined high-level dialogues at the EU Pavilion during the EU-led Circular Economy Days at the Global Expo in Osaka, emphasizing that while over 70 countries have circular economy roadmaps, global value chains remain linear and unequal. UNEP highlighted the need for systemic change, global rules, and collaboration through initiatives like the International Resource Panel and Finance Initiative, showcasing circularity as a pathway to resilience and wellbeing.

Find more information and links to the recordings of the sessions Global Leadership for a Circular, Resilient and Just Economy and Plastic Planet: Innovating Solutions for a Cleaner Tomorrow; [here](#).



Food Waste Breakthrough Initiative

Circularity extends to food systems: UNEP's Food Waste Breakthrough, launched at COP30 and presented at the EU Health Platform in November, aims to halve global food waste by 2030 -cutting methane emissions by up to 7%. This initiative mobilizes governments, businesses, and communities to scale practical solutions for a sustainable future.

Learn about the [Food Waste Breakthrough here](#).

Building with Nature: Affordable Housing and Biodiversity in Cities



As part of the European Week of Regions and Cities, UNEP and UN-Habitat co-hosted a high-level panel at the Committee of the Regions on 14 October 2025. The discussion focused on how cities can meet growing housing needs while protecting biodiversity and boosting climate resilience. Speakers showcased innovative nature-based solutions (NbS) such as floating homes, sponge city models, and passive cooling, demonstrating that integrating nature into urban planning is essential for sustainable development.

Participants emphasized that biodiversity must be embedded in urban systems from the outset to reconcile housing pressures with environmental goals. NbS not only strengthen climate resilience and cool cities but also deliver social and infrastructure co-benefits. The panel called for stronger cross-sector collaboration and alignment of EU funding with sustainability goals to scale these solutions across Europe.

Find more information and a summary article [here](#).

Corporate Sustainability and Human Rights: UNEP Brings the Environmental Lens



As the European Union revisits its Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), there is growing attention to how simplification measures may impact human rights and environmental responsibilities. On 23 September, UNEP joined the event “*Safeguarding Human Rights in Simplification*” organized by the UN Office for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Brussels.

Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of the UNEP Brussels Office, spoke in a panel discussion exploring the environmental perspective within this debate. The conversation focused on the implications of proposed amendments for corporate human rights obligations under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and their potential impact on vulnerable rights-holders.

The message was clear: simplification must not come at the expense of human rights or environmental integrity. The image displays the key messages to EU legislators, as transcribed by OHCHR.

Roundtable on Investing in Resilience



In October, the Brussels Office took part in an expert roundtable on conflict- and climate-sensitive infrastructure in fragile contexts, co-hosted by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and Search for Common Ground. The session explored how Global Gateway investments can foster peace, sustainability, and social cohesion through inclusive infrastructure planning.

Learn more [here](#).

EU-UN Partnership Roundtable - Beyond Crisis: Fostering Peace and Managing Global Risks



On 5 November 2025, UNEP joined senior EU and UN experts for an interactive roundtable on Climate, Peace and Security, exploring how climate risks intersect with conflict dynamics and prevention strategies. Moderated by the Head of UNEP Brussels, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, the session built on lessons from EU-UN cooperation in Central and South Asia and highlighted the importance of integrated approaches to address the climate-security nexus. Discussions showcased regional experiences and thematic applications, emphasizing the need for joint action to strengthen resilience and prevent crises in fragile contexts. The event reinforced UNEP's role in advancing environmental dimensions within peacebuilding and security agendas, contributing to shared best practices and deeper collaboration ahead of global policy milestones.

UNEP FI Regional Roundtable Europe 2025 Concludes in Brussels



On 28 -29 October, Brussels hosted the UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Regional Roundtable Europe, co-organized with AG Insurance and Ageas Group. The event gathered over 250 participants, including 140 UNEP FI members from 38 countries, to accelerate action on sustainable finance. Discussions focused on key priorities such as policy developments and next steps for sustainable finance, transitioning the real economy, aligning sustainable finance taxonomies, supporting a nature-positive transition, materiality assessment practices, decarbonizing trade, and leveraging data to accelerate sustainable finance. The Roundtable showcased growing momentum and collaboration among banks, insurers, and investors committed to shaping a resilient financial future. The next milestone: the UNEP FI Global Roundtable in London during Climate Action Week, June 2026. Learn more [here](#).

Belgium Launches Landmark Climate Risk Assessment



On 6 November, Belgium launched its first Climate and Environmental Risk Assessment (BCRA), marking a milestone in national climate-security policy. Based on the EU-wide European Climate Risk Assessment framework, the report maps ecological, economic, social, and security risks, calling for urgent, coordinated action. At the launch, UNEP's Veronika Hunt Safrankova stressed growing risks in an era of “polycrisis” and urged stronger adaptation, better data, and inclusive resilience planning, echoing UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2025 (see under Reports). Both reports highlight the need for early warning systems and prioritizing vulnerable communities.

Read more about the BCRA [here](#).

UNEP Brussels on the Ground



UN Brussels in Action: From Cleanups to Circular Solutions

On 19 September, UNEP and UN colleagues collected 13 kg of litter at Parc Royal, joining the UN-Habitat led global campaign to raise awareness on waste. This year's theme focused on textile waste, but cigarette butts and plastic packaging dominated the haul -highlighting the need for lasting behavior change. To end their action, UNEP and UNESCO joined Ben Abdelmoumen, Alderman of Finance and Public Cleaning for the City of Brussels, city officials, waste pickers, and Smurfette an SDG Ambassador, with a ceremony celebrating cleaners and calling for gender balance in the sector.



Standing United Against Gender-Based Violence
On 25 November, UNEP joined UN partners to launch the **16 Days of Activism** campaign, spotlighting the urgent need to end violence against women and girls, offline and online. Digital spaces are increasingly affected by harassment, abuse, and misinformation, with emerging technologies such as generative AI amplifying these risks. The initiative calls for collective action to create safe

environments and promote respect and equality. The color orange symbolizes hope for a future free from violence. #NoExcuse



Tree Planting for Biodiversity in Tervuren

On 29 November, UNEP Brussels Office convened colleagues from FAO, UNESCO, and OHCHR to join them for a family friendly tree-planting activity at the Arboretum in Tervuren. The activity, coinciding with the European Tree Planting Day and local Belgian Weeks of the Tree, reinforced our commitment to ecosystem restoration and cross-agency collaboration, and support the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration goals.



From Waste to Worth: Action Against Food Waste

To mark the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, UNEP and FAO visited SOCIETY BXL, a youth-led nonprofit in Brussels rescuing unsold organic produce to create healthy meals for low-income communities, combining food waste reduction with social inclusion. More info [here](#) about Society BXL.

[Youth Engagements](#)



KULeuven Conference to mark the UN at 80

Veronika Hunt Safrankova delivered the opening remarks at KU Leuven's conference "The United Nations at 80: Achievements and Challenges" on behalf of the UN Director in Brussels. The event brought together leading voices to reflect on the UN's legacy and its role in today's turbulent world. Discussions highlighted the organization's measurable impact over eight decades, from peacekeeping and humanitarian aid to climate action, global health, and support for democratic processes; achievements made possible through global cooperation. Looking ahead, the UN80 Initiative aims to make the UN more agile and future-ready, with proposals such as a New Humanitarian Compact, a UN Data Commons, and a Technology Accelerator Platform.

Read her speech [here](#).



Building the Leaders Tomorrow Needs

As part of a capacity building programme of the Young Professionals in Foreign Policy organization (YPFP), officials from the UNEP Brussels Office, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), participated in an event organized by Young Professionals in Foreign Policy in the UN House which was aimed at amplifying an international community of young, dynamic, diverse leaders from all sectors of international affairs, to accelerate their impact on critical global challenges. The event targeted young professionals and included sharing personal career experiences, advice, and answering the many questions surrounding careers.



UNEP Keynote at Coimbra Group's 40th Anniversary

On 21 November, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, delivered a keynote address at the Coimbra Group's 40th Anniversary Reception held at BOZAR, Brussels. The Coimbra Group, Europe's oldest university network, marked four decades of academic excellence and international collaboration among leading universities. In her speech, Veronika reflected on 80 years of the United Nations (UN80) and the importance of global environmental multilateralism. She emphasized the critical role of education and research in driving environmental sustainability and fostering partnerships for a greener future.

Learn more [here](#).



Youth Engagement on UN80

The UN marks its 80th anniversary this year with the UN80 Initiative, a bold agenda to make the organization more agile and responsive to global challenges. As part of the UN #Back2School campaign and on the Occasion of UN Day (24 October), Veronika Hunt Safrankova delivered a presentation to 120 Year 12 students at the British School of Brussels with a talk on UN80 and environmental action, sparking lively debate on multilateral cooperation.

Learn more about UN80 [here](#).



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[Recent Reports](#)

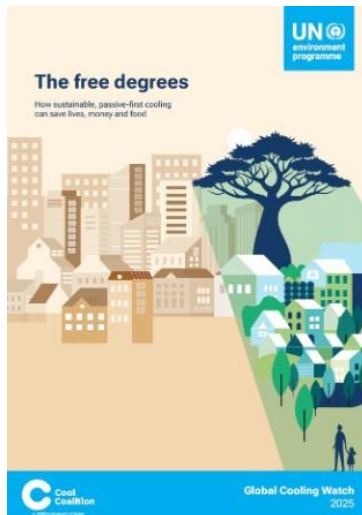
UNEP regularly releases cutting-edge scientific research and reports on various environmental issues, to advance solutions to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. Access these resources [here](#).

Find a selection below:



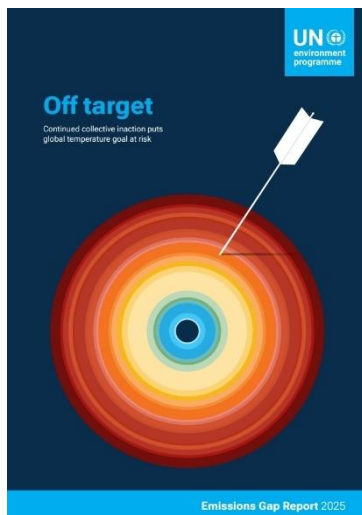
Global Environmental Outlook, Seventh Edition, 2025

The [Global Environment Outlook, Seventh Edition](#): A Future We Choose, the product of 287 multi-disciplinary scientists from 82 countries, is the most comprehensive scientific assessment of the global environment ever carried out.



Global Cooling Watch 2025

The second edition of [UNEP's Global Cooling Watch Report](#) takes a deep dive into one of the decade's most urgent challenges: surging heat, soaring cooling demand, and stark inequalities in access. Building on the 2023 edition's analysis of global sustainable cooling trends, the report provides the scientific foundation for the Global Cooling Pledge and charts pathways toward near-zero emissions from cooling.



Emissions Gap Report 2025

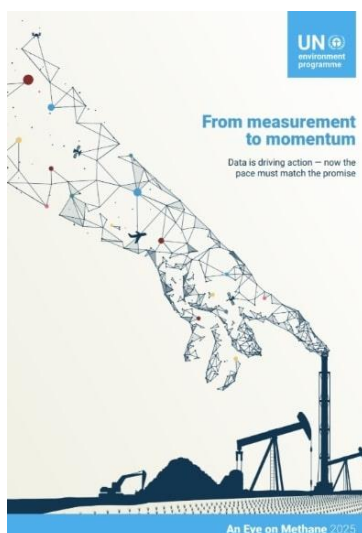
[UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2025: Off Target](#) finds that available new climate pledges under the Paris Agreement have only slightly lowered global temperature

rise over the course of this century, leaving the world heading for a serious escalation of climate risks and damages.



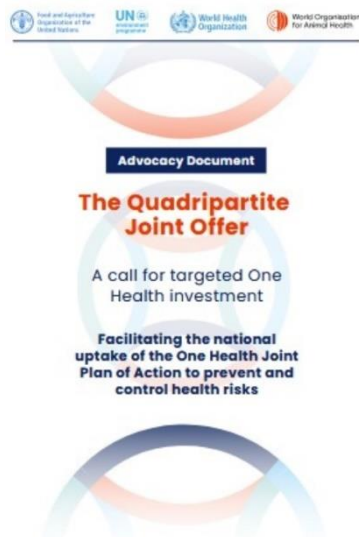
Adaptation Gap Report 2025

Amid rising global temperatures and intensifying climate impacts, [UNEP's 2025 Adaptation Gap Report: Running on Empty](#) finds that a yawning gap in adaptation finance for developing countries is putting lives, livelihoods and entire economies at risk.



An Eye on Methane 2025

The UN Environment Programme's International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO) annual report, [An Eye on Methane: From measurement to momentum](#), finds that data-driven solutions to rapidly target methane action are available – but progress to scale action must accelerate across governments and companies.



The Quadripartite Joint Offer - A call for targeted One Health investment

[The Quadripartite Joint Offer](#) is a strategic call for targeted One Health investment aimed at supporting member states in implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action. It provides a coordinated platform that brings together resources and expertise across sectors to more effectively prevent, prepare for and mitigate health risks at the human-animal-environment interface. Preventive investments through a One Health approach have consistently demonstrated strong returns, significantly reducing the expected costs associated with health emergencies.



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