

Our planet. Our purpose.





Message from the Executive Director

The way forward is **together**

Amid global tensions and shifting national priorities, multilateralism is undoubtedly facing challenges. Even so, 2025 was a year in which nations showed that environmental multilateralism is the beacon that rises high above the fog of geopolitical differences to rally the world in united action.

As you will see in the coming pages, UNEP remains at the centre of this environmental multilateralism, backing global efforts to tackle climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, land degradation and desertification, and pollution and waste – and so creating a better and more resilient future for people and planet.

Nowhere was the strength of environmental multilateralism more evident than during the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in December. At the global gathering in Nairobi, nations backed UNEP as the leading global environmental authority. They handed down new mandates through 11 resolutions and three decisions that cut across the environmental changes facing the world – covering the sound management of the minerals and metals essential to the energy transition, tackling glacier melt and wildfires, protecting coral reefs, boosting the environmental dimension of antimicrobial resistance, backing the sustainable use of AI and more.

UNEP was heavily involved in many other key multilateral efforts. The new Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution – which completes the trifecta of scientific panels on climate, biodiversity and pollution – was established in June, fulfilling the request of Member States at UNEA 5.2 to create such a panel. UNEP supported nations to ratify the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, which in 2025 passed the threshold to enter into force.

Meanwhile, UNEP reports, like the *Emissions Gap Report* and the *Global Environment Outlook*, provided the science for policymakers to act. UNEP also supported nations as they implemented Multilateral Environmental Agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. And, UNEP supported vulnerable communities to adapt to the climate crisis, safeguard themselves from natural disasters and recover from the environmental fallout of war.

While there are so many other highlights, the clear theme is that countries trust UNEP to deliver. But the world is in choppy financial waters. UNEP's budget has tightened, personnel have departed, and our ability to deliver is being tested even as Member States ask more of the organization.

UNEP needs a steady source of predictable, flexible financing – particularly to the Environment Fund, which is UNEP's backbone. It funds our science, helps us respond to emerging environmental issues, allows us to bring nations together and enables us to take a long-term approach. Additionally, it leverages and supports the capacity for nearly US\$3.3 billion of policies and programmes globally.

UNEP is tremendously grateful to all our funding partners. Last year, more than 100 Member States contributed to the Environment Fund, with a record number at their full-share level — and UNEP expresses deep gratitude to those Member States that are in a position to contribute above their full share and have chosen to do so. This strong performance underscores the increasing confidence of Member States in UNEP and widening commitment to its work. I call on all Member States to make their full contributions so that we at UNEP can deliver what you have asked us to deliver, with results and impact.

The environment is undoubtedly the foundation upon which peace, prosperity, economic growth and stability rest. Every single Member State, every single city, every single business and every single individual will benefit from a stable climate, thriving biodiversity, healthy and thriving lands, and a pollution-free planet.

To achieve these goals, the world needs environmental multilateralism more than ever. And Member States need a strong UNEP to realize this ambition.



A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to read 'Inger Andersen'.

Inger Andersen
UNEP Executive Director

Millions of people depend on the Indus River, which flows through Pakistan and Tajikistan, pictured here. UNEP works to protect and restore this vital river basin. Photo: UNEP



2025 highlights

Throughout 2025, UNEP carried out a planet-wide, people-centric programme of work to counter climate change; nature, biodiversity and land loss; and pollution and waste. Here are some of our major achievements.



The seventh edition of the *Global Environment Outlook*, authored by hundreds of multi-disciplinary scientists, showed how environmental action can deliver trillions in additional global gross domestic product (GDP), avoid millions of deaths and lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and hunger.



The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was established after three years of negotiations under UNEP's leadership. The panel will provide policymakers with the science they need to take on the mounting tide of pollution and waste.

2.3M

With UNEP support, over 170,000 square kilometres of natural spaces have either become protected or are being more sustainably managed, which will benefit 2.3 million people.



54

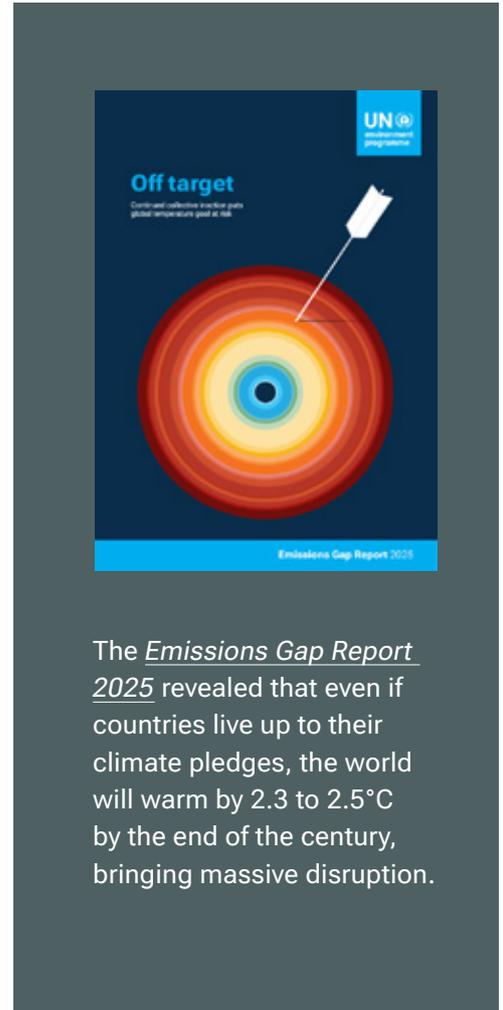
UNEP supported communities in 54 countries to adapt to the ravages of climate change, while extending the reach of life-saving early warning systems across storm-prone Pacific states.

UNEP supported communities dealing with the aftermath of conflict, including by conducting a key environmental assessment in Gaza and advising Ukrainian cities on renewable energy plans.





UNEP supported dozens of countries to speed up the ratification of a landmark agreement to protect biodiversity in the high seas, which is under threat from climate change, over-fishing and pollution.



The *Emissions Gap Report 2025* revealed that even if countries live up to their climate pledges, the world will warm by 2.3 to 2.5°C by the end of the century, bringing massive disruption.

106

The number of Member States that contributed to the UNEP's core fund, the Environment Fund, in 2025, with a record number of them doing so at their full-share level.

UNEP brought 186 countries together for the seventh edition of the UN Environment Assembly, where nations agreed upon 11 resolutions and three decisions – covering issues from the sustainable use of AI, minerals and metals, to action on wildfires and glaciers.



3000+

More than 3,000 events across 155 countries were held to celebrate the UNEP-led World Environment Day, which showcased solutions to plastic pollution.

About UNEP

A **global** footprint



The [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) is the world's leading authority on the environment. Founded in 1972, UNEP provides leadership and encourages 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.

UNEP worked in 151 countries in 2025, delivering science to support policymaking, providing advice to governments, supporting businesses to become more sustainable, and leading community-level projects that improved lives and livelihoods. Among others, work was carried out in:

43

Least Developed Countries

36

Small Island Developing States

32

Landlocked Developing Countries

20

Conflict-affected countries or states



The closing of UNEA-7 on 12 December 2025.
Photo: UNEP

Coming **together**

Representatives from 186 nations travelled to Nairobi, Kenya for the seventh edition of the UN Environment Assembly. The world's top decision-making body on the environment passed 11 resolutions and three decisions designed to make the planet more resilient.

That included resolutions on safeguarding coral reefs and glaciers, on the sound management of the minerals and metals essential to the energy transition, on the sound management of chemicals and waste, on the sustainable use of AI, on international cooperation to combat wildfires, on strengthening work on the environmental dimension of antimicrobial resistance and more. The Assembly also gathered representatives from all sectors of society – from youth to Indigenous Peoples to businesses – and brought together Multilateral Environmental Agreements for more joined-up action across all strands of the environmental crises.



Our planet is under strain like never before. Temperatures are rising. Biodiversity is collapsing. And nearly every person on Earth breathes unsafe air. Yet this Assembly offers hope.

António Guterres
UN Secretary-General

Scientific Assessments

The more you **know**

A core part of UNEP's mandate is to produce science that policymakers can use to address some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

At the pinnacle of that effort was the seventh edition of the *Global Environment Outlook* (GEO-7), released in December. The report, written by 287 scientists from 82 countries, found that humanity is off track in its efforts to counter climate change, nature loss and pollution. But the report also laid out a blueprint for transformation in five key systems, from finance to energy, which could deliver over US\$20 trillion per year in additional GDP, avoid millions of premature deaths from pollution, and lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and hunger. The report was mentioned in 1,273 news stories across 83 countries in 33 languages.



The seventh edition of the *Global Environment Outlook*, UNEP's flagship publication, was launched alongside UNEA-7 in Nairobi. Photo: UNEP



Meanwhile, the *Emissions Gap Report 2025* revealed that even if countries live up to their climate pledges, the world will warm by 2.3 to 2.5°C by the end of the century, bringing escalating impacts with each fraction of a degree. Given the lack of action on greenhouse gas emissions, average global temperatures will exceed the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement, likely within the next decade. The report calls for a massive step up in emissions reductions to minimize this overshoot and return to 1.5°C by 2100. The report was widely cited by political leaders, including Brazilian President [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](#) and [André Aranha Corrêa do Lago](#), President of the 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30). Its findings were also mentioned in a [key COP30 decision](#) that calls for US\$1.3 trillion a year in climate-related financing for developing countries.

The *Adaptation Gap Report 2025* found that developing countries have nowhere near enough financing to adapt to the fallout from a deepening climate crisis. This is putting lives, livelihoods and entire economies at risk. The report was cited by 323 media outlets across 57 countries in the first week after publication.

Also in 2025, the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution](#) was established. The body will provide countries with independent science and assessments, backing policymakers to counter the rising tide of pollution and waste. It has been in the making since a 2022 UN Environment Assembly resolution. The panel completes the trifecta of science-policy bodies addressing [climate change](#), [biodiversity loss](#) and pollution.



Climate **Action**

Punishing droughts. Record-breaking heat. Devastating floods. These are all hallmarks of a climate crisis shifting into overdrive. UNEP is working to counter these threats, which is pivotal to creating jobs, bolstering livelihoods and improving human health.



Satellite imagery from the International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO) depicts a methane leak. Photo: IMEO

Curbing greenhouse gas emissions

Throughout 2025, UNEP supported countries, cities and other partners to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Using satellite observations, UNEP's [International Methane Emissions Observatory](#) detected methane leaks from oil and gas installations in 36 countries. Alerts to governments led to the repair of at least 19 leaks, which combined had been [pumping out 1,200 tonnes](#) of methane every 24 hours.

In 2025, 14 additional oil and gas companies joined the UNEP-led [Oil and Gas Methane Partnership](#), which assists firms to measure and reduce their methane emissions. More than 150 companies with assets in 90-plus countries – representing 42 per cent of oil and gas production – now belong to the partnership.

With support from the UNEP-convened [Climate and Clean Air Coalition](#) (CCAC), 35 nations developed roadmaps for reducing methane emissions, and 25 countries integrated methane reduction targets into the latest round of their national climate pledges. The CCAC also supported nations as they pursued their commitments under the [Global Methane Pledge](#), an international push to reduce emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 from 2020 levels.

UNEP supported 17 nations, some among the world's Least Developed Countries, as they [created concrete plans](#) for using technology to counter climate change. The work became a pillar of Yemen's national climate change strategy and allowed Ghana to secure US\$70 million in financing, which is expected to benefit 3.6 million people.

UNEP also leveraged digital technology, working with partners to make power systems more efficient in four countries. In Brazil, some residents saw their electricity bills drop up to 70 per cent. Meanwhile, in Bogotá, Colombia, and New Delhi, India, the interventions helped reduce energy use and prevent blackouts. The effort improved the lives of 340,000 people.

UNEP advised Brazil on the development of a national plan to achieve its climate change-related targets. The strategy will guide public policy and investment in the country. UNEP also provided technical guidance to Chile as it implemented a framework national climate change law designed to make the country carbon-neutral by 2050, part of a broader ecological transition plan.

By the numbers

2.3 to
2.5°C

Amount the world will warm even if countries live up to their climate change pledges, according to UNEP's *Emissions Gap Report 2025*.

Adapting to climate change

UNEP supported communities around the world to contend with droughts, floods, storms and the other hallmarks of an increasingly erratic climate.

In 2025, UNEP led 90 climate adaptation projects in 54 countries. The work allowed drought-hit Somali farmers to trap rainwater on their rooftops. It supported Colombian villagers as they protected their homes from increasingly severe storms. And it backed Gambian farmers, beset by rising seas and dwindling rains, to find new types of work, which some families said reduced the pressures that lead to migration. These adaptation projects collectively aim to benefit 4.6 million people and restore at least 2,700 square kilometres of land.

At the same time, UNEP supported 25 countries as they developed and implemented national plans for adapting to climate change. Ghana's plan, for example, led to the installation of automated weather stations, which will provide drought-hit farmers with more accurate forecasts.

A big focus of UNEP's work is protecting the most vulnerable from heat waves while reducing emissions from the cooling sector. In the Indian city of Chennai, UNEP led a pilot project that used nature-based solutions to lower the temperatures in schools in low-income neighbourhoods by 3°C. The work is expected to benefit 150,000 students. In Cambodia, UNEP supported the development of a national cooling plan requiring developers to use passive cooling – which lowers temperatures by reducing or even eliminating the need for energy-hungry air conditioners – as part of getting building permits.

The UNEP-led [Cool Coalition](#) has supported 10 countries in integrating cooling into their national climate plans and in developing national cooling strategies. UNEP mobilized US\$170 million to support countries as they develop [early warning systems](#) for hazards like floods, cyclones and droughts. In five [Small Island Developing States](#) – Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu – UNEP’s work allowed government officials to better track weather patterns and wave heights, harbingers of tropical storms. UNEP also supported Kiribati as the country improved its meteorological forecasting and Timor Leste to create a plan for responding to floods. Overall, UNEP’s work across 11 countries is expected to protect more than 7 million people from climate-related disasters.

Meanwhile, the UNEP-hosted [Climate Technology Centre and Network](#) supported 33 countries as they leveraged technology to adapt to climate change. In Colombia, one effort used drones and satellite mapping to reveal where mangroves, key for keeping storm surges at bay, were thinning.

Finally, at the 30th UN Climate Change Conference, the Cool Coalition launched the [Beat the Heat](#) initiative, which will support cities to become more resilient to high temperatures by bridging gaps in policy, finance and delivery.

Meanwhile, The Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate, coordinated by the UNEP-hosted [Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction](#), launched [an international call](#) for governments to support the construction of affordable and sustainable housing.

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When there’s no mangrove, everything falls apart and families start suffering. With this project, my family will live happier. It’s like a treasure that’s going to stay for them.

Fisherman Diego Alfredo Vélez Cortés on a [UNEP project](#) that is helping to replant mangrove forests along Colombia’s Pacific coast. The trees are breeding grounds for several species of fish and shelter coastal villages from storm surges.

Photo: CTCN



Backing the Paris Agreement

UNEP supported 18 countries as they strengthened their national climate reporting systems. This allowed nations to better track greenhouse gas emissions, develop more ambitious climate policies and open up access to new climate-related financing. UNEP also assisted 24 countries as they prepared their climate transparency reports, which outline their efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement. [That process](#) helps build trust among the accord's signatories, something considered pivotal to its long-term success.

Generating climate-related financing

Many developing nations are struggling to generate the financing they need to adapt to extreme weather and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. For example, UNEP's [Adaptation Gap Report](#) finds that nations will need up to US\$365 billion a year by 2035 to adapt to climate change – around 12 times what they have access to now. UNEP is helping to change that equation.

Through the [UN-REDD Programme](#), UNEP supported 17 tropical countries as they put in place social and environmental safeguards that are prerequisites to accessing a combined US\$3 billion in results-based payments in return for protecting forests. This work could help prevent the release of 300 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, equal to the annual emissions of 80 coal-fired powerplants.

Meanwhile, UNEP's [State of Finance for Forests](#) report found the world must dramatically scale up investments in forests to counter climate change and nature loss. The report was one of the data sources [that informed](#) Brazil's creation of [a fund](#) at COP30, initially backed with US\$6.7 billion, to protect tropical forests.



What we do to
the Earth, we do
to ourselves.

Dia Mirza

Model, actress, UNEP Goodwill
Ambassador for India and UN Secretary-
General Advocate for Sustainable
Development Goals

Paraguay shows what's possible when countries safeguard their forests. With UNEP technical support, the nation secured US\$50 million in results-based finance for avoiding the release of 23 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by reducing deforestation.

From 2022 to 2025, UNEP provided seed capital to forest restoration projects across 13 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. That financing helped generate an additional US\$212 million from private sector investors. In all, the effort aims to restore and protect 849 square kilometres of forests and prevent 54 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

Up close



Photo: UNEP

The **homefront**

After a powerful storm devastated her groundnut crop a few years ago, Gambian farmer Mangasa Kijera sat down with her husband for a potentially life-altering conversation.

Nearly destitute, Kijera suggested her husband make the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe in search of work. It is a trip undertaken by thousands of Gambians every year. Many are fleeing rural communities where droughts and storms linked to climate change have made farming increasingly difficult.



I was very sad because I had no knowledge of how to make money. The project equipped me with the skills that I need [to market food].

Gambian farmer Mangasa Kijera, pictured above, speaks on how a UNEP-led project helped her earn a livelihood, allowing her husband to avoid migrating for work.

But Kijera and her husband found an alternative to the Mediterranean crossing. They joined a UNEP-led project devoted to supporting communities as they adapt to climate change. Outreach workers introduced Kijera to drought-resistant crops and showed her how to make more lucrative processed foods – like chili spreads – from the vegetables she grows.

Kijera now earns enough to cover essentials like food, medicine and school fees for her three children. The venture also gives her a cushion to weather future storms.



Photo: UNEP

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When the forest was being cut down, our bees had nowhere to forage, and there was no yield. But now, with the forest protected, our bees have both a good yield and security.

Rwandan farmer Goretti Bahirumwe, who learned beekeeping – a profession more resilient to climate change – through a UNEP-backed project.





Nature and Land **Action**

Much of the planet has been altered by humans, who have razed forests, degraded land and aquatic ecosystems, and pushed 1 million species towards extinction. To counter this crisis, UNEP is supporting countries to better govern natural spaces, ensuring that conservation and restoration benefit communities, and is generating the financing that is so crucial to conserving biodiversity.



Bolstering the governance of the natural world

Nature underpins our societies and economies. But to continue to do so, it must be governed in ways that allow everyone, everywhere to benefit from its bounty. This is a key focus of UNEP's work.

In 2025, the organization supported 70 nations to develop national biodiversity strategies and align them with the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), an agreement to protect the natural world. The work is considered crucial to making good on the promise of the framework, which, among other goals and targets, aims to protect 30 per cent of land and sea by 2030.

UNEP also provided technical and financial assistance to 112 countries as they prepared their national reports to the [UN Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD). The reports spell out how nations are countering drought, desertification and land degradation, which affect 3 billion people worldwide.

Another focus was improving governance of the ocean, which is under mounting pressure from climate change, over-fishing and pollution. UNEP worked with dozens of countries to speed up the ratification of the [Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction](#) (BBNJ). The landmark agreement, which in 2025 gained enough ratifications to officially enter into force in early 2026, will for the first time extend protection to biodiversity in the high seas. Among other things, UNEP is providing technical support to 29 countries as they align their laws with the treaty and prepare for its implementation.

By the numbers

148

The number of countries in which UNEP supported efforts to conserve, restore and sustainably manage ecosystems.

The organization also provided technical input to the G20 on marine spatial planning, coastal restoration and pollution reduction, helping to promote sustainability. The G20 accounts for around 45 per cent of the world's coastlines and 85 per cent of global GDP, underscoring the potential global reach of these policy discussions. At the same time, UNEP provided technical and financial support to the African Union as it developed a continent-wide strategy for governing ocean and coastal waters. The result of 10 years of consultations, the strategy focuses on protecting the region's marine ecosystems while creating sustainable economic opportunities.

Raising incomes, improving lives

At the core of UNEP's work on nature is the reality that conservation and restoration will only work if local communities both drive and benefit from the process. That's why, from Cameroon to China, the organization has focused on creating sustainable economic opportunities for local communities.

UNEP led on-the-ground work across 148 countries to conserve, sustainably manage and restore natural spaces. As a result of that work, at least 170,000 square kilometres of terrestrial and marine areas were under improved management during the 2025 fiscal year, which ended in June. More than 2.3 million people are expected to benefit from those efforts, double the number from the previous year.

In Cameroon, for example, [UNEP supported](#) small-holder cocoa farmers in bolstering their yields, eliminating the need for them to cut down trees in a nearby wildlife reserve. That was part of a larger UNEP effort that has seen 4,000 square kilometres of rainforests and peatlands placed under improved management across eight Congo Basin countries. This swath of greenery is home to 11,000 species and is one of the planet's largest carbon sinks.



Photo: UNEP



My family is now getting a premium price for our cocoa, which allows us to survive and invest.

Farmer René Etoua Meto'o talks about a [UNEP project](#) to make cocoa farming in Cameroon's Congo Basin more sustainable and lucrative.

In Madagascar's central highlands, community members nurture tree saplings and get trainings on alternative livelihoods, like essential oils production, in order to protect their landscapes. Photo: UNEP



Meanwhile, in Chile, UNEP supported communities in safeguarding more than 3,000 square kilometres of wetlands along the country's coast, protecting homes from storm surges and bolstering a growing eco-tourism sector. In Mongolia, the organization and partners restored 52 square kilometres of carbon-filled peatlands and permafrost, a push that will also improve rangelands for 14,000 reindeer herders. Finally, in Madagascar, UNEP backed 18 villages to gain the right to manage their own natural resources with the aim of halting deforestation, protecting plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth.

A focus of UNEP's work on landscapes was the mounting threat of desertification. The organization worked in 140 countries – leveraging US\$334 million in grants – to slow land degradation and combat drought. That included supporting the Great Green Wall, an Africa-led effort to regreen the Sahel in nine countries.

UNEP also supported the conservation and restoration of marine environments – including mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass meadows – in 27 countries. That led to the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of 22,000 square kilometres of ecosystems by the end of last year.

UNEP supported five countries in Southeast Asia to better manage 10,000 square kilometres of ocean, much of that area home to key fisheries. In Mexico, UNEP supported the conservation of mangrove forests, important breeding grounds for fish. And in Libya, UNEP backed the improved management of 10 square kilometres of protected areas around Garah Island, a key breeding ground for seabirds.

Investing in the natural world

Protecting and restoring the natural world takes money. To generate that funding, UNEP is forging innovative partnerships with governments and the private sector, while directing financing to companies with nature-friendly business models.

For example, UNEP, in partnership with the [Global Fund for Coral Reefs](#), channeled more than US\$35 million to businesses and communities that are protecting the world's corals, which are under mounting threat from climate change, pollution and human activity. In 2024, more than 31,000 people benefitted from that funding through improved livelihood opportunities.

The UNEP-led [Restoration Cities](#) initiative is backing 24 urban centres as they revive their natural landscapes, with an emphasis on shunting financing towards restoration-related projects. In Dakar, Senegal, for example, it supported officials as they laid the groundwork for a greenbelt around the city, part of an effort to counter desertification.



Now is the time to honor and amplify Indigenous voices, because when we stand with them, we stand for the future of our ocean and for a planet in balance.

Jason Momoa

Actor and UNEP Advocate for Life Below Water

Photo: UNEP



Up close



Photo: UNEP



We decided to start this, or we would lose everything.

Volunteer ranger Baatyrbek Akmatov on why he helps protect endangered species in the Kyrgyz mountains.

Protected places

For the snow leopards of Central Asia, it has been the perfect storm. Climate change, declining prey numbers and run-ins with livestock are threatening the survival of these solitary big cats.

But in some places, there are signs of hope. That includes a swath of Kyrgyzstan's rugged Tian Shian mountains that has been designated an ecological corridor thanks to UNEP's work. Here, a small group of volunteer rangers, with support from UNEP and partners, patrol 380 square kilometres of some of Central Asia's harshest terrain.

Braving bone-chilling temperatures and rifle-armed poachers, the rangers' goal is to protect the snow leopards' prey and habitat – and spark a resurgence of the elusive animal known locally as the “ghost of the mountain.”

Thanks to the patrols, prey species, like ibex and deer, have begun to return. So have apex predators, like wolves and snow leopards – 12 of the big cats have been spotted in recent months.

“I’m quite optimistic,” says resident Eliza Ismailova. “We used to tell stories to our kids that there were once wild pigs and fish. Now I’m happy they can see it.”



Photo: UNEP

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It's amazing to see how species are thriving. It's a model that can be replicated not only in Chile but worldwide.

Environmental campaigner Lucia Zapata discusses a [UNEP-led effort](#) to revive a series of wetlands along Chile's coast.





Pollution **Action**

The Earth is swimming in pollution and waste: nearly everyone on the planet breathes dirty air, humanity produces about 400 million tonnes of plastic waste annually and every second the equivalent of a garbage truck of clothes is incinerated or dumped in a landfill. To change that, UNEP is working to make sectors and value chains – including agriculture, construction, electronics, energy, textiles, plastics, mining and transport – more sustainable.



Small- and medium-sized textile enterprises in Kenya, as well as in South Africa and Tunisia, are receiving UNEP support to transition toward circularity. Photo: UNEP

Minimizing fashion's environmental footprint

The textile industry produces 2 to 8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, uses 86 million Olympic-sized swimming pools worth of water a year and has a sizeable chemical footprint. UNEP is working to lessen that environmental impact by backing the sector to use more circular solutions.

The organization has been working with small- and medium-sized textile makers in Africa and Asia, supporting them as they aim to reduce waste by 25 per cent. UNEP is also supporting these companies as they become part of transparent value chains, allowing them to access markets with sustainability requirements. Smaller companies are the backbone of the clothing industry, often supplying the world's biggest brands.

UNEP also worked to shift consumption patterns through the International Day of Zero Waste. This year's edition focused on how to make the fashion and textile industries – including fast fashion – more sustainable by reducing waste. Among other things, the day, led by UNEP and UN-Habitat, featured the launch of an initiative to cut down on waste by three provinces along China's Yangtze River.

Zero Waste Day came as the textile industry increasingly turned its focus to reducing pollution in line with the targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals, a key agreement adopted in 2023.



Fashion... has the opportunity and the responsibility to be an agent of change.

Amber Valletta

Supermodel and UNEP Goodwill Ambassador

Taking on plastic pollution

A rising tide of plastic pollution is sullyng land, sea and air, and increasingly finding its way into our bodies in the form of microplastics. To counter this threat, UNEP is working in 41 countries to address pollution across the life cycle of plastics and to create a more circular economy for the material. As part of this work, UNEP advised Zimbabwe as it mapped microplastics in its rivers for the first time. UNEP also supported Ecuador as it developed rules for biodegradable plastics – which is important as some materials labeled as “biodegradable” degrade to microplastics.

In 2025, UNEP supported the development and implementation of extended producer responsibility programmes in seven countries. These initiatives, which are becoming increasingly popular, make producers responsible for plastic products throughout their life cycle and help unlock financing for managing plastic pollution. That is why they are seen as one of the most important tools for countering plastic pollution. In Nigeria, for example, UNEP is supporting the design of a national registry for packaging, which will support the enforcement of producer responsibility rules.

UNEP also launched a programme, dubbed Plastic Reboot, to support 15 countries as they transition away from single-use plastic packaging – one of the leading sources of plastic pollution – in the food and beverage sector. The US\$108 million initiative will support countries as they enhance their policies and transition towards a more circular economy for plastics.

UNEP is assisting cities in Colombia, Jamaica and Panama to develop strategies for countering plastic pollution through the adoption of reuse programmes. Reuse has taken off in many places as countries move to transition away from single-use plastics.

Turning the tide

The Tide Turners Challenge, which educates young people about plastic pollution and leads plastic cleanups, passed the 1-million-member mark in 2025. Since its launch in 2019, the programme has been active in 61 countries. Recent evaluations show it has helped change how students and their families handle plastic and reduced the effects of plastic pollution on some communities in Africa and Asia.

Greening the transport sector

The transportation sector is a major source of both air pollution and greenhouse gasses. To lessen its impact on the environment and human health, UNEP supported more than 50 low- and middle-income countries as they transitioned towards electric vehicles and promoted the uptake of walking and cycling. That work backed the rollout of everything from electric taxis in Costa Rica to electric bikes in Uganda.

UNEP advised East African countries as they adopted standards for cleaner fuels for petrol- and diesel-burning vehicles, including cars and motorcycles. UNEP also supported West African nations as they implemented regulations designed to lower the sulfur content of vehicle fuels. That is helping to rein in two types of pollution detrimental to human health: particulate matter and black carbon.

UNEP also launched a partnership that supports some of the world's largest food and grocery delivery companies as they transition to electric motorcycles and other forms of zero-emissions transport. The Deliver-E Coalition has seen significant commitments since its adoption and includes platforms that operate in 96 countries and make 6 billion deliveries a year.

Alongside its work on road transport, UNEP is helping to reduce pollution at airports. UNEP launched a push to phase out the use of toxic fluorinated firefighting foams – including those that contain so-called forever chemicals – at major hubs in Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. The nearly US\$83 million effort will help airports transition to less toxic-alternatives and remove 4,500 tonnes of toxic foams.

In Costa Rica, UNEP is partnering with the Global Environment Facility to help the country reduce its emissions by weaving more electric vehicles into its transportation network. Photo: UNEP





Before, I feared the road.
Now, I own my future.

Dorothy Namaweje, a Ugandan motorcycle taxi driver who learned how to operate and repair electric two-wheelers through a [UNEP-led programme](#) that aims to reduce pollution while creating economic opportunities for women.

Photo: Women Rising for Africa



Making mining more sustainable

UNEP is working across the minerals sector to protect communities from pollution, curtail waste and promote responsibility.

In a [new study](#), the [International Resource Panel](#) called for dramatic changes to how the world finances and governs the use of energy transition minerals. These minerals are the building blocks of clean energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicle batteries. Most large-scale mining-related companies that responded to a survey during the development of the study, *Financing the Responsible Supply of Energy Transition Minerals for Sustainable Development*, believe that environmental, social and governance reporting will help attract new investors to the sector.

Many mining operations produce tailings, the waste left over after minerals are extracted from ore. Last year, UNEP and partners came together to [launch the Global Tailings Management Institute](#), an independent body designed to ensure mining companies safely manage these often-toxic materials. The institute will oversee how firms handle tailings based on a [standard](#) co-developed by UNEP. The aim is to reduce the risk of tailings accidents, which have in the recent past resulted in significant fatalities.

For some minerals, much of the extraction is done at small-scale and artisanal mines. That's especially true for gold, where 80 per cent of miners work at these smaller facilities. The [UNEP-led planetGOLD programme](#), which aims to improve production practices and working conditions at these smaller mines, expanded to 26 countries. It has supported more than 13,700 miners and helped prevent the release of nearly 38 tonnes of mercury, a highly toxic substance often used in smaller mines.

Tackling air pollution

UNEP also addressed other forms of air pollution, which claims about 7 million lives annually.

The UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) supported 68 countries in implementing policies to reduce super pollutants, substances that both sully the air and spur global warming. This support, which included US\$22 million in funding, focused on countries in the Global South and worked with a range of high-emitting industries.

The CCAC, implementing a UN Environment Assembly resolution, launched the Air Quality Management Exchange Platform, a one-stop knowledge hub designed to back governments' efforts to develop evidence-based policies for cleaner air.

The Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership advised eight countries as they developed clean air policies. That included Thailand, which UNEP advised on a new clean air act. UNEP also produced a technical report that contributed to the strengthening of the country's outdoor air quality standards.

African environment ministers officially endorsed a new regional roadmap that aims to reduce the open burning of waste by 60 per cent by 2030 and eliminate it entirely by 2040. The plan was developed with support from the CCAC. As well, with backing from the CCAC, the environment ministers from the G20 adopted a declaration calling for more decisive action on short-lived climate pollutants.

Finally, in October, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations passed a resolution declaring that everyone in the bloc had a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. UNEP supported the drafting of the declaration, which is expected to guide national policy reforms and bolster environmental governance in a region home to more than 670 million people.

Photo: UNEP

By the numbers

90%

The percentage of the world's population that is exposed to air pollution levels exceeding WHO guidelines.

Up close

A biodegradable dress that debuted at Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week. Photo: Tony Ward



With onion peels and sage dyes, designers **embrace sustainability**

When designer Batoul Al-Rashdan, founder of Jordanian fashion house Studio BOR, tells people she makes clothes out of ground olives and onion peels, some look at her with raised eyebrows.

But there's a good reason for her food-based fashions. They are designed to decay over time, setting them apart from the mountains of synthetic textiles swamping the planet. These synthetic clothes often wind up leaching chemicals into soils, shedding microplastics into waterways and, when they're incinerated, polluting the air.



It's definitely a conversation starter.

Fashion designer Batoul Al-Rashdan on her biodegradable designs.

Al-Rashdan is one of 150-plus eco-conscious designers who have received advice and mentorship from UNEP as part of an effort to reduce fashion's toll on the planet. One designer in the UNEP-led programme fashioned a collection out of paint brush bristles; another made a fur-like coat out of shoelaces.

"Everything we have done is coming back to [haunt] us," says 31-year-old Lebanese designer Hazem Kais, who often uses sage to dye his creations. "We have to be more sustainable."



Technology

The next wave

UNEP, in partnership with the Government of France and the International Telecommunication Union, launched the [Coalition for Sustainable Artificial Intelligence](#). The group, which brings together over 200 partners, including 37 tech companies and 14 countries, aims to ensure that AI is environmentally sustainable and has a positive impact on the planet.

Codebreakers

More than 150 young innovators took part in a [hackathon](#) for the environment in Nairobi, Kenya. The winner: Msitu Guard, who created a machine-learning model that predicts the survival rate of trees, data seen as key to countering deforestation. The hackathon was part of a broader UNEP effort to provide budding environmental innovators with training and mentorship.



In a hackathon, young innovators in Kenya co-created digital and data solutions to address environmental crises. Photo: UNEP

Disasters and Conflicts

From the ashes

From the Gaza Strip to Ukraine, UNEP is supporting communities grappling with the environmental effects of disasters and conflicts, while also addressing the environmental vulnerabilities that often feed instability.

UNEP and the UN Development Programme removed 22,000 tonnes of debris from 27 key access roads in the Gaza Strip, where two years of conflict have left the enclave covered in rubble. The debris clearance eased the delivery of humanitarian aid and supported the safe movement of Gazans, benefitting an estimated 200,000 people. Teams are also preparing two recycling centres, where debris will be turned into building materials, a pilot project meant to serve as a model for the rest of Gaza.

At the request of the State of Palestine, UNEP published a second environmental assessment of the Gaza Strip. It found the territory was facing an unprecedented environmental crisis, with its soils, coastline and freshwater supplies all likely heavily polluted. It further found the bombardment of Gaza had generated 61 million tonnes of debris – about as much as 15 Great Pyramids of Giza by volume. The assessment, which provides 30 recommendations for reversing environmental damage, has helped shape humanitarian work in Gaza.

Meanwhile, UNEP environmental assessments in Ukraine have informed recovery efforts, including initiatives to strengthen wastewater management, address chemical contamination and better manage debris. UNEP is also providing technical support to two Ukrainian cities – Kharkiv and Mykolaiv – as they develop plans for tapping into renewable energy.



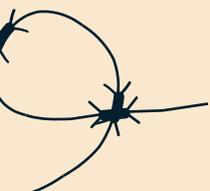
The work is designed to support a sustainable recovery from the conflict, which has levelled US\$20 billion worth of Ukrainian energy infrastructure. In the city of Kharkiv for instance, the initiative has developed a two-year plan to digitalize the energy networks that provide heating to 1.2 million consumers.

UNEP, in partnership with the European Union, launched the restoration of 10,000 square kilometres of crop and rangelands around Sudan's Dinder National Park. The effort is designed to support community efforts to cope with erratic rains, linked to climate change, and reduce competition over scarce resources – all while safeguarding one of the country's largest nature reserves. The project will directly benefit almost 55,000 people and comes at a critical time for Sudan, where a nearly three-year-old civil war has sparked widespread food insecurity.

In southern Iraq, UNEP co-led an effort to construct a five-hectare wetland that treats the wastewater of 30,000 people through a series of reed-filled ponds. The effort is showcasing how sustainable, low-cost solutions can restore wetlands, treat waste and bolster water supplies in drought-prone areas.



In Gaza more than 61 million tons of debris will require clearing, sorting and recycling or disposal – some of which is contaminated with asbestos, and industrial chemicals and wastes – states UNEP's second environmental assessment of the area. Photo: AFP



Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Better together

UNEP hosts the secretariats of multiple Multilateral Environmental Agreements, regional intergovernmental partnerships and science-policy bodies. While recognizing their independence, UNEP works closely with these bodies to address the world's most pressing environmental problems. Here's a look at some of their main achievements from 2025.

The 2025 meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions continued efforts to protect people and the environment from chemicals and waste. The Basel Convention was amended to update the disposal operations that define waste, strengthening the convention's environmental controls. Three persistent organic pollutants were added to the Stockholm Convention's list of regulated substances, setting the stage for their phase-out. And two new chemicals were listed in the Rotterdam Convention, which regulates the international trade of hazardous chemicals.



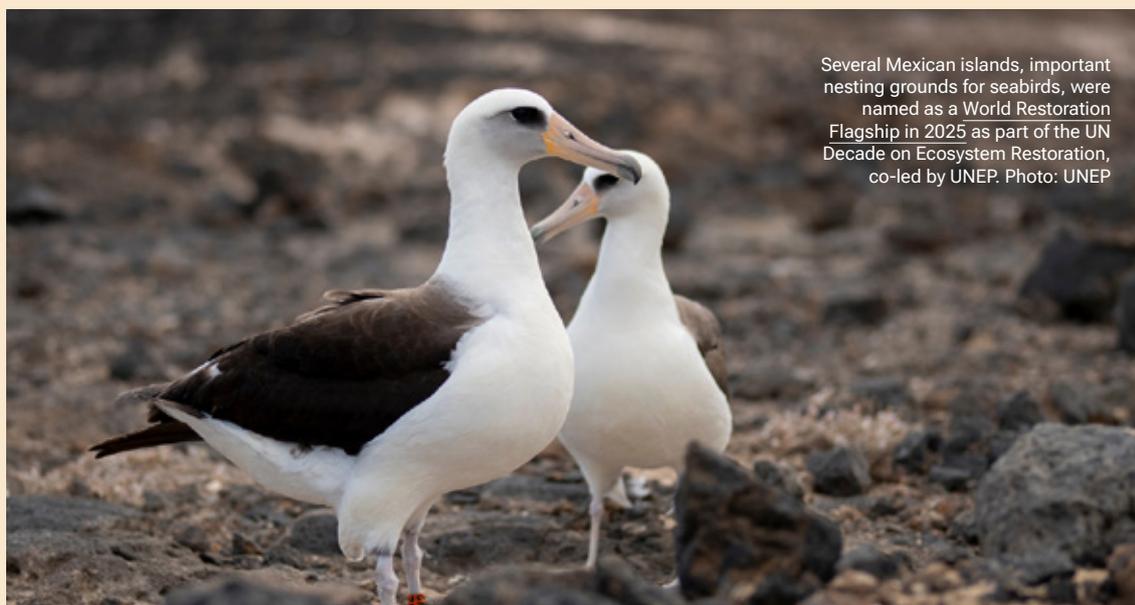
Countries gathered in Geneva, Switzerland for the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), tasked with developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. More than 1,400 delegates from 184 countries took part, along with 1,000 participants from more than 400 observer organizations. While the talks adjourned without an agreement, countries reaffirmed their commitment to continue negotiations. The INC will once more resume the fifth session in February 2026 to elect new officers.

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services promoted the uptake of two landmark reports looking at the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and integrated solutions to the global biodiversity crisis. The reports were used by a variety of decision-makers, including the government of Brazil, and Europe's pension and insurance authority.

In 2025, Parties to the Minamata Convention agreed to end the use of dental amalgam by 2034, considered a milestone in reducing mercury pollution. Building on a 2023 ban on mercury in cosmetics, the Libreville Commitment called on African countries to stamp out toxic mercury-laced skin-lightening creams.

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer celebrated its 40th anniversary. The treaty led to the Montreal Protocol, an agreement to phase out the substances that destroy the ozone layer. Since many of the substances covered by the agreement also warm the planet, the protocol prevented the release of about 135 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases from 1990 to 2010 alone, equivalent to about two years of today's global emissions.

In its 2024-25 financing cycle, the Multilateral Fund, established under the Montreal Protocol, approved 538 projects across 128 countries and two regions. That work is expected to prevent the release of more than 7,500 tonnes of ozone-depleting substances by limiting the consumption and production of hydrochlorofluorocarbons. It will also avoid the release of nearly 14 million tonnes of carbon dioxide through projects tackling hydrofluorocarbons, climate-warming gases that are being phased down under the Protocol. Since its launch three decades ago, the fund has provided US\$4.3 billion in grant funding for more than 10,000 ozone-related projects.



Several Mexican islands, important nesting grounds for seabirds, were named as a World Restoration Flagship in 2025 as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, co-led by UNEP. Photo: UNEP

Communications

Spreading the news

By leveraging social and traditional media, and leading awareness-raising campaigns, UNEP helps spur environmental action.

On 5 June, people across the planet marked World Environment Day 2025, uniting around one of the planet's most pressing environmental challenges: plastic pollution. The campaign struck a chord, covered by the global media through 56,000 stories in 56 languages. More than 3,000 events across 155 countries were organized by governments, organizations and individuals and registered on the Day's website, signaling a global will to end this mounting crisis.

UNEP also led campaigns around three other key international days: The International Day of Zero Waste, the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies and the International Day of Food Loss and Waste.

Meanwhile, stories about UNEP's work protecting the environment and published on its website were read more than 3.7 million times, UNEP videos were viewed more than 194 million times, and posts on UNEP's corporate social media channels were displayed more than 235 millions times, with 3 million engagements.

Each year, UNEP awards the UN's highest environmental honour to individuals, naming them Champions of the Earth. In 2025, five people and organizations that have made monumental strides in the fight against climate change were awarded. In partnership with clean technology CEO Chris Kemper and YouTube channel Planet A, UNEP also honoured three up-and-coming environmentalists as Young Champions of the Earth. Alongside the UN General Assembly in New York, the Young Champions partook in three days of mentorship and networking, in addition to receiving the award itself. Their inspirational stories reached more than 40 million people, with videos played more than 70 million times on UNEP channels alone.

On World Environment Day

Dutch artist **Mr. Super A** created a 20-storey mural in downtown Chicago to raise awareness about the importance of restoring ecosystems.

Photo: @StreetArtMankind



Funding

A stronger core

In recent years, UNEP has seen enduring demand for its work. This is a clear sign countries appreciate UNEP's unique ability to tackle the drivers of environmental crises. To answer these calls for support, UNEP needs a steady stream of flexible and predictable financing.

The primary vehicle for this is the Environment Fund, UNEP's core fund supported by Member States. Public funding remains the bedrock of UNEP's delivery on its core programme of work, which is expanded through specific programmes and projects supported by earmarked funds from blended sources.



The UNEP Planetary Funds, which are open to contributions from all manner of donors, complement the Environment Fund with softly earmarked financing and help UNEP scale its core work.

Here is a closer look at why core funding and financial flexibility is important.

The long and short of it: Core funding allows UNEP to respond rapidly to emerging challenges and take a long-term view with its work, necessary for impact on a global scale.

Multiplier effect: Core funding is a catalyst for further investment, helping projects and programmes to expand across regions.

Science accelerator: Core funding helps UNEP to keep the global environment under review by providing support for authoritative assessments – like the *Global Environment Outlook*, the *Emissions Gap Report* and the *Global Foresight Report* – which guide evidence-based policymaking.

Policy bridge: Core funding has supported the creation of science-policy bodies, like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and the new Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution.

Global cooperation: Core funding is the seed that allows UNEP to bring nations together to forge and implement game-changing international environmental agreements.

In tandem

For 30 years, UNEP has worked hand-in-hand with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support people to improve the quality of their lives without compromising the prospects of future generations. In 2025, UNEP and the GEF partnered on 302 projects across 148 countries. This work, made possible by US\$1.3 billion in funding, helped to limit chemical pollution; safeguard biodiversity, shared waters and degraded lands; and improve the resilience of communities to environmental challenges. More than 32 million people are expected to benefit from these efforts.

Taking on climate change

Since 2016, UNEP and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have partnered on 100 projects across 78 countries valued at US\$504 million. Currently, the active portfolio constitutes 40 projects in 46 countries worth US\$433 million. Together, these initiatives have catalysed US\$53 million in co-financing, protected and strengthened the management of 525 hectares, and benefitted more than 601,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

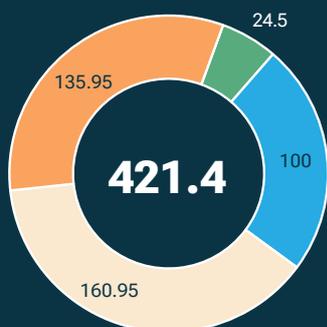


Funding snapshot

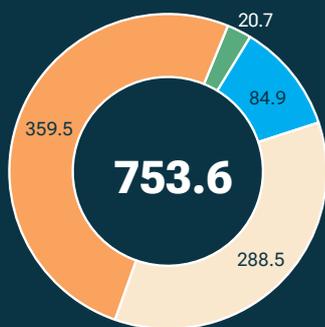
All funding data as of 31 December 2025

Financial status (US\$ million)

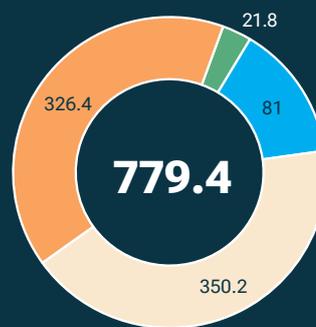
Budget



Income



Expenditure



UN Regular Budget Environment Fund Earmarked Funds Global Funds

- i. The income and expenditure figures are provisional and subject to completion and closure of UNEP's 2025 financial accounts.
- ii. Earmarked Funds include the UNEP Planetary Funds and other softly earmarked funds.
- iii. Global Funds represent the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Top 15 Environment Fund contributors in 2025 (US\$ million)

Norway	13.0
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	10.2
Germany	9.9
Denmark	7.8
France	7.6
Sweden	5.1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	4.7
Belgium	4.7
Switzerland	3.9
Canada	2.2
Spain	2.1
Finland	1.8
China	1.4
Japan	1.3
Saudi Arabia	1.2

Top 15 Earmarked Funds contributors in 2025 (US\$ million)*

UN Agencies	48.7
Germany	41.1
Italy	39.9
Denmark	22.9
UNEP Finance Initiative**	22.4
European Commission	22.3
Foundation/NGO	20.1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	19.4
Japan	9.4
Norway	7.8
Sweden	6.9
Australia	6.0
Private Sector	4.8
Switzerland	4.5
Canada	3.0

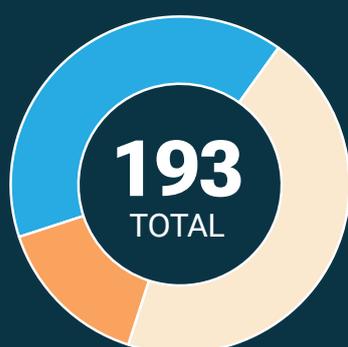
UNEP Planetary Funds contributors, to date (US\$)

Norway	18,962,952
Belgium	9,479,557
Finland	3,271,538
Denmark	3,029,832
Czechia	166,230
Philippines	20,000

*Includes softly earmarked contributions.

**Partnership between UNEP and the global financial sector to mobilize private sector finance for sustainable development.

Environment Fund contributors in 2025 by category (number of Member States)



77 Full share* contributors

29 Other contributors

87 Non-contributors

*Full share and above full share contributions to the Environment Fund, as determined under the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions (VISC) established by Member States.

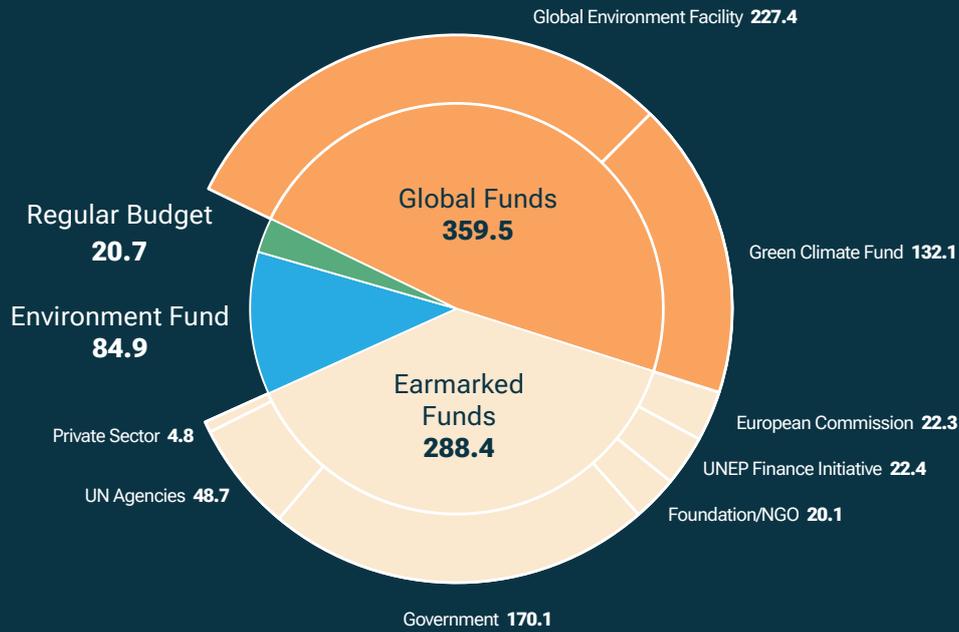
Full share and above contributors

Albania	Gambia (Republic of The)	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Slovenia
Armenia	Georgia	Monaco	Solomon Islands
Azerbaijan	Germany	Mongolia	Somalia
Barbados	Grenada	Montenegro	Spain
Belgium	Honduras	Morocco	Sri Lanka
Belize	Iceland	Nauru	Sudan
Bhutan	Iraq	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Sweden
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ireland	New Zealand	Switzerland
Cabo Verde	Jordan	Norway	Tajikistan
Cambodia	Kenya	Oman	Timor-Leste
Côte d'Ivoire	Latvia	Panama	Tonga
Cyprus	Liberia	Peru	Tuvalu
Czechia	Libya	Philippines	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Denmark	Lithuania	Rwanda	Uruguay
Dominican Republic	Luxembourg	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Vanuatu
Egypt	Madagascar	San Marino	Yemen
Eritrea	Maldives	Saudi Arabia	Zambia
Eswatini	Malta	Serbia	
Fiji	Mauritania	Seychelles	
France	Mauritius		
Gabon			

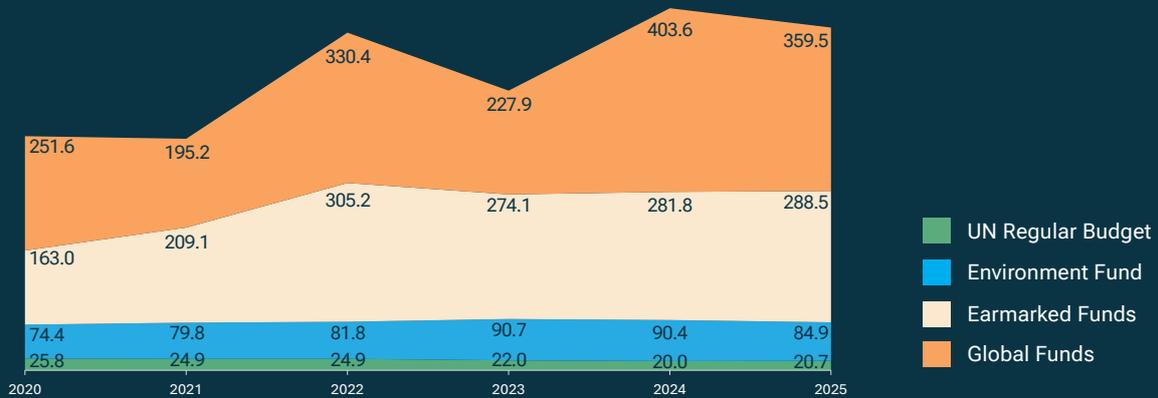
Other contributors

Andorra	Croatia	Malawi	Slovakia
Australia	Finland	Malaysia	South Africa
Austria	Hungary	Mexico	Thailand
Bangladesh	Indonesia	Pakistan	Trinidad and Tobago
Bulgaria	Italy	Poland	Viet Nam
Canada	Japan	Portugal	
China	Kazakhstan	Republic of Korea	
Costa Rica	Kuwait	Singapore	

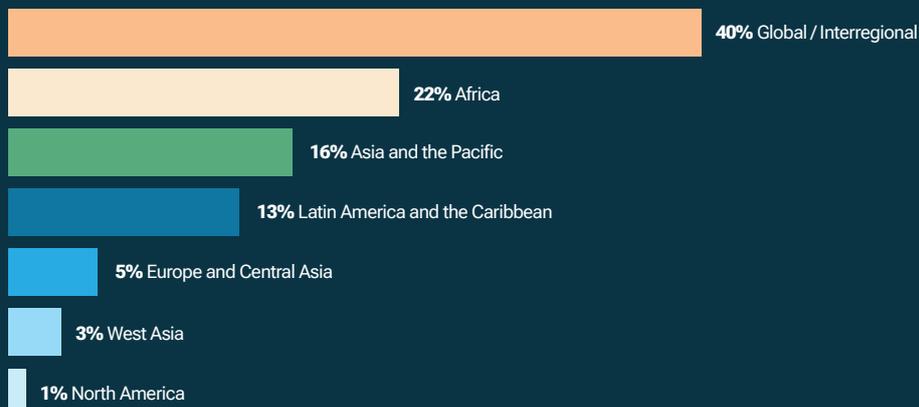
Resources by partner type, 2025 (US\$ million)



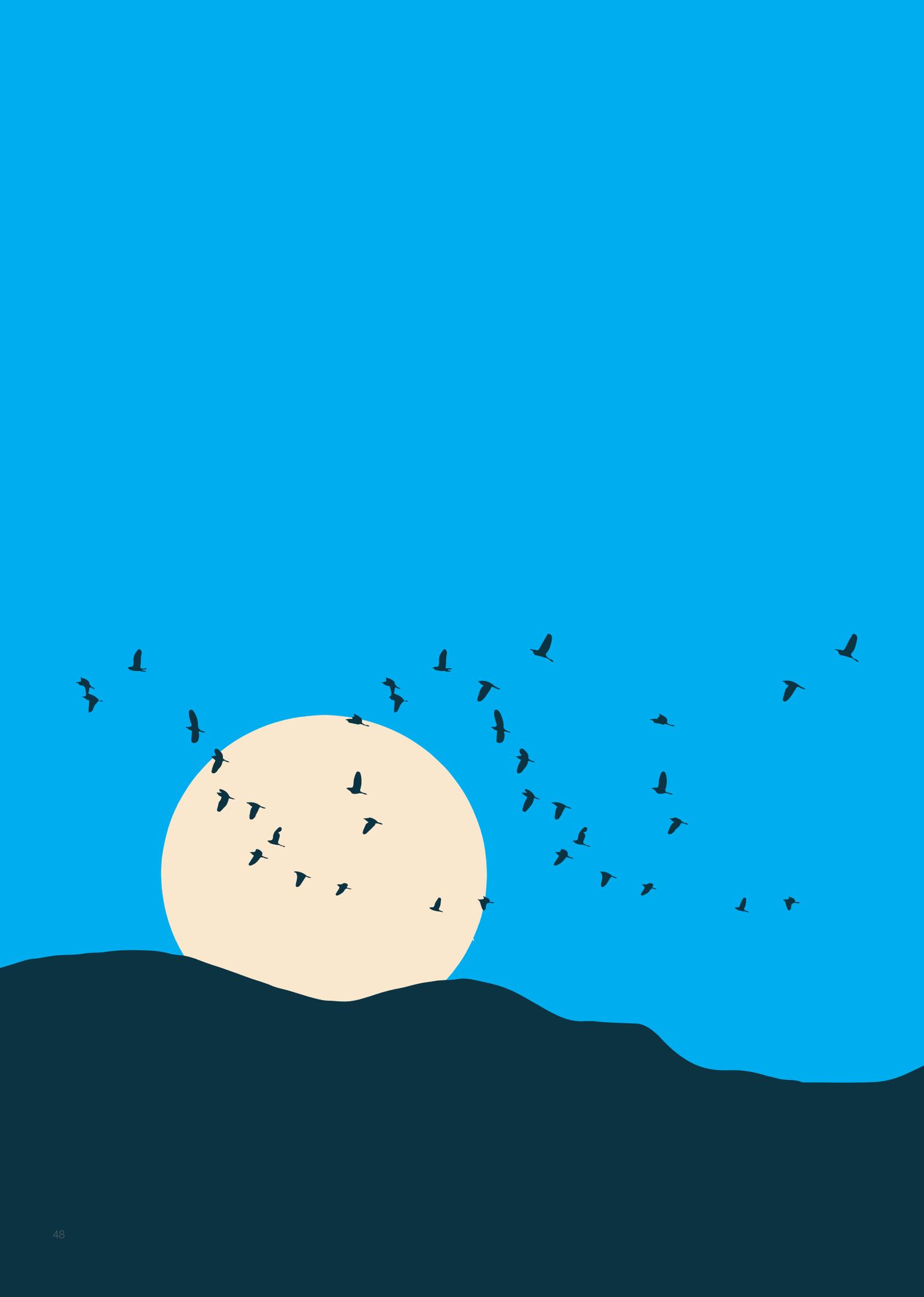
Resources by funding source, 2020-2025 (US\$ million)



2025 expenditure in UN programme countries, by region



UNEP is grateful to
all funding partners.
**Each contribution
matters**, for people
and planet.





Special thanks to UNEP's funding partners. For more than 50 years, UNEP has served as the leading global authority on the environment, mobilizing action through scientific evidence, raising awareness, building capacity and convening stakeholders. UNEP's core programme of work is made possible by flexible contributions from Member States and other partners to the Environment Fund and UNEP Planetary Funds. These funds enable agile, innovative solutions for climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.

Support UNEP. Invest in people and planet.
www.unep.org/funding



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