



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

OUT OF CRISIS — OPPORTUNITY

Opening Remarks,
Policy Statement and Speech
by **Achim Steiner**,
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At the Opening of the **25th Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

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UNEP Partners in ‘One UN’

Some Recent Examples

UNDP	Poverty and the environment/ One UN pilots and UNDAFs
WTO	Trade and climate change
UNIDO	Cleaner production/UN Energy/Renewables
UNWTO	Climate change and sustainable tourism
UNOCHA/ ISDR	Emergencies/Disaster Management — Preparedness
FAO	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation/ sustainable fisheries
UNESCO	Decade for Education and Sustainable Development/Biosphere Reserves/ Great Ape Survival Partnership
UNICEF	Children/youth climate change outreach
WMO	IPCC/Global Climate Adaptation Network
Un-Habitat	Climate resilient cities/eco-mobility
WFP/UNOPS	The Green Afghanistan initiative among several activities
WHO	Health and the environment/alternative malaria strategies
UPU	Postal services and climate change
UNSCC	Environmental sustainability training/UNDAFs
UNCTAD	Capacity-building on trade, environment, development/organic agriculture
IAEA	Post conflict/environmental assessments

It has been an extraordinary and perhaps historic past 12 months.

The world has witnessed an oil price that rocketed to just under \$150 dollars a barrel before plummeting to under \$40.

We have witnessed a food crisis in which millions were forced back into hunger and seen riots breakout from Egypt to Haiti and Cameroon to Bangladesh.

The financial crisis, followed now by the continuing economic crisis, has shaken the foundations of the global banking sector.

It has pushed many economies into slow downs and recession and could spin the time-piece for achieving the Millennium Development Goals backwards.

Pain is being felt from the developing to developed economies as homes are re-possessed; pensions lose their value; jobs are cut; commodities and thus export profits tumble; and remittances home become smaller and more erratic.

Meanwhile, the science on climate change gets bleaker rather than brighter.

I could mention countless examples from the past year but it is the impacts on glaciers that is perhaps the loudest and clearest canary in the climate change coal mine.

UNEP, in cooperation with the World Glacier Monitoring Service, announced its latest findings in March 2008.

During 1980-1999, average loss rates were 0.3 metres per year. Since the turn of the millennium, this rate had increased to about half a metre per year.

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“Data from close to 30 reference glaciers in nine mountain ranges indicate that between the years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 the average rate of melting and thinning more than doubled.”

The *UNEP Year Book 2009*, launched today at your request, also flags that since the IPCC's landmark 2007 Fourth Assessment ever more defining events may be under way — from an accelerating loss of the Greenland ice sheet to methane bubbling up off the coast of Svalbard in the Arctic.

The long discussed 'tipping points' may be getting ever closer, as is the deadline for a new agreement in Copenhagen, Denmark in just 300 days from now.

We urgently need to demonstrate courage and creativity as an antidote to any complacency in the face so many full-scale emergencies.

The last Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/ GMEF) so ably hosted by Monaco last February carried on the 2007 theme of 'Globalization and the Environment' with a focus on 'Mobilizing Finance to Meet the Climate Challenge'.

It signalled a sharpened focus for this institution on influencing the economic pillar of sustainable development.

“While the Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013 (MTS) noted that “the current environmental challenges and opportunities will cause the environment to move from often being considered as a marginal issue at the intergovernmental and national levels to the centre of political and economic decision-making”, none of us could have foreseen how relevant the Monaco meeting would prove to be as the momentous events unfolded throughout the year and into these conference halls today.”

Here in Nairobi this week, under the theme 'Globalisation and the Environment — Global Crises: National Chaos?' — it is no longer so much the question of mobilizing finance: hundreds of billions of dollars of public money has just been mobilized almost overnight in response to the financial crisis.

It is the manner in which such funds are invested that will have a direct bearing on the resolution and mitigation of other environment and development challenges.

The MTS stated that we need “to enhance the linkages between environmental sustainability and economic decision making” as a “key nexus for public policy making and market development.”

Invest these funds in a way that sets the stage for a new, Green Global Economy that can deal with the challenges of the here and now, and the ones looming on the radar from climate change and food insecurity to natural resource scarcity, especially fresh water.

Take the unprecedented opportunity of these unprecedented stimulus packages to also rapidly evolve public policy measures and far-sighted financial instruments.

Ones that re-focus and re-direct markets so that the trillions of dollars waiting for signs of recovery, currently waiting on the sidelines — in pension funds to private individuals accounts and venture capital funds — flow into the clean tech, high tech, ecosystem-based service sectors of a 21st century, rather than a 20th or 19th century economy.

And that in a Green Economy, every dollar, Euro, Yen, Rupee, Yuan and Kenya shilling, needs to work harder delivering on several fronts for the same unit of investment.

Equally that in dealing with the dilemmas of today we do not cheat on our children — that investments made today are just as cognisant of the next generation’s right to a healthy, functioning and productive planet: that the sums spent now are not translated into economic burdens for those yet to come.

Investments that also deliver new Green Jobs now and in the future at a time when millions are being pushed into dole queues and back into poverty.

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“It is our collective role to ensure that the ministers of finance and of energy, of health, transport and development, spend these funds wisely and to maximum effect.”

Global Green New Deal and the Green Economy initiative

In October last year we launched the Global Green New Deal and the Green Economy initiative, which I presented to our Committee of Permanent Representatives at the end of last year.

The foundations and fundamentals of these two projects — one short term in nature and very much aimed at dealing with the immediate crises, and the other with a medium to long term perspective of sustainability — emerge from the notion that the economic models of the 20th century are hitting their limits in terms of their ecological footprint.

“The Green Economy initiative also recognises the fundamental responsibility of governments to shape and to order markets in a way that delivers wealth not for the few, but for the many.”

Decent employment for the 1.3 billion currently unemployed or underemployed — and the 500 million young people joining the work force over the next decade — can be found in promoting clean tech industries and employment in managing ecosystems, as much as and perhaps more than in many conventional sectors.

Green Economy Team

UNEP has assembled a high-calibre team of internal and external financial, economic and policy experts to evolve the conceptual and practical blue prints underpinning a Global Green New Deal.

Some economies need no persuading. Over the past few months China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Germany and the new administration in the United States of America have all announced plans for stimulus packages that to a greater or lesser extent see environmental investments as a way of powering national and the global economy out of grim times.

Others may be unsure as to how to move forward and which directions are best for their national circumstances and current development trajectories.

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“UNEP has responded in a supportive and potentially transformational way to these multiple challenges.”

Ladies and gentlemen,

UNEP will today at 1pm publish its draft Global Green New Deal report compiled after intense debate and discussion by United Nations organizations and by leading economists at a meeting last month in New York.

Your wisdom, experience and above all your inputs for action will help shape the Global Green New Deal further.

The Global Green New Deal is, as previously mentioned, an immediate response to the current economic malaise.

The team is simultaneously pin pointing and compiling the suite of financial market mechanisms and fiscal instruments that countries can utilize and adapt as part of the transition to a Green Economy nationally, and within the context of a globalized world.

Your insights and actions now and in the near future will assist us in shaping that final report of the Green Economy initiative scheduled for release in around 18 months time supported by interim reports in 2009 and 2010.

The three objectives:

- Revive the world economy, create employment opportunities and protect vulnerable groups.
- Reduce carbon dependency, ecosystem degradation and water scarcity.
- Further the Millennium Development Goal of ending extreme world poverty by 2025.

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“This is very much a partnership. Here at this 25th GC/GMEF we also want to hear from you — the ministers of the environment — about how your country is coping and how you may be translating crisis into opportunity.”

“Broadly six themes, central to greening our economies are at the centre of the Green Economy initiative:

- Ecosystems (or environmental infrastructure);
- Clean and efficient technology;
- Renewable energy including rural energy;
- Biodiversity-based products and services (such as organic foods);
- Chemical and waste management and mitigation technologies; and
- “Green Cities” — tomorrow’s habitat for humanity — with ecologically friendly buildings, construction, and transport systems.”

In a sense it crystallizes and articulates the persistent and emerging challenges facing us today into a coherent, rational and economically viable, market-relevant response.

Green Economy — A developing country agenda too

This agenda — this locomotive for sustainable development — is as relevant to developing and emerging economies as it is to industrialized ones.

I would like to thank the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the many United Nations and external organizations, institutes and centres for their support.

I would like to especially acknowledge the International Labour Organization, employers' organizations and international trade unions who, together with UNEP, got the debate under way and the ball rolling with the launching of the Green Jobs report last September in New York.

“Greening the economy is as much about greening overseas development aid; bilateral and multilateral assistance; south-south cooperation and direct foreign investment as it is about national investment.”

Honourable ministers,

UNEP Reform — Implementing the Strategic Reform Agenda

Let me now turn from the reform of the global economy into a Green one to the reform of this institution.

When I stood before you two years ago as the new Executive Director of UNEP, I was well aware that reforming UNEP was a central responsibility entrusted to me by you.

I was also aware that coherence within the United Nations system between the many conventions and agencies dealing with the environment, especially the multilateral environmental agreements, was a central challenge given to this institution.

We have come a long way and would like to give you an update of where we stand in February 2009.

Honourable ministers,

In 2007, UNEP embarked on an ambitious reform process to make better use of existing structures, and create a more effective, efficient and results-focused organisation, sometimes referred to as ‘UNEP+’.

I first outlined this reform process for Member States in 2007 at the twenty-fourth regular session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), which I described in the context of a 3-12-24 month reform agenda.

“A ‘match-fit’, modern and forward-looking environment programme of the United Nations is central to bringing sustainability into the development agenda in the 21st century.”

“The open, transparent and consultative process undertaken with the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, civil society and the private sector was unique.”

The reform process has been central to UNEP:

- Gaining increasing confidence of States;
- Being in a position to more effectively respond to the needs of States, especially through implementing the Bali Strategic Plan;
- Better fulfilling its role as the environment programme of the United Nations system; and
- Responding in a timely and effective manner to emerging environment and development challenges and opportunities.

The 2002 ‘Cartagena package’ and its five recommendations have been very much part of this effort, from strengthening the role of the GC/GMEF to moving forward on capacity building and country-level coordination

Strategic Reform — A Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013

In February 2008, Member States adopted a decision on the MTS at the tenth Special Session of the GC/GMEF, held in Monaco.

This milestone was achieved a full twelve months ahead of schedule, which enabled UNEP to expeditiously move forward with its ambitious reform agenda.

Most recently the MTS was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution on the tenth Special Session.

Reform — The GC/GMEF: The UN’s High-Level Environment Policy Forum

Through its GC/GMEF, UNEP brings the world’s environment ministers together annually to “review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment”, in the process involving heads of UN agencies, MEAs, civil society and the private sector.

The process of strengthening the role of the GC/GMEF, which started in 2007 where the heads of five United Nations agencies participated in the Forum, continued in 2008 with the focus of the Ministerial Forum being ‘*Globalisation and the Environment: Mobilising Finance to meet the Climate Challenge*’ and ‘*International Environmental Governance*’.

This year we have further enhanced the Forum through a focus on “*Globalization and the Environment — Global crises: national chaos?*”

“These are timely consultations that will focus on whether the international environmental governance system — evolving and now changing rapidly in the area of financing — is adequately equipping the international community to provide the coherent and timely responses to multiple environment and development challenges and to capitalize on emerging opportunities.”

The second major topic is *“International environmental governance and United Nations reform — International environmental governance: help or hindrance?”*

The MTS also highlighted the role of UNEP as the environment programme of the United Nations and we have been actively working on many fronts — be it support to the Secretary-General’s Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, a system-wide and coherent response to climate change or tackling poverty and the environment to name but a few.

Reform — Enhancing Delivery on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building

Its delivery was mainstreamed at national and regional level through the Programme of Work 2008–2009, including through directly participating in the One UN ‘Delivering as One’ pilot programmes in the eight pilot countries in collaboration with UN Country Teams (UNCT).

“The MTS placed strong and renewed emphasis on significantly enhancing UNEP’s capacity to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan, providing clear strategic direction for the development of the draft Programme of Work 2010–2011.”

“Meanwhile UNEP is also increasingly playing a leading role in promoting the environmental pillar of sustainable development in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). By way of example:

- In Albania and Rwanda, UNEP was designated by the UNCT to lead the thematic group on environment
- UNEP has been instrumental in the development of joint projects under the One UN Coherence Fund in Uruguay.
- The integration of environment and climate change in UNDAFs in Cape Verde, Tanzania, Pakistan, Botswana and Kenya has been spearheaded by UNEP in collaboration with UNDP.
- In Vietnam, UNEP working with other UN resident agencies provided technical support and mobilised resources for the One UN green house.
- The development and operationalisation of the Environmental Sustainability training module, as a joint effort involving UNEP, UNDP, UNHCR and UNSSC, goes above and beyond conventional collaborative work with UN country teams.”

Delivery of the Bali Strategic Plan was also mainstreamed through UNEP’s enhanced partnership with UNDP, including the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund and the Poverty and Environment Facility.

“The MTS placed strong and renewed emphasis on UNEP operating to become a more effective, efficient and results-focused entity, including through ensuring its interventions are founded on sound science.”

Reform — Strengthening UNEP’s Science Base

Science is very much at the core of this partnership and it is very much at the core of our programme of work: it is a big part of the reform process too.

In 2008, initiatives included cooperating on implementing the reform of the Global Environment Facility’s Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel in order to enhance its impact.

UNEP also organized an international meeting in Malaysia to examine the pros and the cons of an Intergovernmental Panel or Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services — I will present the outcome of this meeting to the GC/GMEF and seek your guidance on the way forward.

Today, I am delighted to announce the appointment of Joseph Alcamo to the post. He has played a central role in many of the key environmental scenario processes of the last decade including the IPCC, Millennium ecosystem assessment and UNEP’s global environmental outlook.

He brings a first class scientific, systems approach- mind to the sustainability challenge and has distinguished himself at research institutes from India and South Africa to the United States and Europe.

As a measure of Mr Alcamo’s calibre, he won the prestigious Max Plank Research Prize for global modelling and its role in international policy in 1998.

“Finalising the recruitment of a UNEP Chief Scientist within the Division of Early Warning and Assessment has been a high priority.”

Reform — Strengthening the Financial Basis of UNEP

“Over the past 12 months greater confidence has been gained in the Organisation through, for example, the finalisation of the MTS and the consultative process in the development of a new draft Programme of Work and Budgets 2010–2011, which included 15 meetings with the Committee of Permanent Representatives.”

This has resulted in important additional resources being available through the Environment Fund in 2008, enabling us to present a supplementary budget to authorise the Executive Director to allocate an additional \$24 million.

The financial situation was also strengthened through further reinvigorating the Division of Global Environment Facility (GEF) coordination and UNEP’s relationship with the GEF.

Strengthened too through the establishment of a Resource Mobilisation Section to drive a more coordinated approach for mobilising financial resources from an expanded donor base, including the private sector.

Reform — A Results Based Institution

Results-based management was mainstreamed through the organisation by developing a prioritised results-based MTS and draft Programme of Work and Budgets for 2010–2011.

Extensive training was also provided to staff as part of making the transition towards being a fully results-based organisation.

Reform — Strategic Presence

“In line with the direction provided by the MTS, strategic directions were put into place for the significant strengthening of UNEP’s presence in the regions, based on UNEP engaging its staff and resources more effectively.”

As part of strengthening UNEP’s presence in the regions, clear strategic direction on the respective roles of Regional Offices and Headquarters was developed.

UNEP’s capacity on results-based management and the strategic presence initiative were doubly strengthened by:-

- Providing training opportunities for more than 200 UNEP staff in duty stations around the world on results-based management in the context of environmental sustainability.
- Training too for more than 250 staff on programme and project development and implementation.

Reform — Engaging in the International Environmental Governance Debate

UNEP engaged in the IEG debate through the GC/GMEF and through participating in various events and informal processes instigated by Member States and civil society consistent with the ‘Cartagena package’.

The issue of IEG is again on the agenda for our Ministerial Consultations but this time taking a country perspective to the issue.

It has been given added momentum by the release of the Joint Inspection Unit report on environmental governance in the United Nations system; a subject which I will return to later.

“Fully implementing the Cartagena package has been a high priority of mine for the past 12 months, with the importance of its full implementation being further highlighted by the Governing Council through its decision on the MTS.”

Reform — the Workforce

I have put a strong emphasis on talent, training and equity at UNEP — an emphasis that reflects the new challenges of the programme of work.

The MTS has served as the guide for UNEP reinforcing its commitment towards these areas and to embed them within its programmatic framework, management and operations.

“In 2008 new, innovative organisational and staff development initiatives included a voluntary rotation programme; a training and learning programme and a staff reward and recognition programme called the UNEP Baobab Staff Awards as well as a career coaching programme.”

UNEP conducted a wide-ranging Staff Opinion Survey combined with a 360-degree assessment for managers, as well as a comprehensive training and learning survey.

Significant support was provided to the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director towards filling more than 25 senior management positions, including related targeted outreach activities.

An intensified search for qualified female candidates continued to result in an increase of women employed in senior and professional positions within UNEP.

Reform — the Management

New line management structures within UNEP were established through new sections on quality assurance, corporate services and resource mobilisation, as well as through the introduction and mainstreaming of results-based management into the operations, programming and planning of UNEP.

An organisation-wide delegation of authority and accountability framework put into place in 2007 was reviewed, and internal business processes were streamlined thereby making the organisation more effective and efficient.

Reform — Information and Communications Technology

The MTS laid the foundation for initiatives aimed at upgrading UNEP’s information and communication technology capacity.

It has laid the foundation for creating an organisation-wide e-identity, and provided the necessary platform for developing enhanced knowledge management tools.

“UNEP in 2008 took further steps to ensure it is an organisation that contributes substantively to greater gender equality through its programmes and operations.”

Reform — Gender

Specific gender focal teams embedded within Divisions now comprise a total of 80 staff members, and divisional gender action plans have been developed.

Training on mainstreaming gender into UNEP's programmes of work was provided to all Divisions and Regional Offices reaching a total of 450 staff.

Significant efforts also resulted in a strengthened partnership on gender with both intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, including the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders of Environment, which will be meeting in the margins of the 25th session of the UNEP GC/GMEF.

UNEP was also instrumental in the formation of the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance, with key partners such as UNDP, IUCN and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

Reform — the Strategic Implementation Team

The UNEP Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) was established by me as Executive Director in March 2007 to provide additional capacity to help drive the ambitious reform agenda within UNEP, which I have reported on today.

The SIT was established for “up to three years” with the aim of achieving two fundamental organisation-wide goals:

- Operate as ‘One UNEP’ by delivering on results-based management reforms; and
- Deliver on the ‘One UN’ and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

The role and success of the SIT in providing UNEP and the Senior Management Team with an enhanced capacity for accelerated reform has been widely acknowledged within the organization as well as in the CPR.

It is also worth noting that the SIT, and indeed the entire reform process has so far been achieved without requesting any additional funding from member states.

“Due to the successful implementation of its core mandate and work plans — and based upon its own recommendation — the SIT was disbanded around a year ahead of schedule.”

I would like to take this opportunity before the Governing Council to commend the SIT Team Leader and all of the members of his team for what they achieved in rapid time.

“The first UNEP-wide Intranet, established in 2007, was enhanced: together with the UN Office at Nairobi, UNEP established a ‘mirror-site’ with the United Nations in Geneva to strengthen the institution’s Information Technology capacity and efficiency.”

Reform — Future

Much has been achieved but much still remains to be done to implement reform. A modern organization needs to be in a constant state of renewal.

This is now mainstreamed within UNEP via the organizational responsibilities of the Senior Management Team and the recently established Quality Assurance, Corporate Services and Resource Mobilisation sections.

Reform — Enhancing EMG Effectiveness

These include significant work on progressing the Secretary-General's leadership not only internationally but at home on global warming by moving the United Nations to climate neutrality and adopting a system-wide sustainable procurement policy. Today:

- Almost all of the forty-six United Nations system organizations of the EMG have designated their climate neutral focal points.
- Thirteen organizations have established internal task forces to address climate neutrality within their institution, while sixteen have designated a “senior-level champion” to drive the process.
- Good progress is being made by organizations in estimating their greenhouse gas footprints, with some twenty-four agencies having begun the process, thirteen of which have preliminary data, and six of which have final or near-final numbers.
- Some thirteen agencies have developed strategies outlining how they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
- At least twenty-five agencies have begun implementing some measures, including UNEP which achieved carbon neutrality for the first time in 2008.
- Eight organizations have made specific events that they have organized climate-neutral through the purchase of offsets.
- Procurement.
- New initiatives with the EMG and the United Nations system including conventions focusing on the year of biodiversity 2010 as well as ones on desertification and land degradation.

Reform — Taking Forward Poverty and Environment

The support of UNDP administrator Kemal Dervis and his team has been invaluable. I would like to wish him well in his future endeavours after his decision not to seek a second term on personal grounds.

“The United Nations Environmental Management Group (EMG), which falls under my chairmanship, is an important part of the wider reform agenda and it led and catalyzed a number of these high priority UN-wide initiatives in 2008.”

The United Nations system has benefited enormously from his organizational and intellectual leadership and Mr. Dervis will be missed in the UNEP family.

The PEI is aimed at providing operational support to governments to integrate sustainable environmental management and natural resource use into national and sectoral development planning processes.

This is in order to deliver improved livelihoods, health, and security especially for the poor.

Initially launched with seven pilot countries, the initiative was scaled-up in 2007 by establishing a joint UNEP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Facility.

Since then:

- 2008 has seen the Facility become fully operational, which has proven to be a milestone—not least in the context of achieving system-wide coherence.
- The two agencies have implemented a full, joint mechanism with pooled funding, joint programme development and implementation plus joint teams in the Facility and the Regional PEI programmes.
- Bhutan and Malawi, amongst other countries, commenced PEI programmes in 2008.
- In terms of country level scale up, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States are starting new regional PEI programmes.

And in 2009 new PEI programmes will be implemented in for example Burkina Faso, Ecuador and Tajikistan

Encouragingly, spontaneous demand from countries for PEI programmes is very high — evidence that the PEI approach developed from the lessons learnt in the PEI pilot countries is country responsive.

The PEI has led the way for further co-operation between UNDP and UNEP, for example on chemicals and climate change.

A new UNDP-UNEP Memorandum of Understanding has set the stage for increased joint programming between the two agencies.

I would like to thank the governments of Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, along with the European Commission, for their continued support.

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“I am pleased to report that the joint UNEP and UNDP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) is going from strength to strength and represents a key building block in our commitment to implementing the Bali Strategic Plan.”

Reform — Enhancing MEA and UNEP Coherence

As member states you have repeatedly called for greater cooperation and coherence between the work of UNEP and the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

“As Executive Director, I am now regularly convening the MEA Executive Heads through the UNEP MEA Management Team to enhance effective communications, administration and better cohesion.

- In 2008, I convened an annual meeting of the UNEP Senior Management Team, MEA Management Team and UNEP Regional Directors.
- MEA Secretariats were also consulted in the development of the MTS and the draft Programme of Work and Budgets 2010–2011.”

All this is being carried out in full recognition of the authority and autonomy of the governing bodies.

The multiple operational, economic and environmental benefits of greater cohesion were recognized by governments at the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the Twentieth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol successfully hosted in mid-November by Qatar.

Here, governments requested the Executive Secretary of the Montreal Protocol ozone agreement to better coordinate with, amongst others, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

They requested that the two treaties hold meetings and explore several areas of cooperation including on how best to reduce releases of substances known as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

HFCs, along with pollutants such as CO₂ and methane, are one of the six gases controlled under the climate convention's Kyoto Protocol.

In addition, governments are suggesting that mutual benefits can also come from an accelerated freeze and phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) agreed by governments at the meeting of the Montreal Protocol in Canada in 2007.

I am pleased to report that the Executive Secretary of the Montreal Protocol followed through on the request and held an exploratory meeting with the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC at the United Nations Climate Convention meeting in Poland in December.

I am sure this is the beginning of fruitful partnership and one that resonates with the double challenge of recovering the ozone layer and combating climate change in the fastest possible time.

Reform — Wider UN Climate Change Cooperation

Climate change is a central part of the MTS and central too to the One UN.

I have already mentioned the work of the EMG in this respect.

Let me highlight a few other key milestones in 2008 that both support the climate negotiations and the UN’s ability to Deliver as One.

UN-REDD

UNEP was selected to host the secretariat, which is being established in Geneva, Switzerland and staffed by the three agencies.

UNEP is aware that REDD may have a central role in making the UN climate meeting in Copenhagen a success. As such:

- Scoping missions to develop national REDD policies and involving UNEP, FAO and UNDP and also the World Bank, have already been to Panama, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Tanzania and most recently the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- UNEP and its sister United Nations agencies have also hosted a meeting of experts in Washington DC to see how best to build capacity on monitoring, reporting and verification—a crucial set of elements if REDD is to work as part of the wider climate agenda.

We are also assessing how to bring in even wider, multiple Green Economy opportunities from REDD.

For example, we are in discussions with the Convention on Biological Diversity in terms of maximizing the biodiversity benefits, a good example of which was spotlighted at the recent climate convention meeting in Poznan, Poland.

Here the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre launched a preliminary report, mapping and overlaying tropical forests with biological hot spots — an initial guide to governments and investors keen to not only conserve carbon but biodiversity too.

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“Launched with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in September last year and with \$35 million-worth of funding from Norway, the UN Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) programme enhances the chances of a decisive, global climate deal in Copenhagen later this year.”

The Great Ape Survival Partnership, co-coordinated by UNEP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has now taken the data to assess the double benefits that might flow from REDD in Cameroon, in terms of climate but also conservation of the habitat of the rare Cross River Gorilla.

Climate Communications

The Secretary-General has emphasized the important role of communications for mobilizing public support for furthering the climate change agenda en route to Copenhagen.

In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNEP's children and youth unit, incorporating the TUNZA initiative has in 2008 drawn up a wide-ranging collaborative effort focusing on young people and climate change including:-

- Linking their online communities to those of relevant key partners such as FAO, UNESCO, UN Habitat, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Organization of the Scout Movement, to establish ONE youth platform around climate change and connected issues.

Other potential partners include the European Youth Forum, Commonwealth Youth and Francophony and Arab States youth. The goal is to bring existing and new online communities together in the single largest online youth portal on climate change. Other major initiatives include:

- 'UNite to Combat Climate Change' will include a 'Connecting Classrooms' programme to engage students in developed and developing countries in collective climate change awareness activities.
- It will build on existing partnerships, networks and initiatives such as UNEP/UNESCO's 'YouthXchange' programme, UNESCO's Associated Schools Project, UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools Initiative and other networks including UNEP's TUNZA network.
- A shared climate change curriculum and tips on sustainable consumption will allow young people in the classrooms of the North and South to exchange experiences and best practice.

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"UNEP working through the UN Climate Communications Group, spearheaded the design and dissemination of the 'UNite to Combat Climate Change' slogan and logo which was showcased in Poznan and which will be used throughout 2009."

Climate Adaptation

In October 2008 in Changwon, Republic of Korea we convened an international consultation on a Global Climate Adadaption Network—an initiative grown out of the Bali climate change discussions of 2007.

Here a clear consensus was reached by developing countries on the need for such an initiative, which was endorsed at the last climate convention meeting in Poznan, Poland.

Last month we hosted delegates from Africa as part of regional meetings to take forward and accelerate into reality the Global Climate Adaptation Network.

Partners range from the UNFCCC and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) to UNDP, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the World Bank as well as numerous NGOs including IUCN, WWF and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Reform — Wider Cooperation Across the UN

“Over the past 12 months in fulfilling its role as the environment programme of the United Nations, the directions contained in the MTS, and as part of the wider United Nations reform agenda, UNEP has continued to evolve its cooperation and relationships with its sister organizations of the United Nations, not just on climate change but also on the wider sustainability agenda.”

Collaboration continued between UNEP and the United Nations Industrial and Development Organization in the field of cleaner production; with the United Nations World Tourism Organization on tourism and climate change and with the World Trade Organization on climate change.

UNEP and UN-Habitat have worked together for many years on addressing poverty and bringing sustainability to the urban environment.

In January, and in order to strengthen that cooperation the two organizations signed a joint partnership framework for 2008-2013 focusing on five key areas:

- Climate-resilient cities in Africa as part of the global climate adaptation agenda.
- A global alliance for eco-mobility supporting the promotion of non-motorized transport.

“As is reflected in the MTS, adaptation to climate change is also a priority for this institution.”

- Improving solid-waste management in Nairobi in support of our host city’s renewed commitment to sustainability; its decision to re-locate Dandora — one of Africa’s biggest refuse tips — and Kenya’s new 2030 Vision.
- The promoting of urban biodiversity and better management of cities’ impacts on ecosystems far and near.
- Outreach ensuring the urban environment agenda reaches the international community at the highest level.

UNEP has launched a series of partnerships following up recommendations made in the landmark 2007 post conflict assessment of the Sudan including Darfur including:

- One with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on improving the Sudanese region’s limited tree cover as well as assessments to inform the wider development and humanitarian effort on improved natural resource management.
- With UNICEF, focusing on improving water resources in order to improve livelihoods in Darfur.
- Meanwhile in Afghanistan, UNEP is for working with the FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNDP, The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) on a Greening Afghanistan initiative which also feeds into the UN Development Framework for the country.
- UNEP was part of the United Nations Rapid Needs Recovery Assessment which visited Gaza only a few weeks ago in order to assess and recommend effective humanitarian assistance to the population.

Meanwhile, towards the end of 2008 a UNEP-brokered United Nations inter-agency meeting was held in Berlin where the *UNeLearn* network was launched — it is a technology supported learning initiative to foster collaboration among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to support the Delivering as One process.

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“The Libreville Declaration, concluded at the end of the August meeting, has committed countries on the Continent to establish strategic alliances between health and environment ministries and for UNEP and WHO to jointly provide support.”

In August 2008, UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) — in partnership with the Government of Gabon — hosted the first ever Inter-Ministerial Conference for Health and the Environment in Africa. Health and environment links are many:

During 2008 UNEP played a key role within UN-Water — a system-wide coordinating mechanism — on the compilation of the Third World Water Development Report, produced by the World Water Assessment Programme.

UNEP's ecosystems team was responsible for the first chapter and overarching theme of 'drivers of change'.

The report's findings and recommendations will be unveiled at the Fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey later next month.

With some 660,000 postal establishments; 250,000 motorcycles; over 600,000 cars, vans and trucks and hundreds of aircraft; the opportunity to influence energy-significant industries and green the procurement; manufacturing and marketing chains — from automobile and aero-engine manufacturers to those that produce appliances; inks; adhesives and paper — is huge.

With five million — perhaps as many as 10 million — employees, postal services employ more than the oil and gas industry which is 2.3 million.

Last July Edouard Dayan, UPU's Director General and I signed an agreement to first assess the climate footprint of the world's postal services.

We will then offer the UPU's 191 member states a range of solutions to shrink that footprint.

In China, and in support of the recent Beijing Olympics, postal service vehicles there met Euro IV emissions standards before the starting pistol fired.

Sport and the Environment: Beijing Olympics

Let me choose this opportunity to congratulate China and Beijing for those quite extraordinary games from the dazzling opening ceremony to the level of competition: not least the achievements of the national China team.

The measures in terms of the environment — now an established as a key pillar of the Olympic movement — were profound.

Like Los Angeles, Sydney, Athens and many other sporting events, Beijing was subject to the full scrutiny of the global media, not least in terms of air pollution.

“The Olympic committee in China responded with, for example, the re-location of polluting industries and accelerated investment in public transport but also rapid response measures, such as traffic restrictions.”

“Over the past 12 months we have explored entirely new multilateral partnerships including with the Universal Postal Union — a body whose members can play an important role in the Green Economy.”

I am sure that many elements of the Games will serve as a Green Economy guide for even more sustainable developments for Beijing and a beacon for countries and cities in Asia and beyond.

On Wednesday we publish our final assessment of the Games which I am sure will inspire and motivate Vancouver, London and Sochi as well as other host cities of major sporting events to raise the environmental bar ever higher.

“The environmental dimension of the Olympic Games was a partnership between the government of China, the municipality of Beijing and UNEP.”

Reform — Wider Partnerships

In mentioning such relations and in mentioning vehicle emissions, let me also up date you on one of UNEP’s many flourishing partnerships.

One that underlines the success that can be achieved when we Deliver as One — not just with the United Nations, but with the private sector and civil society.

In 2008, the Clean Fuels Partnership assisted five more countries across the developing world achieve the same results leaving just 14 countries — an unleaded petrol world is in sight!

Work on reducing the sulphur content of vehicle fuels is under way.

Targets and timeframes to move to low sulphur diesel and petrol have been formally adopted by, for example all 14 Southern African Development Community nations, 11 in East Africa and 42 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, born at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, has already led the phase-out of leaded petrol in Africa.”

UNEP and the Partnership are also supporting UN agencies to reduce emissions and carbon footprints of transport operations including the World Food Programme.

A Green Year in Review

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen,

This outlines some of the completed, evolving and on-going reforms taken within UNEP and with the United Nations and its many partnerships.

We are also working to bring the Green Economy alive across our range of activities in support of our programme of work.

A full and exhaustive account is beyond the time allotted for this policy statement. But let me touch on a few areas.

Ecosystems and the Green Economy

“The UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment of 2005, in which UNEP was centrally involved estimates that 60 per cent of the world’s ecosystem services examined are now degraded or being used unsustainably.”

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project, funded by the European Commission and the Government of Germany and now a growing number of donors was launched at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Bonn last May. It underlined similar concerns.

The trend continues. The new *UNEP Year Book 2009* says:-

- Entire forest systems have effectively disappeared in at least 25 countries and have declined by 90 per cent in another 29 countries.
- Since the onset of industrial fisheries in the 1960s, the total biomass of large, commercially-targeted marine fish species has declined by a ‘staggering’ 90 per cent, says the Year Book.
- On current projections, the availability of cropland per person is set to drop to 0.1 hectares requiring a rise in agricultural production “unattainable through conventional means”.
- Soil degradation, linked with intensification, has now and already affected all but 16 per cent of the world’s croplands.

In the past, environmental crises were essentially local — pollution of the local lake; fly-tipping in city park, perhaps the felling of a much-loved forest or the draining of much loved wetland.

Today, as a result of the consumption and production patterns of the industrialized economies and newly emerging ones, the level of degradation is having increasingly global consequences.

In years gone by, communities and societies could move on — could avoid calamities by emigrating to find safer, more prosperous places where opportunities were manifold.

That is not possible in a world of over six — rising to nine — billion people where resources are finite.

We have to produce and consume in far more efficient and less extractive ways where we re-invest in the productivity of the work force; in innovation; and the natural assets that are the foundation of prosperity.

“Both the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the TEEB report provided the international community with a firm rationale for action — the economic losses of degradation and the economic benefits of action.”

The TEEB process, which links to the Green Economy initiative, also brought in the Green Jobs imperative too.

Pavan Sukhdev, who is on secondment from Deutsche Bank to UNEP, is both the chair of TEEB and team leader of the UNEP Green Economy initiative.

He and his team estimate that over \$2,000 billion of natural capital is being lost annually as a result of deforestation alone.

Just \$45 billion a year invested in the world’s 100,000 national parks and protected areas could not only secure services worth some \$5,200 billion but could boost employment and livelihoods for millions of indigenous and rural people.

And there are other new values:

- Coral reefs — worth between \$100,000 and \$600,000 per square km, conserved for an investment of close to \$780 per square km or 0.2 per cent of the value.
- Deforestation — contributes close to 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but just \$17 billion to over \$30 billion annually could halve this.

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“A global marine protected area network, involving the closure of 20 per cent of total fishing grounds could result in profit losses of an estimated \$270 million annually but could sustain fisheries worth \$80-100 billion a year.”

- Conserve an estimated 27 million jobs while generating one million new ones.
- Protect food supplies for over one billion people, especially in developing countries whose main or sole source of animal protein comes from fish.

Some countries have already done their sums. Costa Rica, perhaps the pioneer of Payments for Ecosystem Services easily springs to mind.

Last September, on an official visit to Mexico to also announce its hosting of United Nations World Environment Day 2009, I learned from His Excellency President Felipe Calderon at first hand how 1.5 million people in rural areas are being paid to manage forests and watersheds.

Over the past 12 months UNEP has begun scaling-up work to catalyze investment and re-investment in the conservation of healthy, and restoration of degraded, ecosystems.

We want to prove to a wider constituency, and at a national level and regionally, that investing in ecosystems makes sound economic as well as social and environmental sense — a finding also confirmed in the highly acclaimed 2008 UNEP publication *Africa: Atlas of our Changing Environment*.

Mau Forest

The largest closed canopy forest in Kenya is the Mau Complex: It has lost a quarter of its cover in the past decade due to illegal clearance and degradation.

The ecosystems not only provide essential water to rivers and lakes in Kenya — many key revenue-raising tourist attractions — but also feed Lake Victoria, which is shared with Uganda and Tanzania and is part of the River Nile Basin.

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“The Mau generates goods and services worth in excess of 20 billion Kenyan shillings (or over \$320 million) annually for the country’s tea, tourism and hydro-power sectors.”

“In 2008 we intensified our efforts to assist the Government of Kenya on steps towards a major ecosystem restoration initiative for the Mau with on-the-ground work set to commence this year.”

In a climate constrained world, such investment and improved management of the Mau and forests across the world represents a major adaptation policy too and one that links directly to many of the Millennium Development Goals.

The work is part of a wider partnership with the Government of Kenya and the Nairobi City Council aimed at assisting the realization of the country’s Vision 2030.

Lake Faguibine

In 2008, and at the request of the Government of Mali, UNEP also launched an assessment of an ecosystem renovation project for Lake Faguibine.

It followed the launch at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in June last year of UNEP's Africa Atlas of Our Changing Environment in which the before and after satellite images of the lake were featured.

The lake, a spearhead-shaped water body which at its maximum can cover close to 600 square km, has been almost totally dry since the 1970s.

It once provided agriculture services: dry season grazing for livestock and a fishery with a catch of some 5,000 tons of fish for an estimated 200,000 nomads.

UNEP has now completed the assessment and is ready to move into the implementation phase with the government and other partners.

Haiti

A further project proposal is being drawn up in partnership with a consortium of United Nations agencies to restore soils, wetlands, forests and other key ecosystem on the hurricane-vulnerable island of Haiti where environmental degradation has been linked to social unrest.

Again in crisis, there is also opportunity.

Marshlands of Mesopotamia

Our recent, among many, on the ground experiences will stand us in good stead.

In September we announced the completion of a four year, \$14 million programme to assist Iraq restore the Marshlands of Mesopotamia.

The project, funded by the Government of Japan, has restored clean drinking water for well over 20,000 Marsh Arabs as well as boosting habitats for a wide range of species including the spawning grounds for the Gulf fisheries.

The success of the project has prompted the Iraqi government to press ahead with a push to have the marshlands listed as a World Heritage Site.

Climate Change — the Green Economy

“Throughout the past 12 months, UNEP has continued to support the climate negotiations being conducted under the UNFCCC and to showcase the inordinate opportunities for a transition to a low carbon society.”

UN REDD; support for the United Nations system and communications and the global adaptation network I have already mentioned.

CDM

Honourable ministers,

I think we and partners may be reaching a positive tipping point here and are able to point to some real and genuine progress.

UNEP’s Risoe Centre in Denmark, a key actor in this work, also monitors CDM projects approved and in the pipeline. We can now report:

- Brazil, China, India and Mexico continue to access the lion’s share of the projects with a total of 3,218 of which 1,557 are for China and 1,135 for India.
- But regions and countries once on the periphery of such schemes are beginning to access the environmental, economic and development benefits, many for the first time for example in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Mali and Senegal.
- Assuming a deep and decisive new climate agreement in 2009, Africa overall could see roughly 230 projects by 2012 — not enough by far, but a start.
- These could cumulatively generate over 65 million certified emission reductions, worth close to one billion US dollars at a conservative carbon credit price of \$15.
- The Middle East had zero projects in 2004. UNEP Risoe estimate that a total of 54 are either registered or in the pipeline with the United Arab Emirates emerging with around 13 — progress, but clearly a lot more to do.

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“Over 2008 UNEP has also been working through the Nairobi Framework of 2006 and via other initiatives on capacity building of developing communities to access the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).”

- The greatest challenge is the Least Developed Countries where there are only 39 projects registered or in the pipeline and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The 11 countries in this group currently have only 42 CDM projects registered or in the pipeline.

The analysis also shows that the range of renewables under the CDM is expanding, even if questions remain over the complexity and timelines required to move projects from concept to operation.

These include solar and geothermal power and one 250 MW tidal project in the Republic of Korea.

UNEP made its contribution to the reform discussions of the CDM in Poznan in the form of the report *A Reformed CDM — including new Mechanisms for Sustainable Development* compiled by 17 leading CDM experts from government, academia, NGOs and private sector -from both developed and developing countries.

Forests and Insurance

The CDM assessment also raises some fundamental challenges and profound questions.

Only 0.7 per cent of projects approved or in the pipeline relate to forests in terms of afforestation and re-afforestation — an important issue for developing economies in the Tropics.

One factor is likely to be risk — and risk is best managed by the insurance industry.

We will take this forward in 2009 as perhaps a key contribution to making the existing Kyoto protocol mechanisms and REDD even more likely to succeed.

Breaking Barriers to Renewables

One of UNEP's roles is to overcome some of the barriers to greater up-take of renewables and the realization of a Green Economy in the energy sector — one too that can rapidly meet the needs of the two billion people without access to electricity including 80 per cent of people in Africa.

One way is through public awareness. We are told time and time again that solar photovoltaic power it is too expensive and too far from market competitiveness except in a few situations.

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“In Poznan, UNEP’s Finance Initiative convened insurance experts to examine forestry risk in the context of climate change, and with an eye towards the likely inclusion of REDD in a post-2012 deal.”

The sceptics argue in time-scales of 15, 25 or more years before solar is Grid competitive.

Yet in 2008, a solar roof initiative is well under way in California that is using new, thin-film solar technology that it is claimed generates electricity as competitively as coal or oil fired-generation.

Another route to changing well entrenched perceptions is via cutting edge reports that question the logic of the status quo.

At the UNFCCC regional meeting in Accra, Ghana last August, UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch published an assessment of fuel subsidies:

- Globally around \$300 billion or 0.7 per cent of global GDP is being spent on energy subsidies annually.
- The lion's share is being used to artificially lower or reduce the real price of fuels like oil, coal and gas or electricity generated from such fossil fuels.
- Cancelling these subsidies might reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as six per cent a year while contributing 0.1 per cent to global GDP.

The assessment also challenges the widely-held view that subsidies combat poverty and assist the poor.

“In many developing countries the real beneficiaries of such subsidies are neither the poor nor the environment but well off households; equipment manufacturers and the producers of the fuels,” says the report.

And there are other ways of hurdling the barriers to a Green Economy.

In 2008, UNEP with funding from the Global Environment Facility completed a project testing advanced seismic and drilling techniques in Kenya that has exceeded all expectations:

- Wells of steam, able to generate 4-5 MW of electricity and one yielding a bumper amount of 8MW, have been hit using the new technology.
- It could mean a saving of as much as \$75 million for the developer of a 70MW installation as well as reduced electricity costs for generators and consumers, experts estimate.

The results have now paved the way for an international effort called ARGeo in 2009 to expand geothermal up and down the Rift which runs from Mozambique in the South to Djibouti in the North.

“2012, maybe 2014 — not 2030 — is when they estimate solar will be widely competitive with fossil fuels.”

In Poznan, at the United Nations climate convention meeting, UNEP hosted the heads of three solar companies — Suntech from China; First Solar from the United States and SolarCentury from Europe.

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“The Climate Neutral Network (CN Net) launched last February in Monaco and backed by governments from Norway to New Zealand and Costa Rica to Iceland, is now gaining momentum — and this week we are set to announce we have reached the 100 participant mark.”

UNEP’s work on empowering voluntary leadership on climate change continued through the year.

CN Net

The CN Net is designed to provide an internet-based platform through UNEP to link innovative and pioneering low carbon policies and actions among like-minded countries, companies and cities.

Over the past 12 months we have welcomed on board the Pacific island of Niue which aims to become climate neutral by 2014.

“Corporates include Belcorp, a Peruvian-based international cosmetics company; Inoxia, a French advertising firm; Sempre Avanti Consulting of New Zealand; NatureAir, a carbon neutral airline; URBN Hotels, China’s first carbon neutral hotel; Tesco Lotus, Thailand’s largest supermarket chain; Ementor Group, Scandinavia’s leading IT provider and First Climate Group, a European carbon asset management company and Greenfest, an Australian music festival to name just a few.”

Other new members include Deutsche Post, the parent company of DHL, which has pioneered a “climate neutral” parcel service and Toyota Motors Europe, who have set the goal of “zero-emissions” mobility.

More cities have signed up including:

- Slough Borough Council in the UK; Waitakere, New Zealand’s fifth largest city and the two Australian metropolises of Brisbane and Sydney.

The Billion Tree Campaign (BTC)

The BTC, whose target has been raised to seven billion trees by the Copenhagen climate meeting, continues to catalyze enthusiastic national and civic support.

In February 2008, 1.96 billion trees had been planted. Today 4.26 billion pledges from 169 countries have been registered and 2.61 billion trees planted in 165 countries. The leading governments in terms of numbers of trees remain Ethiopia, Mexico and Turkey.

Some cities also joined the campaign. For example Los Angeles and Shanghai.

Ministers, if we are to pull the seven billion target off, UNEP needs your assistance and in particular those who have not joined us yet but are planning plantings this year.

Food Security and Agriculture — A Green Revolution with a Capital G

Ladies and gentlemen,

Food is perhaps emerging as one of the most challenging issues facing the planet and one that will also be centre stage in the Green Economy initiative.

The food crisis of 2008, which the Secretary-General recently referred to as the ‘forgotten crisis’, may have faded from the headlines, but do not assume that it has somehow gone away or will not come back with a vengeance without a transition to a more resource efficient, less wasteful economic model.

As we meet, close to 50 per cent of Australia’s agricultural land remains in drought and the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reportedly seeing crop losses running as high as 40 per cent due to low rainfall.

In Kenya, shortages of maize and other staples are forcing increasing numbers of hungry people to pick scraps off rubbish tips, many suffering and some dying from food poisoning as a result.

Overall, one billion people are now classed as hungry as global cereal and other crop prices remain stubbornly high.

Over the next 40 years the world will have to find food for an additional 2.5 billion.

Thus even without the impacts of climate change, the world is facing a major challenge.

Many eminent experts have been calling for a green revolution: But what does this mean?

The tough facts are that by 2050 the amount of cropland available per person will have shrunk to 0.1 hectares per head requiring levels of efficiency unattainable under existing industrialized farming methods.

UNEP was one among many agencies and organizations involved in the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).

Its final plenary was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 7–12 April 2008.

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“Simply cranking up the agricultural models of the late 20th century, with their reliance on higher levels of chemicals; water hungry production systems and users of ever larger amounts of productive land must be off the menu.”

Honourable ministers, as you know, the Assessment was not free from controversy. But as I said at the time, and I will say it again: there can be no silver bullet to the agriculture and food security challenge.

We have had many attempts at those and they all eventually miss the mark or if they do strike the target, end up damaging other targets around them.

Agriculture as it is often practiced today in terms of intensification or outputs per hectare has also become a major footprint on the economies, the ecologies and the societies in our world.

So the Assessment was much needed as was the debate surrounding it and it cannot simply be left there.

Environment Food Crisis report

Tomorrow we will present the findings of our new Rapid Response Assessment in the Environmental Food Crisis report as one contribution to this very necessary debate.

It argues that feeding nine billion people is possible, but only if we get smart and do not fall victim to simplistic solutions:

- The experts argue that continuing to feed cereals to growing numbers of livestock will aggravate poverty, hunger and environmental degradation.
- One option is to deploy technologies, developed to produce biofuels, to produce sugars for animal feeds from discards such as straw and even nutshells.

Overall, the report concludes that recycling food wastes and fish discards into animal feed will be an important key to a far less hungry world:

- If this can be done on a truly transformative scale such measures could supply the food-based energy demand for the anticipated population rise.
- Could also allow an increase of 50 per cent in production from fish farming and aquaculture without increasing pressure on an already stressed marine environment.

Organic Agriculture

“There also needs to be an urgent debate around organic methods. UNEP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and the Environment recently surveyed 114 small-scale farms in 24 African countries publishing our findings in late 2008.”

The study found that organic practices outperformed traditional methods and chemical-intensive conventional farming.

It also found strong environmental benefits such as improved soil fertility, better retention of water and resistance to drought.

The research also highlighted the role that learning organic practices could have in improving local education and community cooperation.

So is organic agriculture the luxury of the rich or a major sustainable form of agriculture for small-holder farmers — is it part of a green revolution with a capital G, within a Green Economy?

Only last week UNCTAD reported that despite the economic crisis organic agriculture would continue to grow representing an opportunity for developing country farmers including those in Africa.

It estimated sales of certified organic produce could reach close to \$70 billion in 2012, up from \$23 billion in 2002.

Access and Benefit Sharing

The links between biodiversity and agriculture were also brought into sharp focus in 2008 at the CBD meeting in Bonn.

This meeting also galvanized the debate on the long standing need for an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing of genetic resources with nations agreeing a deadline for negotiations by the next CBD COP in Japan in 2010.

UNEP is supporting the process given its critical link to sustainable livelihoods and contribution to reversing the rate of loss of biodiversity.

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“We found that yields had more than doubled where organic, or near-organic practices had been used. That increase in yield jumped to 128 per cent in East Africa.”

The GC/GMEF — Taking Forward the Green Economy

Honourable Ministers,

These are just some of the highlights of the year, but what about this week?

Here in Nairobi we can take forward the Green Economy in concrete and practical ways, not least on the question of the neuro-toxic heavy metal mercury.

We know the science, it is clear.

Emitted to the atmosphere or re-released into oceans, lakes and river systems this pollutant and its even more toxic compound — methyl mercury — can travel hundreds and thousands of miles, entering the food chain via for example fish and then to the dinner tables of consumers across the world.

Eating advisories relating to fish consumption remain in place in many countries targeted at those at risk including pregnant mothers and babies.

Scientists and the NGO Sharkproject are also flagging yet another cause for concern — the increased consumption of shark meat in some parts of the world.

By some estimates these foods contain up to 40 times more mercury than recommended food safety limits and perhaps a great deal more.

Mercury levels in Arctic ringed seals and beluga whales have increased by up to four times over the last 25 years in some areas of Canada and Greenland.

This has implications for wildlife but also human health where marine mammals form a significant part of the diet.

It is a classic issue for the UNEP Governing Council given its global dimensions and it is an issue that has been on the back burner for way too long.

This week's GC/GMEF follows several years of intense debate about possible solutions to the global mercury challenge.

Both Europe and the United States have in recent months backed export bans on mercury with the European Union setting a date of 2011.

Here we have the opportunity to go even further. Before you is a framework for action and a set of policy options including the choice of UNEP working to develop a legally-binding instrument.

I believe this meeting provides an opportunity for decisions to be taken which will allow real, globally coordinated reductions in mercury emissions.

Documents before you show that a wide-range of products and processes that once depended on mercury now have cost effective, well proven and safer alternatives.

This includes thermometers, high-intensity discharge automobile lamps and the chlor-alkali chemical process.

The case for others is perhaps less clear cut at least for some manufacturers and economies.

High-intensity discharge lamps for use outside the automobile industry, some liquid crystal display units and certain kinds of plastics production in China spring to mind.

Meanwhile, an estimated 10 million artisanal miners and their families may be suffering in fields ranging from Brazil and Venezuela to India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Zimbabwe.

The alternative to mercury in small-scale mining is really no alternative at all — it is cyanide. Thus alternative livelihoods must be found and quickly.

The Green Economics stack up too. UNEP estimates that every kilogramme of mercury taken out of the environment can trigger up to \$12,500 worth of social, environmental and human health benefits.

Here at the GC/GMEF, the world's environment ministers can take decisions that will touch the health of literally millions of people across the globe.

And in Copenhagen, in combating climate change you will also be combating mercury pollution.

“Flexibility needs to be shown but also some sense of vision. Only by setting a clear and unequivocal landscape of a low mercury future will governments trigger innovation and an ever greater array of cost effective, alternative products and processes.”

Of the around 6,000 tonnes of mercury entering the environment annually, some 2,000 tonnes comes from coal-burning in power stations and homes.

Meanwhile, curbing greenhouse gas emissions and global warming can reduce the risk of mercury compounds trapped in lake sediments and the Arctic being re-released as the ice melts back into the environment and thus the food chain.

Honourable ministers,

Given the overwhelming scientific evidence, the availability of alternatives, we must walk away from this GC/GMEF with tangible progress here.

An agenda that reflects current challenges and opportunities

The agenda for the GC/GMEF in 2009 is one that reflects the scale and nature of the challenges and emerging opportunities that the world is grappling with.

Within our Ministerial Consultations, through working with the Bureau of the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, we have put before the GMEF an agenda that is commensurate with its role as the United Nations high-level environmental policy forum.

Through the Committee of the Whole we will be tackling issues that are of critical importance to the ongoing work programme of UNEP and to the world in addressing major environmental challenges.

Twelve months ago I presented the draft MTS to you, which you authorised me to use in formulating the strategic frameworks and programmes of work and budgets for 2010-2011, and for 2012-2013. Your decision has been central to the reform of UNEP and to my efforts to make UNEP a more focussed and results-based organisation.

Today I can inform you that we have fully delivered on the decision you took on the MTS, including the UNEP results framework that we laid out in the MTS and in my presentation.

During this time we have worked extensively with our Committee of Permanent Representatives, which has been an integral part of the UNEP reform process, and have successfully presented our strategic framework and draft programme of work and budgets 2010-2011 to the Committee on

Programme and Coordination and Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) respectively.

This constitutes a major step forward in the transition to UNEP becoming a fully results-based organisation through the programmatic realignment in line with the MTS.

This week you have before you a draft programme of work and budgets for 2010-2011 that fully implements the strategic direction of the MTS for which I seek your support.

The draft has been developed through no less than 17 meetings with our Committee of Permanent Representatives and its sub-committees, and I sincerely thank all Committee members for their extraordinary support and the significant contribution they have made throughout this highly consultative process.

The proposed Environment Fund for 2010-2011 proposes an appropriation of USD\$180 million, up from USD\$152 million in this biennium. In my view this increase represents a reasonable level of ambition for UNEP at this time based upon:

- The contribution projections for 2008-2009 of USD\$176 million that has necessitated the preparation of a supplementary budget;
- The demands for UNEP services in delivering on the BSP and serving as the environment programme of the United Nations;
- Strengthening the regional presence of UNEP to ensure coherent delivery of one UNEP-wide programme at the regional level; and
- The growing confidence in UNEP as it moves to fully implement results-based management.

In this context I am pleased to note that, the ACABQ report raises no objection to this increase and states that it has no objection to the proposed staffing table, while also stating that there is scope for further improvement in some areas.

All of the other matters on the agenda of the Committee of the Whole are of significance.

Reforming the Global Environmental Architecture

Let me seek your guidance on International Environmental Governance (IEG) — a key agenda item before this week too.

“We have before us a UN Joint Inspection Unit report on environmental governance within the UN system to which the General Assembly, our Governing Council, the Secretary-General, and I, as Executive Director of UNEP, am required to respond.”

So the challenges of IEG remain, and I would suggest the increasing fragmentation of the environmental financing architecture is accelerating rather than consolidating or leading to a more effective structure.

In the past 24 months we have witnessed the establishment of no fewer than 14 new finance mechanisms for climate change.

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“It raises many of the same and persistent issues that have led to the various IEG initiatives of the past, namely the fragmented IEG landscape not least on financing. But it does so with unprecedented clarity and analysis.”

But as we reform, other parts of the environmental architecture are engaged in building, or considering new structures and mechanisms — ones that I would urge you as environment ministers to reflect upon in this IEG debate.

Governments have indeed stepped up funding for UNEP as the principle environmental organ of the multilateral system as a show of confidence in the reforms that have taken place over the past two years.

And I thank those ministers who have increased their contributions, and those who have contributed for the first time, for their support.

But simultaneously, sometimes the same governments are channelling environmentally-related funding in even greater amounts to an ever increasing range of funds and organizations.

Meanwhile, one of the principle funding mechanisms for the global environment — I refer to the Global Environment Facility — is considering options for reform including pursuing an increasingly separate path taking it away from the principles that underpinned its very establishment .

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“There is greater coherence within UNEP and between this institution and the rest of the United Nations system and I can assure you that I will strive to continue this progress.”

In doing so it raises the inevitable question of whether we need to fundamentally rethink its future rationale and indeed its relationship with UNEP — the principle multilateral platform for the environment where governments develop and agree policies, norms and standards as well as mandates to guide the global environmental agenda.

In addition the principal United Nations institution that has perhaps done more on the issue of adaptation to climate change may see the funding needed to make a real difference managed elsewhere .

In parallel, the debate raises issues about the role and functions of convention secretariats and their role in servicing a conventions, vis-à-vis programmes established for implementation .

I would suggest that these developments, among many others, may ultimately deliver an IEG architecture far from the streamlined, transparent or effective one required to address the sustainability challenges and sustainability opportunities unfolding.

And what does all of this mean for a country seeking to address its environmental priorities? How does it interact with such a fragmented system and does the system work in a manner that actually helps or hinders the achievement of country objectives?

For too long we have allowed the debate to be top down — at this GC/GMEF we are seeking to turn the debate on its head and getting the focus back on how the system works to assist its Member States in meeting their environment and development objectives.

At this critical juncture, I believe that you as environment ministers need to take a pro-active approach.

Finding an appropriate way of engaging with you, as the world’s high-level environmental policy forum, on these issues will be the key to moving the debate forward at this critical time in history.

.....

“Thus there is an urgent need to review the international environmental architecture, including as it relates to finance, if we are going to be in a position to adequately assist States respond to the existing, and emerging, challenges and opportunities.”

Honourable ministers,

UNEP will take the Green Economy forward in 2009 as part of Delivering as One and in support of developing and developed economies alike in order to realize the change we all share as the imperative for a viable, sustainable 21st century.

Far from burdening an already over-stressed, over-stretched global economy green investments are the very investments needed to get people back to work; to get the order books flowing and to assist in powering economies back to health.

The sums that have been mobilized to address the current woes, alongside and the trillions of investors' dollars waiting in the wings, represent an opportunity unthinkable only 12 months ago.

Spent wisely with the right market signals these stimulus packages, and investment patterns, could trigger quite far reaching and transformational trends: setting the stage for an urgently-needed Green Economy for the 21st century.

Standing before you today I confidently report that we are ready to do this, to further evolve the environment programme of the United Nations and in doing so to take it to a higher level.

- UNEP is now well on the way to being fully results based.
- UNEP is increasingly delivering as 'One UNEP' within a 'One UN'.
- UNEP is working towards delivering on a clear set of organization-wide priorities.
- UNEP is modernizing its procedures and its staffing.
- UNEP is more flexible and able to respond at the global, regional and national levels.
- UNEP is more effectively responding to needs of States, especially through the implementing of the Bali Strategic Plan.
- UNEP is catalyzing new and creative thinking and action on persistent and emerging challenges.
- UNEP is rapidly becoming a partner of choice across a wide spectrum of issues.
- UNEP is gaining increasing confidence of member states and is now match fit and ready to play in a much higher league.

Thank you



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