

Environment and human settlements

In 2014, the United Nations continued its work in protecting the environment and improving the living conditions of people in cities through legally binding instruments along with activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in June, included a high-level segment on the themes “Sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable consumption and production” and “Illegal trade in wildlife”. The Environment Assembly reaffirmed commitment to the full implementation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) outcome document, “The future we want”. The Assembly also adopted resolutions on science-policy interface; chemicals and waste; marine plastic debris and microplastics; the role of UNEP in promoting air quality; ecosystem-based adaptation; the Global Environment Monitoring System/Water Programme; UN-system coordination on the environment; the relationship between UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements; implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; the programmes of work and budgets for 2014–2015 and 2016–2017; and amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility.

The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at its twentieth session in December, adopted the Lima Call for Climate Action, which confirmed that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action would complete the work required for the Conference of the Parties, at its twenty-first (2015) session, to adopt a protocol, legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention. Annexed to that decision were the elements for a draft negotiating text. Additional outcomes from the session included progress on the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, and the Lima work programme on gender.

In October, the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted 35 decisions, including those related to the integration of biodiversity into the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and progress made in implementing the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention on Biological Diversity, serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, adopted 13 decisions, including those on risk assessment and risk management, socioeconomic considerations and monitoring and reporting. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization entered into force on 12 October. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol adopted 13 decisions to advance implementation of the Protocol.

In November, the combined tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and twenty-sixth meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol adopted 22 decisions.

UN-Habitat continued to support the implementation of the 1996 Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. The seventh session of the World Urban Forum took place in April under the theme “Urban equity in development: cities for life” and discussed, inter alia, urban equity in development law; urban planning for social cohesion; and raising standards for urban resilience. The outcome of the Forum: the Medellín Declaration, provided recommendations on four key areas: equity as a foundation of sustainable urban development; the city as opportunity; the new urban agenda; and contributing to the future.

In May, the first-ever integration segment of the Economic and Social Council focused on sustainable urbanization and provided a platform for discussion on how urbanization could become an instrument for the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In September, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held its first session, at which the Habitat III Secretary-General reported on an outline of work leading up to the Conference in 2016.

Environment

UN Environment Programme

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The first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was held in Nairobi from 23 to