

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
(UNEP)  
AND  
THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION  
(UNESCO)

Paris Headquarters  
4 April 2009



This Memorandum of Understanding, (hereinafter referred to as “MoU”) is entered into by the United Nations Environment Programme (hereinafter referred to as “UNEP”), a subsidiary organ of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as “UNESCO”), a specialized agency of the United Nations.

**WHEREAS** based on its 1946 Constitution, the mission statement approved by UNESCO General Conference at its 34<sup>th</sup> session, as contained in UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2008–2013 (document 34 C/4) states that UNESCO “as a Specialized Agency of the United Nations contributes to the building of peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information”;

**WHEREAS** UNESCO’s Medium-term Strategy for 2008-2013 determines for the Organization’s work five overarching objectives:

- Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning,
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development,
- Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges,
- Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace,
- Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication

and 14 strategic programme objectives:

- Strengthening UNESCO’s global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favor of EFA,
- Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all, and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development,
- Leveraging scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of natural resources,
- Fostering policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation,
- Contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation,
- Promoting principles, practices and ethical norms relevant for scientific and technological development,
- Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations,
- Fostering research on critical emerging ethical and social issues,
- Strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development,
- Demonstrating the importance of exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion and reconciliation in order to develop a culture of peace,
- Sustainably protecting and enhancing cultural heritage,
- Enhancing universal access to information and knowledge,
- Fostering pluralistic, free and independent media and info-structures,
- Support through UNESCO’s domains to countries in post-conflict situations and post-disaster situations;



**WHEREAS** the UN General Assembly by its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 established UNEP and its Governing Council , *inter alia*, to (a) promote international co-operation in the field of the environment; (b) provide general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system; (c) keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments; (d) promote the contribution of the relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information and, as appropriate, to the technical aspects of the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes within the United Nations system; and (e) maintain under continuing review the impact of national and international environmental policies and measures on developing countries, as well as the problem of additional costs that may be incurred by developing countries in the implementation of environmental programmes and projects, and to ensure that such programmes and projects shall be compatible with the development plans and priorities of those countries;

**WHEREAS** UNESCO is authorized under Article XI of its Constitution to cooperate with other intergovernmental organizations and to this end has entered into an agreement establishing working relations with the United Nations in 1946;

**WHEREAS** UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 sets out the next phase in the evolution of UNEP by providing a clear, results-based focus on a new programme of work that addresses the following six cross-cutting thematic priorities:

- (a) Climate change;
- (b) Disasters and conflicts;
- (c) Ecosystem management;
- (d) Environmental governance;
- (e) Harmful substances and hazardous waste;
- (f) Resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production;

**WHEREAS** UNESCO and UNEP (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Parties”) have maintained a longstanding and effective collaboration with their distinct, yet complementary roles in the UN system involving the application of sciences in solving the problems of the environment, reinforcing capacities and supporting policy- and decision-making at the national, regional and international levels, drawing on the best scientific knowledge available and on multi-scale assessments of thematic and crosscutting issues;

**WHEREAS** the Executive Heads of UNESCO and UNEP, inspired by UN General Assembly Resolution 57/254 declaring 2005 – 2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) for which UNESCO was designated as lead agency of the UN system, signed, in February 2005, a joint statement for collaboration during the Decade, underlining UNEP's key role in defining and promoting the environmental perspectives of ESD and in coordinating related advocacy, including through networks and alliances of environmental organizations;



**WHEREAS** the Parties recognize their roles in the achievement of paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and its decision to explore the possibility of a coherent institutional framework to address the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, “including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and the specialized agencies”;

**WHEREAS** the Executive Heads of UNESCO and UNEP are fully committed to UN reform, strengthening UN system-wide coherence and “delivering as one”, carried forward under the auspices of the Chief Executives’ Board (CEB) and its subsidiary bodies, especially the UN Development Group (UNDG).

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the parties agree to cooperate as follows:

### **Article I Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration between the Parties, on a non-exclusive basis, to enable national governments to access UN expertise, based on national development priorities and plans, contributing to United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes and supporting complementary UN common country programming processes; and to undertake scientific research, monitoring and assessments and to provide policy advice to all Governments;

### **Article II Areas of Cooperation**

2.1 Within the scope of each Party’s relevant rules and regulations, the Parties agree to cooperate in areas of common interest, further to and within each Organization’s respective mandate. Particular focus will be given to the creation and maintenance of the scientific knowledge base, the formulation of national policies in the fields of science, environment, technology and innovation, education for responsible consumption patterns, the monitoring and benchmarking of trends and advocacy.

2.2. The Parties undertake to cooperate also through complementary and/or joint programming efforts supporting national, regional and global initiatives and UNDAF outcomes in areas where UNEP’s and UNESCO’s joint capacities and expertise can add value.

2.3 Specific areas of joint collaboration may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Climate change
  - Linking the scientific knowledge base for climate change – maintained and refined by UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission



(IOC) together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in the context of the CEB approach as well as by the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) – with UNEP's advocacy and policy advisory role;

- Strengthening the capacities of developing countries, both in the assessment and monitoring of climate change and the formulation of pertinent policies;
- Reinforcing joint efforts to strengthen the adaptation capacities of vulnerable communities, with a focus on indigenous peoples and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the role of local and indigenous knowledge in enhancing community-based responses;
- Cooperating within the framework of the CEB/HLCP process on areas where UNEP plays a convening/ co-convening role (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) in Developing Countries, Capacity Building, Climate Neutral UN and Public Awareness) and where UNESCO plays a convening/co-convening role (Science, Assessment, Monitoring and Early Warning);
- Promoting the role and contribution of education in the context of climate change action;
- Following-up to the International Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Arctic Sustainable Development: Scientific, Social, Cultural and Educational Challenges (Monaco, 3-6 March 2009);
- Cooperation on the UNEP Climate Change Adaptation Network Initiative;
- Raising awareness and build the capacity of media professionals, including public service broadcasters, to report on climate change issues in a scientifically well-founded way.

ii. Multi-scale environmental assessments

- Joint promotion of Earth observations and Earth systems sciences linked with development of policy advice;
- Strengthening the science-policy interface at multiple scales with specific focus on providing advice to decision-makers and building the capacity of scientists from developing countries to undertake multi-scale integrated environmental assessments using appropriate methodologies;
- Capitalizing on synergies between the assessment processes led/coordinated by the Parties;
- Joint programming activities linked with the Follow-up Implementation Initiative to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

iii. Freshwater

- Joint collaboration in the context of the UN-Water mechanism;
- Joint support and contribution to the World Water Assessment Programme and the preparation of the World Water Development Report;
- Maximizing complementarities and synergies in national water resource management plans and policies as well as capacity-building, especially



through cooperation with and participation in UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), focusing also on ecohydrology approaches in watershed management, integrated water resources management (IWRM) at the river basin level, and water resources adaptation strategies;

- Cooperation on water resources adaptation strategies and policies to mitigate the impact of global changes on the hydrological cycle and on water resources in transboundary and other river basins and aquifers;

iv. Ocean and coastal issues

- Joint support and development to the UN-Oceans mechanism and activities (with IOC);
- Joint support and contribution (with IOC) to the Regular Process for the Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects, leading to the development of the first global integrated ocean assessment by 2014; Exchanging information on coastal/near-shore marine water quality and the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA);
- Partnering with IOC in the development of methodology for the assessment of transboundary waters (open oceans);
- Participation and cooperation in the development of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), including relevant panels and activities;
- Cooperation between the Ocean Sciences and Ocean Observation programmes of IOC, including GOOS, and the UNEP Regional Seas programme;
- Joint activities with respect to the assessment of the impact of climate change on the oceans and the development of policy responses at various levels;
- Joint sponsorship of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection;
- Collaboration on the promotion of Integrated Ocean and Coastal Management principles, specifically in the development of initiatives related to i) marine spatial planning, ii) marine-protected areas, and iii) mitigation of coastal hazards and risk reduction;
- Joint programmes on the development of ecosystem-based management tools and initiatives addressing coastal and ocean environmental issues and resource use.

v. Urban and coastal environmental issues

- Involvement of UNEP in UNESCO's work on urban, coastal zone and small island ecosystems under Programmes such as the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Management of Social Transformations (MOST) and LINKS;
- Joint presentation at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010.



- vi. Biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Collaboration in the international initiative to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
  - Joint efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss and joint organization of events to be held during the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010;
  - Use of the MAB World Network of Biosphere Reserves for innovative linkages between biodiversity conservation as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly in the framework of the UNESCO-UNEP-UNU-ICSU partnership on Human and Ecosystem Well-being (HEW);
  - Strengthening of Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), of which UNEP and UNESCO provide the joint secretariat, in particular through regular consultation between UNEP and UNESCO Nairobi.
- vii. World Heritage
- Strengthening of cooperation between UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) and UNEP in the field of biodiversity-related conventions;
  - Strengthening of cooperation between UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) and UNEP on important biodiversity-rich World Heritage sites in danger;
  - Inclusion of World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves within the UNEP Global Environmental Report Outlook (GEO);
  - Management of interoperable databases linking spatial data held by UNEP with activities by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB).
- viii. Education, awareness-raising and training
- Strengthening of joint activities in the context of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), with a special focus on climate change and on education for responsible consumption and lifestyles, building also on the existing UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange project;
  - Enhancing the work of the UN Inter-agency Committee for DESD (IAC/DESD);
  - Identification of best practices in mainstreaming environmental and sustainability issues in educational programmes, in particular in higher education institutions;
  - Enhancing the delivery of environmental education, training and awareness-raising drawing on technology-supported learning and the UNeLearn network;
  - Promoting synergies of DESD with international initiatives such as the Marrakech Process for Sustainable Consumption and Production;
  - Strengthening of collaboration on media literacy and communications for sustainability;

- Strengthening of regional partnerships in support of education, research and outreach, such as the joint UNEP-Tongji Institute of Environment for Sustainable Development (IESD), and of regional and sub-regional environmental education action plans and strategies;
  - Collaboration in water education programmes aimed at capacity-building and postgraduate education (with UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education);
  - Collaboration on UNEP's proposal for a Green Economy and Green Jobs, including in UNESCO programmes on life-long learning and vocational training as well as dedicated components in science policies and related capacity-building.
- ix. Access to environmental information
- Strengthening joint activities in the context of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);
  - Enhancing access to information through better utilization of information and communication technologies;
  - Use of Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS).
- x. Disaster preparedness
- Joint efforts to establish early warning systems for natural disaster preparedness, including collaboration on IOC-coordinated development of tsunami warning and mitigation system;
  - Contribution by UNEP to UNESCO's education programmes for disaster preparedness and mitigation.
- xi. Energy
- Joint efforts to provide assistance to developing countries in the field of new and renewable energies, with emphasis on energy policy, capacity-building and educational programmes;
  - Joint assistance to developing countries in formulating policies for more informed energy choices;
  - Collaboration in context of UNESCO's Global Renewable Energy Education and Training (GREET) Programme as well as regional initiatives aimed at sharing of best practices;
  - Collaboration and organization of joint events on alternative and renewable energy.
- xii. Gender and environment
- Promotion of gender equality in all areas of joint interest and in particular in phases of natural disaster management, in biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable use of resources.



2.2 The Parties agree to continue to cooperate through their appropriate mechanisms and structures to promote strengthened environmental development effectiveness at global, regional, sub-regional and country levels as needed.

2.3 This MOU shall be brought to the attention of the staff of both Organizations, in particular the Directors of UNEP Regional Offices and the Heads of UNESCO Field Offices. UNEP and UNESCO will collaborate to provide guidance, information and learning tools to staff members concerned so as to enhance cooperation in the agreed fields.

2.4 Within the scope of each Party's relevant rules, regulations and business processes, the Parties will explore opportunities to cooperate in the areas of staffing in furtherance to the purpose of this MOU, including the possible secondment of their respective staff.

### **Article III Programme Planning and Implementation**

3.1 At the country level, the Parties recognize the particular importance of the UN country teams (UNCT) and the potential of joint programming and its implementation for responding effectively to national priorities and capacity building synergies, both through national development plans and UN joint country programming exercises. Joint programming can address cross-cutting themes, normative issues and normative-operational linkages, upstream policy work and advice required by governments.

3.2. The Parties shall explore and promote, within the context of UNCTs, the inclusion of deliverables and UNDAF outcomes related to the building of national capacities for environment-related scientific knowledge bases, related monitoring and assessment, as well as the inclusion of the formulation of national/regional environment policies, with distinct poverty-environment linkages.

3.3. The Parties will pay particular attention to joint work with relevant line ministries at the country level, especially science and environment ministries, as well as with UNESCO National Commissions and other UNESCO networks (e.g. institutes and centres under the auspices of UNESCO (category 2 centers), UNESCO chairs or the Associated Schools Programme/ASP), as appropriate.

3.4. Both Parties will also promote cooperation and exchange of information among their respective representatives at the regional, sub-regional, and country levels (both within UNCTs and in the case of limited activities outside the UNCT framework) and in the context of Regional Directors' (Managers) Teams (RDTs/RMTs).

3.5 At Headquarters level, the Parties also agree to support common programmatic initiatives and to exchange information to develop and strengthen cooperation, as deemed appropriate.



3.6 Substantive areas of cooperation and methods through which collaborative initiatives, strategies and support may be realized between the Parties will be elaborated by focal points designated by the respective Parties. The Deputy Executive Director will act as the focal point within UNEP and the Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning will be the focal point at UNESCO. The focal points will provide the strategic direction of cooperation, monitor the implementation of the MOU and provide regular feedback to their respective institutions.

3.7 The Parties may agree upon, through their focal points, the launch of special initiatives or joint actions, globally and regionally and in collaboration with the partner governments, and cooperate closely in the context of common country programming exercises with UNCTs in accordance with respective rules, policies and procedures of the Parties.

3.8 Each Party shall be responsible for its acts and omissions in connection with the implementation of this MOU.

3.9 For each party, the operational activities shall be subject to its agreement with the concerned governments.

#### **Article IV Collection and Utilization of Statistical Information**

4.1 Subject to 5.1 below the Parties recognize the value and need for sharing statistical and scientific information in order to avoid duplication in collection, analysis, publication and distribution of such information.

4.2 To this end the Parties will coordinate their efforts to ensure efficient data collection, maintenance and management, while supporting governments' capacity in data collection and analysis, including capacities to produce and use earth observations. As regards statistics, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) will serve as focal point for UNESCO.

#### **Article V Consultation and Exchange of Information**

5.1 Consultation and exchange of information and documents under this Article shall be without prejudice to arrangements which may be in place to safeguard the confidential and restricted character of certain information and documents. Such arrangements will survive the termination of this MOU and any agreement signed by the Parties within the scope of this collaboration.

5.2 The Parties shall consult with each other on a regular basis on matters which might affect the successful completion of the joint initiatives and collaboration agreed upon in this MoU. The Parties shall hold regular bilateral meetings to review the progress of joint collaboration being carried out and plan future activities in the priority areas of cooperation mentioned in Article II above. Implementation of any specific activities/subsequent projects/programmes pursuant to this MOU shall necessitate the execution of appropriate legal agreements between the Parties.



5.3 The Parties will collaborate to enhance networking and information exchange so as to improve, *inter alia*, the accessibility and inter-operability of information with particular focus on early warning systems to cope with natural disasters.

**Article VI  
Visibility**

6.1 The Parties agree to acknowledge the role and contribution of each Organization in all public information documentation relating to instances of such cooperation and use each Organization's name and emblem in documentation related to the cooperation in accordance with the current policies of each Organization and with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) policies.

**Article VII  
Term, Termination, Amendment**

7.1 This MOU shall enter into effect upon signature by both Parties and shall remain valid for a period of five years. Either Party may terminate this MOU by giving not less than sixty (60) days notice in writing to the other Party. Such termination shall become effective on the date specified in the termination note.

7.2 In the event of termination of the MOU, any subsequent cost-sharing, project cooperation agreements, and any project documents concluded between the Parties pursuant to this MOU, may also be terminated in accordance with the termination provision stipulated therein. In such cases, the Parties shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the activities carried out under the MOU, any cost-sharing agreement, or project documents are brought to a prompt and orderly conclusion in accordance with the respective regulations and rules of the Parties, as applicable.

7.3 This MOU may be amended only by mutual written agreement of the Parties. The Parties may, by exchange of letters (EOL), amend any of the provisions of this MOU or enter into supplementary arrangements designed to extend the scope of the present MOU.

7.4 This MOU shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Article VIII  
Notices and Addresses**

8.1 Any notice or request required or permitted to be given or made under this MOU shall be in writing. Such notice or request shall be deemed to have been duly given or made when it shall have been delivered by hand, certified mail, or overnight courier to the party to which it is required to be given or made at the address specified below or such other address as shall be hereafter notified.



For UNEP: Deputy Executive Director  
UNEP  
PO Box 30552  
Nairobi 00100, Kenya

For UNESCO: Assistant Director General for Strategic Planning  
UNESCO  
7, Place de Fontenoy  
F-75352 Paris 07 SP, France

#### Article IX Miscellaneous

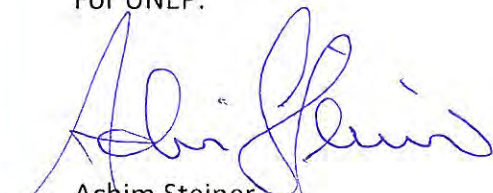
9.1 This MOU comprises the complete understanding of the Parties in respect of the subject matter and supersedes all prior organization-wide agreements between the Parties. Any dispute over the interpretation or application of any provision herein contained shall be settled through negotiations or by such other means as the Parties shall mutually agree. Failure by either Party to enforce a provision of this MOU shall not waive any other provision of the MOU. The invalidity or unenforceability of any other provision of this MOU shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision of the MOU.

#### Article X Entry into Force

10.1 This MOU shall be signed in two copies, each of which shall be deemed an original and this MOU shall enter into force upon signature by the Parties being effective from the date of the latest signature, and shall remain valid for a period of five years, unless terminated earlier pursuant to Article VII above.

**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below.

For UNEP:



Achim Steiner  
Executive Director

Dated 4 April 2009

For UNESCO:



Koïchiro Matsuura  
Director-General

Dated 4 April 2009