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UNEP Initiative on Capacity Building for Integrated Assessment and Planning for Sustainable Development

25-26 June 2003, Geneva

The Economics and Trade Branch of UNEP is launching an initiative on 'Capacity Building for Integrated Assessment and Planning for Sustainable Development'. The main objective of this initiative is to undertake integrated assessment that takes account of the environmental, social and economic aspects in policy design and implementation. The initiative aims to explore and build on existing experiences and approaches for integrated assessment and planning, balancing environmental, social and economic objectives and relating them to poverty alleviation and sustainable trade promotion, with the intention of identifying best practices and approaches, as well as areas which require improvement. It will focus on looking into the sustainability concerns of a broad-based strategic planning process, with particular emphasis on the agriculture sector. Projects will be implemented in eight countries, from Latin America, Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, and Eastern and Central Europe.

This Initiative is in implementation of UNEP Governing Council Decision GC 21/14 related to providing assistance to governments to integrate environmental considerations in the design and assessment of macro-economic policies, adopt an integrated approach to design and implement mutually supportive trade and environment policies, and promote greater understanding of the linkages between poverty and the environment. It is also in response to decision GC22/10, to develop a strategy for the implementation of actions committed to in the plan of implementation of the WSSD on poverty alleviation.

In addition, Governing Council decision GC22/10: "Calls on Governments, international organizations, donor organizations and major groups to actively work towards fulfilling the actions committed to in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development on poverty eradication, as well as operationalizing the work solidarity fund, which was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 57/265 of 20 December 2002, and requests the Executive Director to develop a strategy for the implementation of those actions within the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme"

Moreover, at the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Doha, Ministers noted the efforts by Members to conduct national environmental assessments of trade policies on a voluntary basis, and encouraged expertise and experience to be shared with WTO Members wishing to perform environmental reviews and assessments at the national level.

In order to address these issues, a preparatory meeting was convened by UNEP in February 2003 consisting of a Working Group of experts representing relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, including the World Bank, UNDP, UNECE, UNCTAD, IISD, IIED, WWF, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Centre International



des Technologies de l'Environnement de post-Doha Tunis (CITET), AidEnvironment and the Regional Environmental Centre. The main purpose of the meeting was to agree on an implementation strategy and develop a framework document outlining the objectives and the process to be adopted in the implementation of the country projects.

In order to launch this initiative, UNEP convened a planning meeting in Geneva on 25 and 26 June 2003. The main objectives of this meeting were to identify the methodologies and approaches as well as the process to be adopted in undertaking the country studies.

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As a first step, potential countries were invited to submit a preliminary overview of planned (strategic) planning processes relevant for poverty reduction, environment and trade. This involves domestic plans and planning processes and sustainable development strategies, e.g. agricultural policies, rural or urban development strategies as well as externally driven plans and planning processes. It may involve planning processes aimed at revising or updating existing plans or policies, or may focus on designing new ones. Based on this overview, countries are being requested to identify one key strategic planning process to be undertaken during 2003-2004 and are being invited to submit this as a candidate for a pilot case to be supported by UNEP.

The pilot country studies will be led by a national institution to be identified by each country.

<http://www.unep.ch/etu/etp/events/Poverty/Poverty.dwt>

Capacity Building Meeting on Environment, Trade, and Sustainable Development for the Latin-American, and Caribbean Region, 27-28 March 2003, Mexico City

The meeting was organised to accurately define capacity building needs on the trade, environment and sustainable development policy interface for the Latin-American and Caribbean Region. It aimed to: identify priorities for capacity building activities and develop a long-term capacity building programme on this policy interface for the region; identify a network of regional and sub-regional institutions to assist in undertaking capacity building activities; develop collaboration amongst ministries of environment and trade, and Secretariats of Trade and economic agreements in their trade and environment policy formulation; and identify key environmental and sustainable development issues related to the WSSD and WTO Work Programme for the region; and assist with the integration of environmental considerations in bilateral and regional negotiations.

The meeting generated strong interest from governments in the region, and was attended by trade and environment officials from 13 Latin-American and Caribbean countries. In addition, there were representatives from the United States, Canada and the European Community. International organizations were also represented. The meeting also had active participation from regional, economic, trade and environmental cooperation bodies (including CARICOM, CAN, CAF, and the CEC), and other stakeholders including NGOs, academic institutions and research organizations.

There was broad agreement on the importance of developing a capacity building programme for the region, which: takes into account the specific needs of the countries, sub-regions and regions; promotes the exchange of experience and knowledge between countries, and the coordination of efforts by multilateral, regional and national institutions; and provides the basis for a greater integration of environmental objectives into other sectoral policies.

Environmental goods and services, intellectual property rights and biodiversity; and market access for environmentally friendly products including organic agricultural produce emerged as common capacity building needs for the region.

Participants emphasized the importance of conducting national needs assessments prior to designing capacity building programmes, and involving the private sector in such programmes. They also called for enhanced capacity for trade negotiators to be developed through workshops, new programmes and other training and activities at the institutional level. In this regard, some participants felt that in order of priority, capacity building programmes should focus on, training, research, and then seminars and workshops.

<http://www.unep.ch/etu/mexico/Mexico2003.htm>

CBTF Workshop on Specific post-Doha Trade and Environment Issues, held back-to-back with the WTO Regional Seminar on Trade and Environment for African Countries, 22 May 2003, Cape Town, South Africa

The UNEP and UNCTAD secretariats jointly organized a workshop under the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity-Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) in Cape Town on 22 May 2003. The workshop was held back-to-back with the WTO Regional Seminar on Trade and Environment for African Countries that ran from 19-21 May. Trade and environment officials from 21 Anglophone African countries were invited to both these events.

The CBTF workshop focused on two specific issues related to the post-Doha work programme: (i) the integrated assessment of trade policies; (ii) protecting and promoting traditional knowledge.

The workshop also discussed follow-up activities at the regional level to the CBTF Policy Dialogue on Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products that took place in the ACP Secretariat in Brussels in February 2002. Other capacity building needs at the policy interface between trade and sustainable development were explored, with particular reference to the Doha work programme. This will assist us in planning future CBTF activities in the region.

<http://www.unep.ch/etu/etp/events/CapeTown/CapeTown.dwt>

Final Workshop for the UNEP Project on the Trade and Market Access implications for phasing out Methyl Bromide, 10 June 2003, Beirut

Under the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF) auspices, the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon is conducting a study on the alternatives for methyl bromide (a substance used in soil fumigation and to be phased out under the Montreal Protocol) and the impact of trade liberalization on Agriculture. This project builds on a larger one funded by the Multilateral Fund managed by the UNDP and executed by the Lebanese Ministry of Environment.

The study suggests a two-phase policy plan to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the methyl bromide phase out in Lebanon by 2015. The main processes in this policy include motivating farmers to depart from methyl bromide alternatives, establishing networks between production and marketing stakeholders, exploring and identifying potential export markets, guiding the farmers through the newly explored markets, and establishing a database that could be accessible to stakeholders. These will render farmers ready to compete in international markets.

Capacity Building for Integrated Policy Design and Implementation for Sustainable Development - Developing Mutually Supportive Trade and Environment Policies for Sustainable Development.

Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, 27 - 28 March 2004

Due to the outbreak of the SARS disease and the health hazard it posed, and further to consultations we had with the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, it was decided that this High-Level Forum should be postponed.

Further to discussions with both the Korean Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, it was decided to re-schedule this meeting to take place on 27 and 28 March 2004, in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. Now titled 'Capacity Building for Integrated Policy Design and Implementation for Sustainable Development', it will be held back-to-back with the 8th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum, also being hosted by the Korean Ministry of Environment, from 29-31 March 2004 in Korea. Now taking place over two days, it will no longer include the Ministerial section, but will be devoted to discussions at the technical level on Integrated Assessment and Planning for Sustainable Development and Priorities and Approaches for Effective Capacity Building.

The meeting is expected to draw participation from the Ministries of Environment and Trade, as well as non-governmental and international organizations. With the involvement of both environment and trade officials, it is hoped that the meeting will reflect and focus on specific needs for capacity building on environment, and

sustainable development, and address specific trade and environment issues of concern in the different regions of the world.

http://www.unep.ch/etu/Seoul/2003_Seoul.htm

International World Environment Day Celebrations held in Beirut on 5 June 2003

Lebanon, a country whose fabled cedar trees have been revered since the sea-faring days of the Phoenicians, hosted this year's World Environment Day (5 June). It was the first time in the 30-year history of this awareness-raising event that the main celebrations have been held in the Arab world.

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. This theme has been chosen to support the UN International Year of Freshwater, 2003, & World Water Day, 22 March.



Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the UN, said: "One person in six lives without regular access to safe drinking water. Over twice that number – 2.4 billion – lack access to adequate sanitation. Water-related diseases kill a child every eight seconds". He added that the international community had, at the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, set "measurable, time-bound commitments" to provide safe water and sanitation.

Broadly, the Agenda of the World Environment Day is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will insure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

World environment day is a people's event with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essays and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, as well as recycling and clean-up campaigns.

(continued on page 4)

The celebrations, held in Beirut and around Lebanon under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment, led by Fares Boueiz included the presentation of UNEP's Global 500 Awards. These are made to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the protection and conservation of the environment. A total of eight winners will be honoured in 2003.

UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), based in Bahrain, provides support and advice on environmental matters to 12 countries. Among other activities, ROWA is coordinating the regional component of the Global International Waters Assessment (GEWA), which addresses water management, as well as the regional component of the Global Plan of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (GPA).

Mr Toepfer added: "It will not be lost on billions of people around the globe, that this special day will also hold special significance by being in the Arab world so soon after the recent conflict in Iraq". He said UNEP stood ready to assist in the humanitarian effort for the benefit of the Iraqi people and their environment.

WED, considered one of the most important events on the environment calendar, is celebrated every year in more than 100 countries. The occasion serves to inspire political and community action. Governments, individuals, non-governmental organizations, community and youth groups, business, industry and the media undertake a variety of activities aimed at renewing their commitment to the protection of the environment.

<http://www.unep.org/wed/2003/>

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New ETB Publication: Studies of EIA Practice in Developing Countries

This publication is a companion volume to the UNEP Environmental Impact Assessment Training Resource Manual. It contains a series of case studies of EIA (and elements of SEA) practice in developing and transitional countries.

The case studies have been prepared by EIA specialists from developing countries to exemplify how the EIA process is implemented in different parts of the developing world and to identify difficulties that are commonly encountered in EIA practice in this context.

It is intended that the case studies will be of use in two main ways:

Firstly, they can be incorporated into customised training materials to give them added relevance and realism.

Secondly, the studies can be used as 'reference points' or 'building blocks' to develop specific cases that reflect experience and issues of EIA practice in a country or region.

The manual is a generic tool kit for use by EIA trainers, particularly those in developing and transitional countries. The main objective is to facilitate the preparation of training courses and materials that are specific to a particular country or region. Resource aids are included to help EIA trainers to identify the needs of participants and to custom-design courses to meet them. There is guidance on the sources of EIA information that will be useful when preparing training courses and materials for each topic. EIA reports and supporting documents have been identified as particularly relevant as a resource for preparing locally appropriate case studies.

However, copies of EIA reports are not always readily obtainable in many developing countries or they may be too descriptive to be easily translated into a case study. Indeed, relatively few case studies of EIA practice in developing countries are available in the literature of the field. This compendium of cases has been compiled to help fill that gap.

<http://www.unep.ch/etu/publications/Compendium.htm>

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