



PRESS RELEASE

First UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi Heralds New Era in Global Efforts to Address Environment Sustainability

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other High-Level Representatives from 160 UN Member and Observer States, UN Heads of Agencies, Business and Civil Society Set to participate

Nairobi, 29 May 2014 - The First UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) will convene in Nairobi, Kenya, from 23 to 27 June 2014. This marks a historic milestone in UNEP's 43-year history and is expected to be attended by high-level delegations from over 160 UN Member and Observer States.

UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the President of the UN General Assembly, Ministers of Environment and Foreign Affairs and Chief Executives of a number of international organisations are set to attend the newly-established UNEA that will bring together over 1,200 high-level participants from government, business and civil society.

UNEA is the newly constituted UN high-level platform for decision making on environment that is tasked to chart a new course in the way the international community addresses environmental sustainability challenges. More than 80 Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Secretaries of State as well as heads of international convention secretariats have confirmed their attendance, so far.

UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Mr. Achim Steiner, said, "The convening of the first UNEA session in Nairobi – home of UNEP and the often referred to *environment capital of the world* – represents a coming-of-age for the global environment community. For the first time, all 193 members of the UN, plus Observer States and major stakeholders, will be represented in the new assembly—thereby bestowing upon UNEA a new level of representation, legitimacy and authority."

"A broad range of actors from the world of economy, finance, social sciences, legislation, the judiciary and development are also due to participate to help shape the global environment agenda, under the stewardship of UNEA. The issues facing this first session of UNEA are weighty ones which require the voices of all member states and partners to be heard."

"Now more than ever, it has become increasingly clear that the dichotomy between environmental sustainability and economic and social development should be overcome

through the careful management of natural resources as the keystone of a prosperous and stable society. In this new forum, UNEP and its partners will be able to provide governments and other policymakers with the science, policy options and platform, for international cooperation to more effectively address the environmental dimension of sustainable development,” he added.

For Kenya, the host country of UNEP’s headquarters for over four decades, the convening of UNEA in its capital city of Nairobi marks another milestone in this pioneering partnership.

Ambassador Martin Kimani, Kenya’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said, “Kenya is ready to welcome the world’s leading environmentalists and world experts, working in all areas related to sustainable development to UNEA in June. Our country has made immense strides in building a Green Economy – observe our cutting edge geothermal developments and the high percentage of our GDP from nature tourism.”

“The success of UNEA and UNEP are high in our priorities. Kenya is taking every measure to ensure the success of this landmark event. We are inviting delegates from around the world to actively participate in this historic moment and make their contributions to the assembly in a safe and friendly city that is rolling out every welcome to them,” he said.

As the new governing body of UNEP as well as the world’s Environment Assembly, UNEA has the mandate to make strategic decisions and provide political guidance in the work of UNEP, and promote a strong science-policy interface.

The first UNEA session is expected to deliver a series of outcomes that would spell out concrete actions to address the key environmental challenges discussed at UNEA. Where appropriate, UNEA may also recommend draft resolutions for adoption at the United Nations General Assembly for UN system-wide action.

At UNEA’s high-level segment – held under the slogan *A Life of Dignity for All*— Ministers and international leaders will gather to address two key sustainable development and environment topics of current international concern, namely:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including sustainable consumption and production; and
- The illegal trade in wildlife to address the escalation in poaching and surge in related environmental crime.

To complement the Ministerial discussions, UNEA will also see the convening of two Symposia that address two key aspects of environmental sustainability:

- The environmental rule of law through the gathering of leading representatives of the international judicial community, including Chief Justices, Attorney Generals and Judges. More information is available at: <http://www.unep.org/unea/erl.asp>

- The role of Finance in the Green Economy by bringing to Nairobi and UNEA, leaders from the world of business, finance and industry. More information is available at: http://www.unep.org/unea/financing_green_economy.asp

The UNEA deliberations will conclude with a High-Level Segment led by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President of the General Assembly John Ashe. It will comprise a: strategic briefing on the state of the environment by UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner; ministerial plenaries on Sustainable Development Goals, including Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the illegal trade in wildlife.

During the UNEA week, more than 40 special and side events, fora, and high level dialogues, will take place at UNEP's headquarters, covering a range of issues, such as: climate change, gender and the environment, green jobs, air quality, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the sound management of chemicals, among other topics.

Notes to Editors

- For more information on UNEA, visit: <http://www.unep.org/unea/about.asp>
- More information on the High-Level Segment of UNEA is available at: http://www.unep.org/unea/high_level_segment.asp
- More information on the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including Sustainable Production and Consumption, is available at: <http://www.unep.org/unea/sdg.asp>
- More information on the illegal trade in wildlife is available at: <http://www.unep.org/unea/wildlife.asp>

For more information, please contact:

Shereen Zorba, Head of News and Media, United Nations Environment Programme, Tel.+254 788 526 000 or Email: shereen.zorba@unep.org/ unepnewsdesk@unep.org