

Environment, population and urbanization



The environment, population, and urbanization cluster deals with crosscutting and sectoral issues. It assists the African Union Commission (AUC) and other African organizations in formulating and implementing environmental, population and urbanization policies. In addition, it fosters the implementation of joint projects and collaborative efforts between the United Nations organizations and agencies, African Union Commission, its NEPAD programme and the regional economic communities. Its objectives are to address the challenges of: growing populations and the movement of people; the rapid growth of towns; environmental degradation and pollution; and the lack of demographic statistics.

Cluster members:

AUC, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Cluster governance:

The cluster co-chairs are Constant-Serge Bounda, Head of the UNFPA Liaison Office to ECA and AUC and Dr Ms. Olushola Olayide, Head of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Land Management,, Head of the Environment, Natural Resource and Climate Change Department of the AUC Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Cluster priorities:

- Strengthening synergies on environment-population-urbanization activities
- Addressing the challenges of the growing population pressure and its impact on the environment
- Supporting Africa's response to climate change and disaster risk reduction
- Dealing with health and environmental challenges in Africa.

- Addressing inter-linkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development
- Enhancing the leadership of AUC, the regional economic communities and member States in accelerating the implementation of global and regional agreements on environment, population and urbanization.

Key achievements:

- In a joint effort with ECA, AUC and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to operationalize the United Nations General Assembly-mandated review of the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) programme of action and its follow-up beyond 2014, UNFPA held the African Regional Conference on Population and Development from 30 September to 4 October in Addis Ababa. The outcome of the event was the adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development, which called for the full implementation of the ICPD programme of action.
- The cluster continued to support the follow-up on the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes by conducting a capacity-building training workshop for staff of AUC and the regional economic communities. On the recommendation of AUC, cluster members, such as UNDP, ILO, UNEP and UNFPA carried out a capacity-building workshop on mainstreaming sustainable development and green economy into the plans, programmes and policies of the Commission, as identified in the African Union Environmental and Natural Resources strategic plan 2014-2017. This will facilitate the work of the AUC staff in assisting member States to mainstream sustainable development and green economy policies into their development processes, with focus on monitoring and evaluation.
- In consultation with UNDP, ILO, AfDB, the European Union, the World Wide Fund for Nature, UNIDO and AUC, UNEP held an African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) consultative meeting for the development of flagship projects for the implementation of Rio+20. The outcomes of the meeting were approved at the Fifth Special Session of AMCEN, held in October 2013 in Gaborone, where a declaration was issued on climate change and Africa's development.
- UNIDO worked jointly with ECOWAS and other African countries to set up regional centres for renewable energy and energy efficiency, thereby contributing to increased access to modern energy services and improved energy security.
- The World Meteorological Organization also worked jointly with AUC, ECA and the regional economic communities to carry out extensive capacity-building training for climate information producers and users, and organized the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum.
- The International Maritime Organization, in joint activities with some regional institutions, including the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa, the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa and the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa, organized a capacity-building seminar, which brought together over 30 participants from 15 countries throughout the region to be trained on the importance and benefits of becoming party to the international oil pollution compensation regime. The seminar helped to enhance the recipient countries and regions' institutional and human

capacities to increase output and alleviate poverty, in compliance with relevant international instruments.

- UNESCO, in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, carried out a capacity-building seminar for national directors of education, with focus on integrating education for peace and conflict and risk prevention into education sector plans in West and Central Africa. The aim was to build the capacities of member States to create a holistic vision of education for sustainable development, by integrating climate change, disaster preparedness and risk reduction into educational policies.
- The 2014 African Environment and Wangari Maathai Day was celebrated on the 3 March 2014 in Maseru, Lesotho, under the theme Combating Desertification in Africa: Enhancing Agricultural Productivity and Food Security. Support from the Cluster included inter alia, technical, financial and production of advocacy materials. This commemoration took a different dimension for the first time with the active engagement of RCM-Africa in the celebration. Activities included media training on challenging environmental dispositions in Africa, official launch and tree planting conducted in memory of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai the founder of Green Belt Movement and a champion of biodiversity conservation.

For further information, please contact the Co-chairs:

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References: <http://www.uneca.org/nepad/pages/regional-coordination-mechanism>