



**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Programme of work and budget, and other
administrative and budgetary issues**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/1 on pollution
mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or
terrorism**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its resolution 3/1,¹ on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) encouraged the Executive Director to keep undertaking field visits to affected areas, as appropriate and upon the invitation of the affected State; requested the Executive Director to dispatch urgent assistance missions to affected areas, as appropriate and upon the affected State's request, within available resources and in conformity with the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, in order to undertake field-based and post-crisis environmental assessment and recovery with a view to helping affected States control pollution resulting from armed conflict or terrorism; and requested the Executive Director to continue UNEP interaction with the International Law Commission, including by providing the latter, when requested to do so, with relevant information in support of its work pertaining to pollution resulting from armed conflict or terrorism.

UNEP will support member States, upon request, in the taking of appropriate measures to minimize and control pollution in situations of armed conflict or terrorism; will cooperate closely in preventing, minimizing and mitigating the negative impacts of armed conflict and terrorism on the environment and encouraging all national-level stakeholders to participate in preparing national plans and strategies for setting priorities for environmental assessment and remediation projects; and ensure that the data needed to identify health outcomes are collected and integrated into health registries and risk education programmes.

* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

¹ UNEP/EA.3/Res.1.

Standing capacity exists to deploy expertise, upon request, through the mechanisms provided by the Joint Environment Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNEP, including the UNEP Crisis Management Branch.

I. Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/1

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been actively supporting certain countries in dealing with conflict-related pollution. These countries include those, such as Iraq, that are directly affected by conflict, and others, such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, that are affected by conflict-related displacement.
2. For example, in Iraq, UNEP has been working with United Nations partner organizations to tackle the enormous volumes of debris generated by the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), with a focus on the city of Mosul. United Nations agencies have been supporting efforts to remove debris that has been dumped in an uncontrolled manner, creating long-term environmental problems. Drawing on debris management assessments, modelling scenarios and technical guidance provided by UNEP, the Funding Facility for Stabilization of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with local authorities, are initiating debris recycling projects in Mosul. These projects will support UNDP and IOM efforts to create cash-for-work activities for local inhabitants and returnees, while UNEP participation will ensure that they are carried out in an environmentally sound manner.
3. For South Sudan, UNEP issued the *State of the Environment and Outlook Report 2018*, a first for that country. The report provides a benchmark for assessments, inventories, mapping and valuation of that country's vast natural resources. The information generated will be used to plan and manage natural resources and environmental protection, including in the extractive sector.
4. In Turkey and Lebanon, UNEP is supporting capacity-building to address the environmental dimensions of the massive human displacement caused by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.
5. In addition, UNEP contributed to the development of a pioneering massive open online course (MOOC) on environmental security and sustaining peace by the SDG Academy in New York. Other partners included Columbia University, Duke University, the Environmental Law Institute, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and the University of California at Irvine. The eight-week course ran from March to May 2018 with 9,895 participants from 170 countries. The course website received 30,564 views from 198 countries, and the course itself attracted a diverse group of participants encompassing the major stakeholder groups, including non-governmental organizations (19%), the private sector (18%), government (13%), international organizations (10%), academia (9%) and others. Over 90 per cent of the participants surveyed found the course relevant, valuable and of high quality. The next session of the MOOC will be held in February 2019.
6. UNEP continues to seek to increase its operational capacity to deliver on the resilience to disasters and conflicts subprogramme and on its core programme of work deliverables. In August 2018 recruited an additional Nairobi-based senior programme management officer in order to enhance UNEP capacity to identify, analyse and monitor current and emerging environment-related risks, increase the scale and effectiveness of United Nations work at the country and regional levels to reduce environmental risks, and advocate for enhanced global action to address such risks.
7. UNEP continues to explore ways to improve United Nations system-wide coordination in tackling issues relating to conflict pollution. For example, UNEP is currently discussing the possible establishment of a joint environment team with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees so as to pool the two organizations' capacity and expertise.
8. UNEP also continues to support the work of the International Law Commission to develop and promulgate draft principles on the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict².

II. Recommendations and suggested actions

9. Given that the precise timing of events can be unpredictable, response missions tend to be reactive and difficult to fund adequately. Providing timely and adequate responses is an ongoing challenge for which the allocation of more un-earmarked, rapidly deployable funding would be extremely beneficial.

² See http://legal.un.org/ilc/guide/8_7.shtml.

10. Meanwhile, UNEP continues to work to implement two relevant resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly at previous sessions – resolution 2/15, on protecting the environment in areas affected by armed conflict, and resolution 3/1, on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism. In September, for example, as part of its joint work with Norway’s Oil for Development programme, UNEP organized a five-day training workshop focusing on the assessment of oil-contaminated sites in Iraq, given that oil installations were the main pollution source resulting from the conflict with ISIL. The workshop involved the participation of 26 staff members of the ministries dealing with the environment and oil, from different levels of government, as well as representatives of the office of the Prime Minister and UNDP. The workshop focused mainly on sampling techniques and tools and included field exercises based on oil spill scenarios. UNEP provided participants with an equipment package comprising hydrocarbon pollution analysers as well as sampling and protective equipment to support field assessment of oil-contaminated sites.
