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Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme, including coordination matters

Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Addendum

Joint activities in the urban environment

Joint progress report of the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of the progress made in the biennium 2017–2018 to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). It also provides an overview of key activities in the context of which such cooperation has taken place. Cooperation between the two programmes was strengthened in several respects during the biennium.
2. There were many joint engagements over the course of the biennium 2017–2018, including at the second and third sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and at the ninth session of the World Urban Forum. The Greener Cities Partnership continues to serve as the main platform for knowledge exchange and coordination between UN-Habitat and UNEP. The documents that guide the Partnership have been revised by staff members from both agencies, creating a framework that allows for a wider focus beyond the pillars that guided the partnership during the period 2014–2017, namely, resilient and resource-efficient cities, sustainable transport and mobility, and waste and wastewater management. The new framework offers a refined vision and mission for the Partnership that embodies the value of collaboration through the transformation of urban infrastructure, ecological landscapes and urban planning.
3. The two agencies continue to review progress in their cooperation through the Joint Operation and Coordination Group and maintain open dialogue through regular teleconferences. The Joint Operation and Coordination Group has the mandate of coordinating the Greener Cities Partnership and is the primary vehicle for overseeing the implementation of joint activities. It is also the main body through which major joint events have been organized to showcase current and future collaboration on the urban environment.

* HSP/HA/1/1.

II. General cooperation between the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme: overview of the joint work programme of the Greener Cities Partnership

4. The objective of the joint Greener Cities Partnership is to transform cities into sustainable entities that can provide equal access to natural resources while reducing their impact on the environment. The Partnership was established after an in-depth review of the Partnership Framework for the period 2008–2013 and its associated joint activities. The priorities for the Partnership for the period 2014–2017 (transport, waste, resource efficiency) were selected through a systematic review and consultation process, based on their importance for the global agenda and their potential for leveraging the respective strengths of UN-Habitat and UNEP. Implementation mechanisms include the development of baselines and standards for green cities, assessments of green and blue ecosystems in cities, the development of institutional mechanisms to protect urban biodiversity, the development of a knowledge platform for best practices, and the delivery of joint advisory services to national and local governments. During the biennium 2017–2018, it became apparent that only greater integration beyond a sectoral approach would truly influence the way in which cities were planned and designed and adequately respond to the agenda set by the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Therefore, in 2017, the two organizations launched the second version of the Greener Cities Partnership. The new version is driven by the concept of urban environmental justice and just distribution (of healthy living conditions, including green space, clean air, access to housing and basic infrastructure, and of socioeconomic opportunities) and reflects a recognition of communal, local, regional and national boundaries, thereby also responding directly to the question of rights in cities, which some national and local governments refer to as the “right to the city”, and a recognition of the three transformative commitments that are enshrined in the New Urban Agenda: (a) to leave no one behind, urban equality and poverty eradication; (b) to provide sustainable and inclusive prosperity and opportunities for all; and (c) to foster ecological and resilient cities and human settlements. Therefore, the Partnership offers targeted and tailor-made support to local governments through two strategic, interdisciplinary umbrella projects that, while having different entry points, contribute to and are essential for achieving the same vision.

6. The first project is on the theme “Transforming urban landscapes: City-region planning, green public space and ecosystem services”. The approach of this project reflects a recognition of the importance of viewing cities from a city–region perspective, thereby providing a dynamic approach to planning and managing urban landscapes and to harmonizing their built and natural environments through ecosystem services, green public space and biodiversity protection, among others. The second project is on the theme “Transforming city infrastructure: Sustainable housing, energy, waste management and transport”. The approach of this project is to identify the key sectors that contribute to sustainable and unsustainable consumption and production patterns in cities, including with respect to housing and buildings, energy, waste and transport. Harnessing opportunities in these sectors means finding alternative solutions to traditional value chains that advance the circular economy at the city level.

7. Through the Greener Cities Partnership, UNEP and UN-Habitat draw on their respective strengths to support science-based policies and decisions and prove the multiple benefits of vertical and horizontal policy integration through the implementation of pilot projects. Some of the key elements of the umbrella projects include assessments, such as of environmental and health impacts, urban metabolism (e.g., through an analysis of material flows), scenario-building and the quantification of the trade-offs inherent in alternative urban development approaches to build the foundation for transforming knowledge into norms. The experience of UN-Habitat in formulating national urban policies and the experience of UNEP in formulating assessment-based, sectoral and environmental policies allow for the joint deployment of both urban and environmental policies.

8. Projects under the Greener Cities Partnership are designed so that planning and design will be built primarily on environmental assessments and analyses that develop spatial maps and visualizations of the city’s current situation and future opportunities. In this way, the Partnership will promote an innovative model whereby the quantification of urban metabolism informs the decisions of policymakers and thus shapes a more environmentally sensitive urban morphology. This will be complemented by the further definition of indicators and their underlying methodologies and the collection and analysis of supporting data, to enable the bottom-up tracking of progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. Given that advocacy and outreach are critical, the work will be complemented by a strong cross-cutting communications/advocacy/public engagement component,

with the intention to develop a virtual reality tool that reflects the themes of both umbrella projects. Such a tool would also provide the means for involving individuals in the definition of priorities, thereby facilitating participatory planning.

9. A number of Sustainable Development Goal targets are relevant to the Greener Cities Partnership and the umbrella projects.¹ The Partnership will work with local governments to meet the relevant targets and to promote the New Urban Agenda and its contents relating to the environment and sustainable urban development.

10. Throughout the reporting period, a joint staff member has continued to help to coordinate all urban environmental work at UN-Habitat and to consolidate all partnerships between UN-Habitat and UNEP.

11. One of the challenges faced by the Greener Cities Partnership remains the issue of joint resource mobilization. In order to strengthen the Partnership, a more sustainable funding stream needs to be secured to support related coordination functions in both agencies. One of the four domains of change in the new strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020–2025 focuses on strengthened climate action and an improved urban environment, with a view to further paving the way for the strategic and results-based anchoring of the Partnership.

III. Key activities

12. During the reporting period, several activities were implemented under the Greener Cities Partnership, including in new areas of collaboration such as urban health and air quality, sustainable housing and an ecological living module demonstration unit, coastal and marine spatial planning, and the blue economy.

A. Activities in the priority areas of the Greener Cities Partnership

13. While the focus of the Partnership is now broader, the pillars of the previous version of the Greener Cities Partnership remain relevant. Under the “resilient, resource-efficient cities” pillar, UN-Habitat published “Urban Resilience Enhancer: resource efficiency”, with input from and peer reviews provided by the Cities Unit of UNEP. The publication was shared with partners and stakeholders during Barcelona Resilience Week in November 2018 and is a practical tool that can be used by local governments in any city.

14. Under the “sustainable mobility and transport” pillar, UN-Habitat and UNEP continue to emphasize the benefits and importance of non-motorized transport, improved air quality and bus rapid transit systems. Following the successful launch of a bus rapid transit system in Dar es Salaam under a Global Environment Facility-funded project with the theme “Promoting sustainable transport solutions for East African cities”, government representatives from Addis Ababa, Kampala and Nairobi requested UNEP and UN-Habitat support in introducing bus rapid transit systems that are well-integrated with walking and cycling. The project resulted in technical designs for the first bus rapid transit corridors in Nairobi and Addis Ababa. Upon the future completion of the bus rapid transit systems, growth in the number of private motorized vehicles and of traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced.

15. In March 2018, with support from the Swedish telecommunications company Ericsson, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with UNEP and the county government of Kiambu, Kenya, organized an open street event, during which the impact of the closure of an inner-city street to motorized transport for three days was monitored. The results of the “before, during and after” analysis illustrated that improvements in local air quality had been achieved, with average levels of PM 2.5 pollution being nearly halved over the course of the closure. The activity was part of UN-Habitat support for the county government in developing a transport policy and corresponding street design guidelines for safer walking and cycling.

16. In November 2018, Africa’s first bicycle-sharing workshop was hosted in Nairobi, with approximately 20 participants from Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda. The participants learned from the experience of two pilot bike-share systems in Nairobi: the University of Nairobi campus bike-share project and the bike-share at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON). The workshop was organized by the Global Green Growth Institute, with technical support from UNEP, UN-Habitat and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy. In November 2018 in Nairobi, the Flone Initiative, a non-governmental organization, in collaboration with UNEP and UN-Habitat and

¹ The relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets include, but are not limited to, targets 3.9, 6.3, 8.4, 9.1, 9.4, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.7, 11.a, 11.b, 11.c, 12.2, 12.8, 15.9, 15.a and 17.7.

other major transportation and mobility partners, hosted the Eastern Africa Women in Transportation Conference.

17. Under the third pillar, “Waste and wastewater management”, UN-Habitat and UNEP collaborated under the African Clean Cities Platform, funded by the Government of Japan, and continued to work on the joint monitoring of waste, water and sanitation-related Sustainable Development Goal targets through a multi-stakeholder engagement process that also included UN-Water and the World Health Organization (WHO). Specifically, the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre is also involved in the African Clean Cities Platform, which, along with UN-Habitat, will be taking part in and contributing to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2019. Furthermore, they continue to participate in the Global Wastewater Initiative.

18. Under the three pillars, UN-Habitat and UNEP, in collaboration with the Wuppertal Institute of Climate, Environment and Energy, are implementing a four-year project funded by the Government of Germany as part of the International Climate Initiative on the theme “Urban pathways: Supporting low-carbon plans for urban basic services in the context of the New Urban Agenda”. It focuses on the local implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in the areas of energy, waste and resource management and transportation. The role of UNEP is focused on air quality management, whereas that of UN-Habitat is focused on the design and delivery of action relating to urban basic services. The project is being implemented in Brazil, India, Kenya and Viet Nam. Assessments of the political, technological, socioeconomic and financial viability of project concepts have been completed for all countries, which have informed the development of pilot project proposals in collaboration with partner cities, such as electric-bike-sharing in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and low-carbon neighbourhoods in Hai Phong, Viet Nam. In addition, numerous partner workshops and knowledge exchange forums have been held as part of the programme, most recently in Quito in January 2019.

19. To highlight the need for innovation, UNEP and UN-Habitat are collaborating with partners led by the Yale University School of Architecture and the Yale Centre for Ecosystems in Architecture, and in cooperation with architectural firms, on the development of a new eco-housing module. The 22-square-metre ecological living module demonstration unit is intended to spark debate and new ideas on how to redesign the way we live, including through: resilient and adaptable construction techniques; renewable, locally sourced materials and resources; secure on-site solar energy; safe and sustainable water capture and purification; indoor air quality remediation; and waste management, integrated with distributed micro-farming.

20. The first ecological living module demonstration unit was built and exhibited at United Nations Plaza in New York City during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018 and embodied features relevant to the local climate and the context of the city. Future iterations of the module – including one that was showcased at the home of UNEP and UN-Habitat, in Nairobi, during the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and that will also be showcased during the first session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, respond specifically to local climatic and cultural contexts, including the use of bamboo as an innovative building material. UN-Habitat, partnering with UNEP, also hosted an “urban walk” during the High-level Political Forum, during which guides pointed out to participants specific sustainable and resilient features of New York City. Lastly, the new One Planet Network, which is the network that was formed to implement the commitment of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, was also launched during the 2018 High-level Political Forum.

21. Other joint engagements have included work under the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention), through a partnership with Governments, civil society and the private sector to work towards a prosperous western Indian Ocean region with healthy rivers, coasts and oceans. UN-Habitat was invited to several events hosted by the Nairobi Convention secretariat in 2017 and 2018. In August 2018, on the occasion of the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention, the first Conference of the Parties to be attended by UN-Habitat representatives, UN-Habitat was designated as the agency to work on urban development topics.

22. In 2018, a joint programme proposal was submitted to the European Union for a project to encourage an environmental approach to marine and coastal planning and management at the policy and behavioural levels, with a direct link to sustainable coastal tourism and climate change mitigation. The goals of the project would be to: (a) encourage joint coastal spatial and marine planning and to

support joint planning implementation, in partnership with coastal counties and relevant national institutions; (b) contribute to waste management solutions by contributing to effective and efficient transport, treatment and disposal of waste, together with monitoring and regulation; and (c) improve the protection and preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems against degradation, including pollution, over-exploitation and loss of biodiversity, with a view to ultimately mitigating and adapting to climate change.

23. UN-Habitat has started to work with UNEP, WHO and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants on a joint engagement to reduce air pollution in cities. One outcome of the engagement was a workshop on the “Breathe Life” campaign, held during the “Mobilize” conference in Dar es Salaam in 2018, at which workshop organizers presented various air quality monitoring tools and the preliminary findings of a joint draft report. The draft report is a compilation of findings from air pollution case studies conducted in five African cities (Accra, Dakar, Cairo, Cape Town and Nairobi) and reflects the expertise of the three United Nations agencies. It has been prepared with the assistance of local government officials, academic experts and policymakers and will be published in July 2019. In November 2018, UNEP submitted a proposal for funding from the United Nations Development Account for a new joint programme to promote walking and cycling in cities in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Zambia. The proposal was approved in February 2019 and the programme will be implemented in the next two years. UNEP and UN-Habitat have also jointly submitted a proposal to the Government of Spain, at its request, to work on promoting urban air quality in East African cities.

B. Greener Cities Partnership 2.0 and its strategy for 2017–2019

24. The new version of the Greener Cities Partnership now addresses the broader issues of resource efficiency and resource use, climate change, urban basic services, urban planning and design, urban air quality, biodiversity and ecosystem services, the green and blue economies, infrastructure resilience and environmental sustainability. The new Partnership is designed in a way that offers cities and local governments tailor-made support and solutions through two strategic, multi-scale and interdisciplinary umbrella projects that, while having different entry points, contribute to achieving the same vision. Given the increasing focus on the vulnerability of cities around the world to the impact of climate change, the widening of the thematic and strategic areas of the Greener Cities Partnership represents an opportunity for growth and increased relevance.

25. During the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, the Greener Cities Partnership convened major stakeholders and donors to a closed-door meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP and the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, and included representatives from Colombia, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and the European Union. The meeting allowed stakeholders and donors to give feedback on the Partnership’s relevance and priorities. It was decided that the Greener Cities Partnership would have the power to leverage the efforts of stakeholders and Governments in the new proposed structure and that the Partnership would play a key role in assisting local governments in increasing the efficacy of their urban environmental work from the infrastructural, planning and policy angles.

26. In the light of the approval of the draft strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020–2025 in December 2018 for submission to the UN-Habitat Assembly, and the process of restructuring UN-Habitat that is currently under way, it is likely that the Greener Cities Partnership may yet again play a larger role in the institutional structure of UN-Habitat. One of the four domains of change under the strategic plan is “strengthened climate action and improved urban environment”, the goal of which is to promote resilience, adaptation and mitigation actions for sustainable urban development by curbing the impact of climate change and by creating new economic opportunities to improve the health of human-made and natural systems in cities. On the UNEP side, the importance of integrating the urban perspective into environmental policymaking is being emphasized.

C. Global events influencing joint work

27. The Greener Cities Partnership is aiming to expand the scope of its work to include global conferences by organizing events that more closely focus on urban environmental issues. For example, UN-Habitat and UNEP, working with partners such as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Cities Alliance, and United Cities and Local Governments, jointly organized the inaugural Cities Summit, held on 13 March 2019 in Nairobi during the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. The convening of the Cities Summit reflects a growing focus on cities. At the second session of the Environment Assembly, the role of UN-Habitat mostly consisted of the statements of its Executive Director during the official opening and a joint side event. At the third session of the Environment Assembly, UN-Habitat and UNEP collaborated to organize a nexus dialogue on health, pollution and cities that was hosted by the United Nations Environment Management Group. The dialogue was a

one-day event that brought together high-level speakers from UN-Habitat, UNEP and WHO, as well as national, county and local government representatives and academia. The fourth session of the Environment Assembly provided a great opportunity for more and deeper synergies and a renewed commitment between UN-Habitat and UNEP, which will be built on further during the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, in May 2019.

28. The two agencies were also heavily involved in the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Kuala Lumpur. A special session on the theme of urban ecological landscapes in cities drew attention to the mutually reinforcing potential of cities and nature through a landscape approach, thereby also highlighting the fact that cities needed to design mechanisms that closed unsustainable loops of consumption and production patterns and to focus instead on developing a sustainable circular economy. In addition, the two agencies conducted a joint side event to launch the SHERPA for Sustainable Housing Projects online tool, which was developed under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Users of the app can conduct comprehensive assessments of the sustainability of housing projects and beneficiaries can design and implement housing projects that reflect strong environmental considerations. The app highlights the need for user-friendly, flexible and bottom-up solutions, and has already been tested in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nepal and Nicaragua. Lastly, a networking event was also held on the theme “Joint programme on waste Sustainable Development Goal indicators: Global monitoring and capacity development for sustainable cities and circular economy”, which showcased how the joint efforts of UN-Habitat and UNEP on Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to waste (i.e., 11.6.1, 12.4.2 and 12.5.1) can catalyse actions on the ground. The event featured a panel composed of representatives from the German Agency for International Cooperation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Government of Malaysia, and the state government of Kerala, India.

IV. Other partnerships

29. UNEP and UN-Habitat have also collaborated on numerous multi-stakeholder initiatives on issues such as cities and climate change, sustainable buildings, sustainable land use, participatory planning and resilience. In addition, the two agencies collaborated on a variety of bilateral and multilateral initiatives during the previous biennium, significant examples of which are described in the paragraphs below.

30. UN-Habitat has collaborated with UNEP on several global initiatives, including the Global Initiative for Resource-Efficient Cities, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction and the One Planet Network. The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction was launched at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with the aim of scaling up the huge potential of the building and construction sector to reduce its emissions throughout the life cycle of buildings, while harnessing multiple benefits, including improved air quality and better health. In this regard, various stakeholders have jointly contributed their expertise to the implementation of target 11.c of the Sustainable Development Goals.

31. The two agencies have also jointly engaged in the Environment Management Group, which is institutionally anchored by UNEP and oversees all environment-related activities in the United Nations system. Joint engagements through the Environment Management Group include nexus dialogues and discussions on the themes “Law for environmental sustainability”, “Environment, peace and security” and “Health, pollution and cities”. In 2018, they conducted a joint mission to Kakuma and Kalobeyei, in Kenya, to assess the environmental impact of the United Nations missions located in those towns, through the peer review process of the Environment Management Group. In the same year, the Head of the Secretariat of the Environment Management Group also met with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, who agreed to co-chair one of the next meetings of the senior officials of the Environment Management Group.

32. In 2013, in its resolution 24/5, on pursuing sustainable development through national urban policies, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat recognized the adoption of the global 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in developed and developing countries, and highlighted the need for a supportive urban infrastructure for sustainable lifestyles. The One Planet Network was created to as a multi-stakeholder partnership to implement the 10-Year Framework and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12. Relevant events and initiatives under the network include the trust fund project on the theme “Mainstreaming sustainable social housing in India”, which is being implemented by UN-Habitat and other partners. In addition, UN-Habitat is a member of the multi-stakeholder advisory committee for

the sustainable buildings and construction programme under the One Planet Network, which is co-led by UNEP.

33. In early 2018, UN-Habitat launched a participatory process to develop guiding principles for urban–rural linkages and an accompanying framework for action. Among the partners were United Nations entities (UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Centre for Regional Development and the Economic Commission for Africa), development partners, civil society organizations, private-sector associations, academia and think tanks. In total, 125 stakeholders were included in the process. The participatory process consisted of face-to-face meetings (during the ninth session of the World Urban Forum), a virtual follow-up meeting in May 2018, three online consultation phases and an expert group meeting in Bolivia in June 2018. The outcome document of the process, the guiding principles, is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2019. Since the inception of the process, UNEP has been among the most active partners in discussions and provided comments and suggestions on the draft in respect of environmental sustainability, land use, ecosystems, and water bodies, and also contributed to face-to-face and virtual consultative meetings.

34. UN-Habitat and UNEP are both involved in the Cities Alliance multi-stakeholder joint work programme on resilient cities, which is focused on building urban resilience beyond climate change adaptation by pooling the resources and expertise of partner organizations in the field of urban resilience. Under the umbrella of the joint work programme on resilient cities, they started implementing a project funded by Cities Alliance to support the signatories of the Paris Agreement in the implementation of nationally determined contributions. UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Cities Alliance and UNEP, will build on the potential of integrated sustainable urban development to provide concerted support to countries in the implementation of the urban adaptation and climate resilience components of their nationally determined contributions. One of the major contributions by UN-Habitat to this partnership was the report entitled “Sustainable Urbanization in the Paris Agreement: Comparative review of nationally determined contributions for urban content”, which was issued in October 2017.

35. UN-Habitat and UNEP have continued working together through the Global Land Tool Network to improve the capacities of partners and governments to address land and natural resource issues so as to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts at the global and regional levels. UNEP also attended the most recent partners meeting of the Global Land Tool Network in 2018.

36. UN-Habitat and UNEP have also continued to engage on energy issues, most notably through the ecological living module demonstration unit and through the joint programme on district energy in cities. Furthermore, a jointly implemented project on energy and transport, funded by the Global Environment Facility, was completed in December 2017.

37. UN-Habitat is collaborating with UNEP, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a law and climate change toolkit. The toolkit aims to provide a global resource to help countries put in place the legal frameworks necessary for effective national implementation of the Paris Agreement and their nationally determined contributions. UN-Habitat has developed the urban planning law module of the toolkit and hosted an expert group meeting in September 2018 to review the draft legal assessment questionnaire contained in the module. The assessment questionnaire will be hosted on an Internet platform and the relevant legislation will be uploaded in the system.

38. UN-Habitat also conducted a research project on the theme “Strengthening environmental reviews in urban development processes”. The main objective of the research was to produce new knowledge and empirical evidence on the relationship between environmental and development decision-making in the urban context. International experts and in-country partners have produced six case studies (one each on Brazil, Fiji, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda and New York City) that were peer reviewed at an expert group meeting in Oslo. A comparative analysis was also conducted to identify and validate key implementation issues and recommend actions for legislative, regulatory or administrative reform.

39. Lastly, UN-Habitat and UNEP have jointly engaged in a task force that was established by UNON to improve waste management and resource efficiency in the United Nations compound in Nairobi. This involved providing inputs and suggestions on improving lighting fixtures, changing lightbulbs to eco-efficient ones, changing the bathroom infrastructure to bring about water savings, repaving roads with permeable ground materials, redesigning recycling stations for water, and introducing a recycling scheme by phasing out individual trash bins and single-use plastics throughout the compound. In relation to this, UN-Habitat, UNON, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNEP jointly organized an awareness raising event on World Environment Day in 2018 to promote waste

sorting and recycling. The organizations invited a youth group from the city of Kisii, Kenya, that showcased products made by group members from recycled plastic with support from the UN-Habitat plastic recycling pilot project.

V. Regional highlights

A. Asia and the Pacific region

40. During the biennium 2017–2018, UN-Habitat and UNEP developed a clearer understanding of the main challenges and opportunities that exist at the national level, through root cause analysis and planning regarding land and natural resources and their efficient use, climate change and urban infrastructural issues at both the national and regional levels. Both agencies have also played key roles in providing support for local capacity and institutional coordination mechanisms for territorial management in multiple countries.

41. The two agencies have been jointly implementing the European Union-funded Myanmar Climate Change Alliance since 2014, with support from the European Union Global Climate Change Alliance facility. The first phase of the five-year programme was completed in October 2018. The Myanmar Climate Change Alliance has put climate change on the agenda of priority actions for development and is a flagship partnership between the Myanmar Government, UN-Habitat and UNEP. It has made great strides in developing dedicated governance structures to address the destructive impacts of climate change on the country's economy and to improve the lives of its people. It has raised awareness, enhanced understanding and capacity to integrate climate change considerations into sectoral policies, and piloted climate adaptation at the local level. Under the aegis of the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance, a national climate change policy and a climate change strategy and master plan for the period 2018–2030 were prepared, with multiple stakeholder consultations at the national, regional and local levels. These policy instruments have been submitted to the Government for adoption and are expected to be launched in the second quarter of 2019.

42. The Myanmar Climate Change Alliance also provided support to numerous capacity-building activities, including South-South knowledge exchange visits, the training of government officials on mainstreaming climate change and setting up a dedicated climate change secretariat for the implementation of the climate change strategy and master plan. In 2017, the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance started providing capacity-building support to key departments and ministries that are connected to the sectors of priority focus in the climate change master plan. It also supported the mainstreaming of climate change into other ongoing policy initiatives such as a national action plan for disaster risk reduction and a national urban policy.

43. At the local level, with regard to spatial analysis, UN-Habitat and UNEP undertook innovative vulnerability assessments in two townships, using climate change projections to build climate change scenarios for those townships. The analysis of existing vulnerabilities in the urban economy, infrastructure, ecosystem services and spatial structures were contrasted with expected changes in temperature, rainfall and sea-level rise. On that basis, adaptive measures, including mangrove reforestation, cyclone shelter construction, water-harvesting and vocational training, were designed and have been partly implemented. The process is being documented and taught at the national disaster management centre of Myanmar, for replication in all townships across the country. The Myanmar Climate Change Alliance also helped to strengthen the resilience of women who had been disproportionately impacted by climate change.

44. In 2018, UN-Habitat and UNEP colleagues in India started to plan the submission of a joint proposal for funding under the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility for a programme on sustainable Indian cities. This process is ongoing, and the proposal has been endorsed by the Government of India. If approved by the Global Environment Facility, it will be implemented in the biennium 2019–2020.

45. UNEP and UN-Habitat jointly participated in the fourteenth Asia-Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production, held in Jakarta in November 2018. In the margins of that event, UNEP and UN-Habitat both supported the creation of a community of interest on sustainable housing led by Switch-Asia.

46. UN-Habitat also continued its cooperation with UNEP on a project in Chengdu, China, on the theme "Green and ecological ring". The project is close to completion, with the final report on the project currently under review. During the biennium 2017–2018, a joint team from UN-Habitat and UNEP frequently analysed the greenbelt development and building that took place as part of the project. The report will reflect observations and analyses of background documents and the various steps of the construction phase, provide recommendations for improvement, and address other

considerations and concerns, in line with the vision for sustainable cities outlined in the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

47. UN-Habitat is a member of the National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme, which is led by UNEP and UNDP, in collaboration with several United Nations and non-United Nations entities that provide support to least developed countries and other developing countries. The Global Support Programme has developed urban national adaptation plan guidelines to complement technical guidelines in the national adaptation plan process and has established programmes in several countries to facilitate the joint implementation of urban national adaptation plan priorities. The programme is scheduled to end in June 2019. UNEP has managed the Global Support Programme from its Bangkok office. UN-Habitat was brought in to establish a component for national adaptation plans that focuses specifically on urban climate change adaptation in partnership with UNEP. Therefore, UN-Habitat developed a supplement to guidelines under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on the theme “Addressing human settlements issues into national adaptation plans”.

48. UN-Habitat has been providing planning and capacity development support and developed localized tools for a project funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by UNEP in Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar to build urban climate resilience through ecosystem-based adaptation. UN-Habitat is also a member of the project steering committee. The project was launched in 2018 and country-level implementation will start in 2019.

49. UN-Habitat has continued to play an active role in events organized by UNEP in Asia and the Pacific region, in particular the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, for which UN-Habitat has chaired sessions and made presentations at each of the past three sessions.

B. Africa

50. In 2017, UN-Habitat collaborated with UNEP to submit a proposal to the Adaptation Fund for a project to increase the resilience of coastal cities in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. The proposal was endorsed by the Adaptation Fund in 2018 and thereafter revised by the project team. The project is still in the planning stage, with implementation expected to begin in 2019.

51. In 2018, the Environment Management Group invited several United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Children’s Fund, WFP, UNEP, UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to join a peer-review mission of a United Nations programme in the towns of Kakuma and Kalobeyei, Kenya. The peer review included environmental assessments of the United Nations compound and of ongoing United Nations-led activities, resulting in a report that will be published in the first quarter of 2019, with specific recommendations for action that United Nations agencies can take to improve the environmental conditions of the programme sites in Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

C. Latin America and the Caribbean region

52. UN-Habitat and UNEP have developed several joint activities in Latin America and the Caribbean region. For example, discussions have taken place in the regional offices of both agencies on how to develop a joint programme on sustainable cities in the Caribbean region. In addition, as a result of a joint engagement on one side event on cities in the Amazon region that was held during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), the regional offices for Latin America and the Caribbean region of both agencies have explored the development of a joint project on the theme “Sustainable cities in the Amazon region”, which would aim to build synergies and scale up the experience of the UNEP project entitled “Vision Amazonia” that was implemented in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Wide Fund for Nature. In March 2017, UN-Habitat invited UNEP to participate in an expert group meeting in Belém, Brazil, on the theme “Towards the sustainability of cities and human settlements in the Amazon region”. Experts in various fields participated in the meeting to discuss significant environmental impacts in the Amazon region, specifically in the cities of the region.

D. Europe and Central Asia

53. UNEP and UN-Habitat are developing a proposal for a pilot programme to implement the Greener Cities Partnership in selected countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with the possibility of starting in Azerbaijan. Other countries in the region have already expressed an interest in learning more about the Greener Cities Partnership and in developing other urban environmental programmes in the region, including on brownfield sites redevelopment, sustainable water resources management, livelihood creation and more.

54. UN-Habitat and UNEP jointly hosted an event during European Union Green Week 2018 on the theme “Investing in a greener urban future: Towards sustainable housing and low-emission infrastructure”. The event provided an opportunity to examine (a) policies that are integrated across levels of governance and across sectors; (b) planning approaches that help to harness opportunities that come from strategic density and connectivity in cities; and (c) partnerships, including with the private and the financial sectors, to bring solutions to scale.

E. Arab States

55. In 2018, UN-Habitat submitted a regional pre-concept note to the Adaptation Fund for a project budgeted at \$14 million on the theme “Increasing the resilience of displaced persons to climate change-related water challenges in urban host settlements in Jordan and Lebanon”. Increasing the resilience and adaptive capacities of displaced persons to climate change-related water challenges in urban host settlements will also indirectly increase the resilience of the host communities where the project interventions will take place. The pre-concept note has been endorsed and UN-Habitat is in the process of developing the concept note for the project. UNEP would be an implementing partner.

56. With funding from the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, UN-Habitat organized a regional capacity-building workshop in February 2019 on achieving adaptation and mitigation compliance under the Global Covenant in the Middle East and North Africa. The workshop, co-organized with the European Union-funded project Clima-Med, covered issues related to the impact of climate change on cities, climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level, climate scenarios as a planning tool and considerations for mainstreaming climate change into recovery and reconstruction processes.

57. In 2018, UNEP, in cooperation with UN-Habitat, submitted two concept notes for funding from the twelfth tranche of the Development Account for projects on the themes “Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable development in urban areas hosting Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey” and “Mainstreaming environmental and resource efficiency considerations in recovery and reconstruction process in post-conflict Arab countries”. The agencies are currently awaiting a decision on their submissions.

58. In 2018, UN-Habitat became a partner in the SDG-Climate Nexus Facility, in partnership with UNDP, the League of Arab States, the Arab Water Council, the UNEP Finance Initiative and other United Nations agencies. The Facility has adopted a multi-phased programme and has brought together partners from regional organizations, Governments, the United Nations, the private sector, civil society and academia. The aim is to undertake a series of national and regional activities using a nexus approach to support bottom-up local actions, consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 13 and the Paris Agreement.

59. In 2018, UN-Habitat received a request from the Government of Bahrain to develop a proposal for a project to reduce urban environmental challenges in the capital city. This led to a meeting between the Minister of Environment of Bahrain and UN-Habitat colleagues during the ninth session of the World Urban Forum. A proposal has been prepared, with the possibility of follow-up in that regard in 2019.

VI. Future cooperation

60. Under the Greener Cities Partnership strategy for the period 2019–2021, plans are under way to seek access to enhanced funding, including through the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, for potential new activities. The resources, experience and expertise of both UN-Habitat and UNEP can be used to formulate new proposals. The Greener Cities Partnership is closely monitoring upcoming funding opportunities in 2019.

61. The Greener Cities Partnership will increasingly focus on the implementation of the urban environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. To that end, two multi-country proposals are currently being prepared. One is on the theme “Reducing urban environmental challenges of continental islands: Improving resilience in non-small island developing States by applying lessons learned from small island developing States”. The other is on the theme “Re-naturing cities: Protecting urban biodiversity and ecosystem services to reduce climate change impacts”.

62. UN-Habitat and UNEP hope to engage more closely on blue economy-related topics and to highlight the interconnectedness and interdependence of those topics with issues of coastal resilience and marine protection. A European Union programme to be implemented in Kenya will pave the way for more activities in that regard. UN-Habitat is planning to organize a workshop for urban planners

from coastal cities on the same topic in 2019 and to implement a research project on integrating blue economy issues into urban planning and policymaking in the western Indian Ocean region.

63. UN-Habitat and UNEP have also started a partnership to address marine litter. UN-Habitat will support the UNEP marine litter programme through initiatives such as the African Clean Cities Platform, monitoring efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goal indicator 11.6.1 by quantifying plastic waste sources in cities, and stakeholder engagement. UN-Habitat launched the Waste Wise Cities Campaign in 2018, which will coordinate and collaborate with the UNEP Clean Seas campaign to raise awareness and maximize the global impact of municipal solid waste management as a tool for addressing plastic pollution.

64. UNEP and UN-Habitat have a history of collaboration in the area of urban air quality through their joint Sustainable Cities Programme, which ended in 2008. Since the conclusion of the Sustainable Cities Programme, UNEP has developed further expertise in monitoring urban air quality. Meanwhile, UN-Habitat has been re-engaged in this area since 2016 by helping cities to plan to make improvements to urban air quality through a new project funded by Norway on the theme “Planning for improved air quality in urban areas”, which is focused on Asia. There are many more opportunities to engage in this sector in all regions of the world.

65. UN-Habitat and UNEP are collaborating to develop methodologies for effective data collection and to build national capacity to monitor various waste-related issues, including waste generation, waste management and the impact of waste on terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. More cooperation in monitoring and collecting data will be needed in other key sectors, including transport, air quality, buildings, energy and water use.

66. Through the Greener Cities Partnership, UN-Habitat and UNEP plan to engage with stakeholders on the topic of green city development, with the objective of inspiring cities to sustain and expand their innovative green interventions, reinvest in planning, design more sustainable urban configurations and embrace new advances in understanding, mapping and quantifying ecosystem services. For instance, the Government of Rwanda requested UN-Habitat to develop a “green cities toolkit”, which was completed in 2017. The toolkit is now widely used, and the work done by UN-Habitat in that regard has led to follow-up engagements on green and resilient urban development in cooperation with the World Bank, the Global Green Growth Institute and other partners.

67. UN-Habitat and UNEP will continue their efforts to develop additional projects under the Greener Cities Partnership and to implement joint activities in their regional offices, branches and divisions. The regular assessment of the shared vision and the comparative advantages of the Greener Cities Partnership remains vital to successful collaboration between UN-Habitat and UNEP. The mobilization of additional management and stakeholder resources will be key in the biennium 2019–2020. The new strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020–2025, which reflects an increased recognition that effectively addressing the issues of the urban environment and climate change is crucial for sustainable urbanization, will pave the way for future joint endeavours and achievements.