



Dear Reader,

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present you the third issue of the ACP MEAs III Digest for July 2024. The Digest provides relevant updates from programme partners and other sources on issues related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), environmental governance, biodiversity, chemicals and waste, and ocean governance.

Happy reading!

This Month's Highlights

- Enhancing Vanuatu's National Capacity for Sustainable Development
- The Nairobi Convention Strengthens its Strategy ahead of COP11.
- Ethiopia hosts Africa Blue Economy Week, highlighting marine sustainability.
- The Open-Ended Working Group on Digital Sequence Information will meet ahead of CBD's COP16
- Key outcomes from CITES Animals and Plants Committees Meetings
- CBD appoints new Executive Secretary
- Vanuatu leads the charge against plastic pollution in the Pacific
- Barbados launches National Action Plan to curb plastic pollution

Ocean Governance

Enhancing Vanuatu's National Capacity for Sustainable Development

In an effort to strengthen environmental governance in Vanuatu, a [workshop on Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\) and development permitting processes](#) took place from July 1 to 5, 2024 in Port Vila. This training was organized by SPREP and Vanuatu's Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation, with support from the ACP MEAs III programme and other sources. The event focused on improving inter-agency coordination and environmental assessment capabilities. Over 40 participants, including government officials and NGOs, engaged in discussions and practical exercises to enhance their understanding of EIA, GIS applications, and sustainable development strategies.

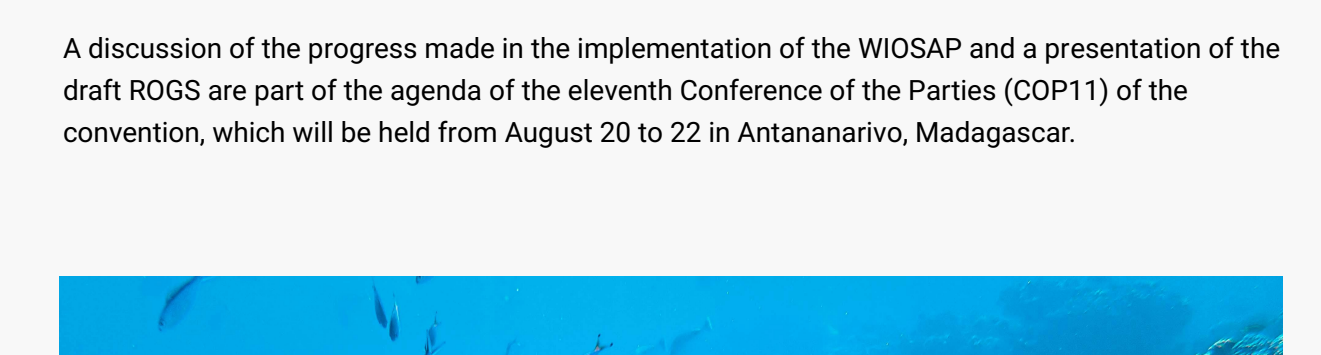


The Nairobi Convention Strengthens its Strategy Ahead of COP11

In the efforts to fulfill its mandate of protecting, managing and developing the coastal and marine environment of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), the Nairobi Convention is implementing and strengthening its strategies and action plans:

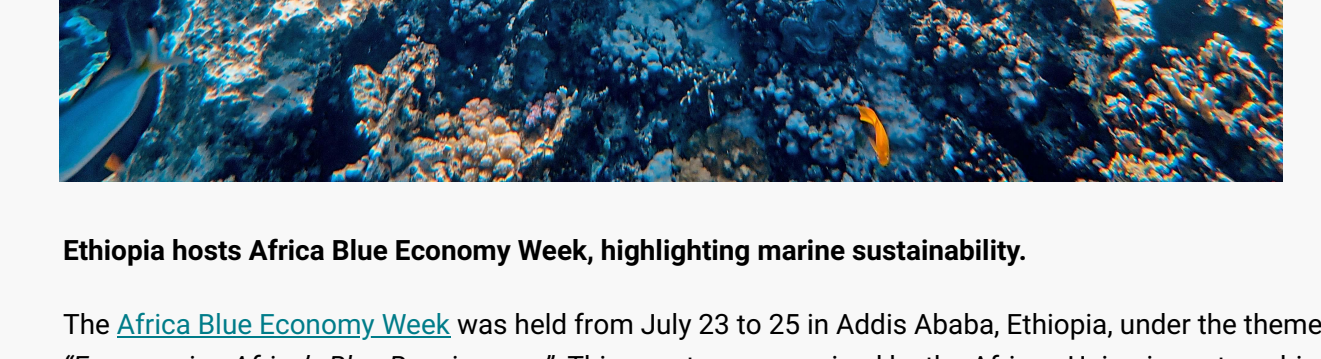
- For several years, the Convention has been implementing the [Western Indian Strategic Action Programme \(WIOSAP\)](#) to protect the region from land-based pollution, which includes a project on marine litter in Zanzibar funded by the ACP MEAs III programme.
- After two years of work, a 24-member multistakeholder task force has drafted a [Regional Ocean Governance Strategy \(ROGS\)](#) for the WIO.

A discussion of the progress made in the implementation of the WIOSAP and a presentation of the draft ROGS are part of the agenda of the eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP11) of the convention, which will be held from August 20 to 22 in Antananarivo, Madagascar.



Ethiopia hosts Africa Blue Economy Week, highlighting marine sustainability.

The [Africa Blue Economy Week](#) was held from July 23 to 25 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme "Empowering Africa's Blue Renaissance". This event was organized by the African Union in partnership with UNDP, and it highlighted the significance of the continent's blue economy potential, focusing on sustainable ocean resources management. The event featured discussions on policy frameworks, innovative practices, and investment opportunities aimed at harnessing Africa's marine and coastal resources. Stakeholders from various sectors, including governments, businesses, and civil society, came together to explore strategies for sustainable development and economic growth within the blue economy sector. The highlights of the event can be found in these videos from UNDP Africa: [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#) and [Day 3](#).



Biodiversity

The Open-Ended Working Group on Digital Sequence Information will meet ahead of CBD's COP16

From 12th to 14th August 2024, the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources (WGDSI-2) will meet in Montreal, Canada for final negotiations before the matter comes up for decision at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 16) in October, in Cali, Colombia. Agreement is needed on several questions, including which industrial sectors using DSI should share its benefits. Top candidates include pharmaceutical, cosmetics and agriculture.

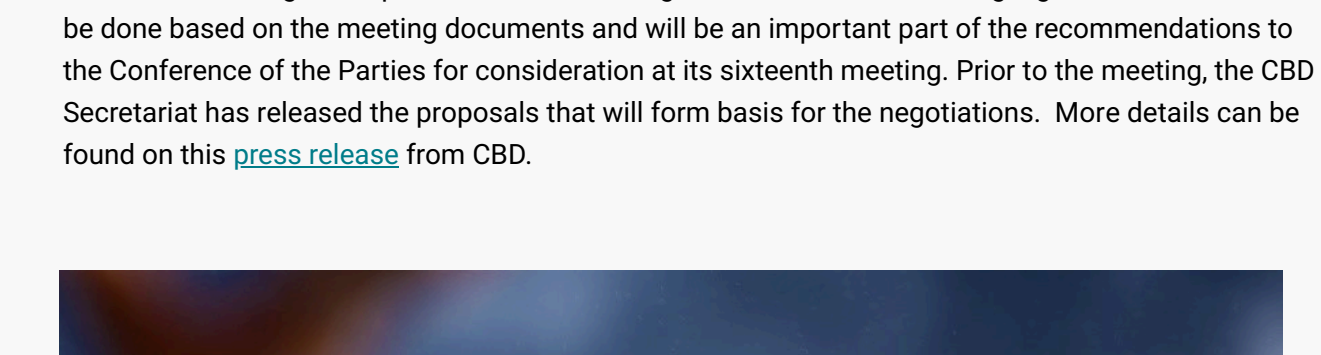
The meeting will also develop further the proposal of the multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund. This will be done based on the meeting documents and will be an important part of the recommendations to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its sixteenth meeting. Prior to the meeting, the CBD Secretariat has released the proposals that will form basis for the negotiations. More details can be found on this [press release](#) from CBD.



Key outcomes from CITES Animals and Plants Committees Meetings

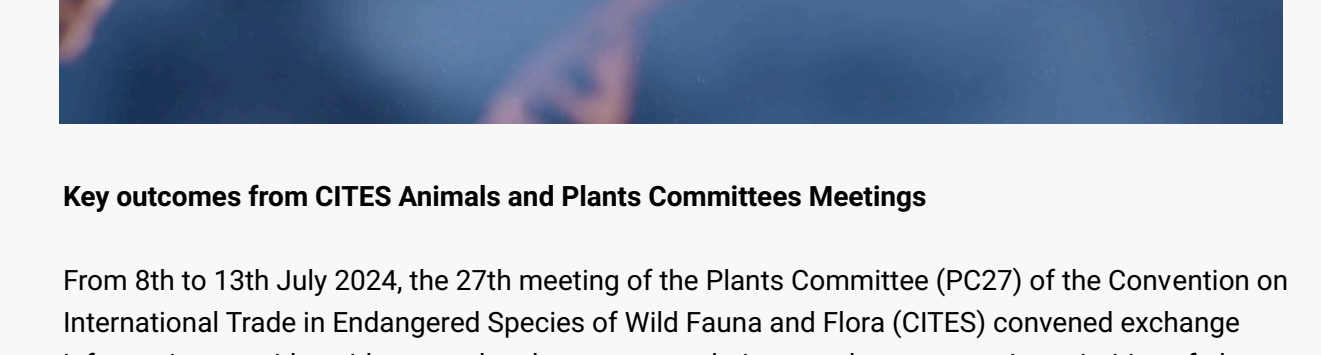
From 8th to 13th July 2024, the 27th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC27) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened to exchange information, provide guidance and make recommendations on the conservation priorities of plant species in international trade. The Committee agreed on several draft decisions for CITES Parties, which outline specific actions, recommendations, or directives on scientific and technical matters for consideration at the next CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP20) in 2025.

More details on the outcomes of this meeting, can be found in [this article](#) from CITES. The 33rd Meeting of the Animals Committee took place from July 15 to 19, 2024 with an aim of discussing the status in international trade of African carnivores, pangolins, sharks, amphibians, songbirds, and marine ornamental fishes, among other species. An overview of the agenda items covered in this meeting, which had registered representatives from 76 governments and 88 observer organizations can be found in this [press release](#) from CITES.



CBD appoints new Executive Secretary

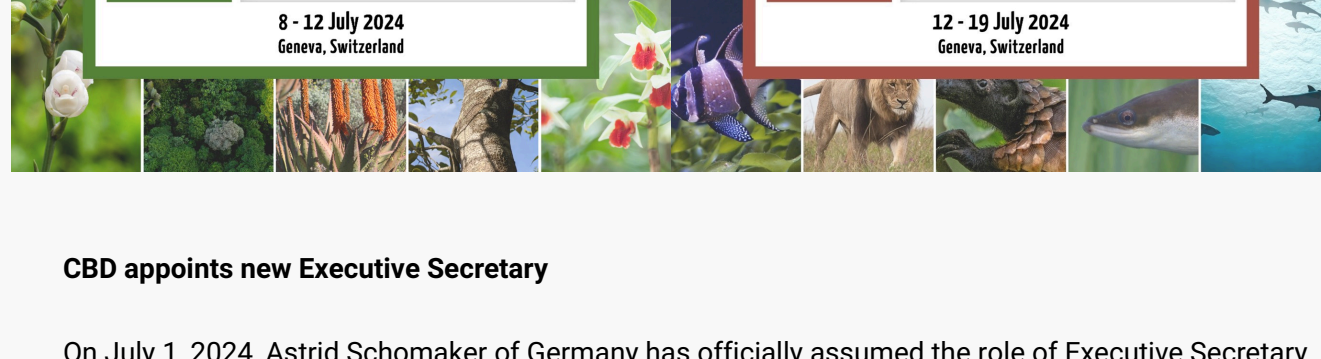
On July 1, 2024, Astrid Schomaker of Germany has officially assumed the role of Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal. With a strong background in international relations and global environmental policy, Schomaker takes charge ahead of the sixteenth meeting of the CBD's 196 Parties (COP 16) in October 2024. UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Ms. Schomaker in April 2024, recognizing her extensive experience, including her recent position as Director for Green Diplomacy and Multilateralism at the European Commission. Schomaker aims to advance the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. More details can be found on this [press release](#) from CBD.



Chemicals and Waste

Vanuatu Steps Forward to Curb Plastic Pollution

In response to the challenges posed by plastic pollution, [the government of Vanuatu has been implementing innovative policies](#), starting from 2018 with a ban on certain single-use plastics, including a world-first ban on plastic straws. The nation has successfully decreased plastic waste by replacing items like plastic bags and polystyrene containers with reusable alternatives. Supported by SPREP and other stakeholders, [the country is now focusing on designing a Product Stewardship Scheme to manage beverage containers](#), aiming to further reduce plastic litter and enhance sustainability.



Barbados Launches New Plan to Tackle Plastic Pollution

In a reflection of its commitment to environmental conservation, the [government of Barbados has unveiled its National Action Plan](#) to combat plastic pollution, aiming to protect its marine environment and promote sustainability. The plan focuses on reducing plastic waste through improved waste management systems, increased recycling efforts, and public education campaigns. By addressing both the sources and impacts of plastic pollution, Barbados hopes to safeguard its natural resources and support a cleaner, healthier future for its citizens and marine life.



Relevant Events: August/ September

[JULY 15 - 2 AUG: 29th Session of the International Seabed Authority Assembly and Council \(Part II\)](#), Kingston, Jamaica

[AUG 9: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2024, Worldwide](#)

[AUG 12 - 16: Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources](#), Montreal, Canada

[AUG 17-24: Nairobi Convention COP 11](#), Antananarivo, Madagascar

[AUG 17: International Youth Day 2024, Worldwide](#)

[AUG 24-28: Ad hoc intersectoral open-ended expert groups meetings for the intergovernmental Negotiating Committee \(INC\) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution](#), Bangkok, Thailand

[AUG 25-29: 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting](#), Nuku'alofa, Tonga

[AUG 30-6 SEPT: The Tenth Special Session of AMCN and the UNCCD Regional Consultations](#), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

[SEPT 4 - 5: Fifth Berlin Forum on Chemicals and Sustainability](#), Berlin, Germany

[SEPT 5-6: Third Global Climate and SDG Synergy Conference](#), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

[SEPT 7: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer 2024, Worldwide](#)

[SEPT 10 - 24: 79th Session of the UN General Assembly \(UNGA 79\)](#), New York City, United States of America

[SEPT 10 - 24: One Planet Network Forum 2024](#), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

[SEPT 17-24: 20th meeting of the Chemical Review Committee \(CRC-20\)](#), Rome, Italy

[SEPT 18-20: SEA of Solutions 2024](#), Bangkok (Krung Thep), Thailand

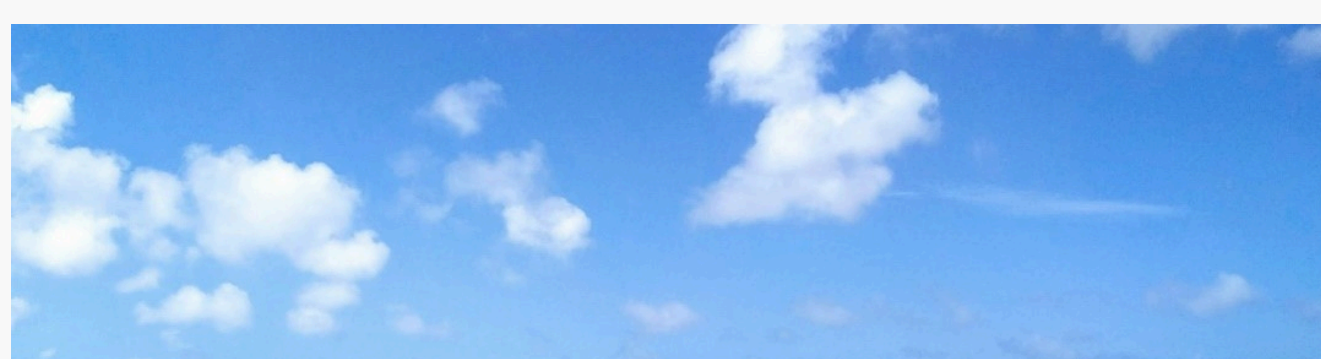
[SEPT 18 - 20: 12th International Conference on Sustainable Development](#), New York City, United States of America

[SEPT 23: Summit of the Future](#), New York City, United States of America

[SEPT 22-23: 20th Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee \(POPRC-20\)](#), Rome, Italy

[SEPT 23-27: 69th meeting of the International Whaling Commission \(IWC69\)](#), Lima, Peru

[SEPT 25: World Maritime Day 2024, Worldwide](#)



The ACP MEAs is a joint UNEP-EU-FAO-OACPS partnership programme. It aims to build the capacity of 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to fulfill their obligations to multilateral environmental agreements. Phase III (ACP MEAs 3) of this programme is being implemented in Africa by the African Union Commission (AUC), Abidjan Convention and Nairobi Convention, in the Caribbean by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cartagena Convention, in the Pacific by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is the civil society partner.

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