

PART VII

*Tackling environmental
protection and climate change*



PRESS RELEASE

United Nations
Development Programme

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UNDP AND JORDAN PUMP LIFE INTO PARCHED OASIS

New York, 24 September 2001 — The Azraq oasis in Jordan's eastern desert is staging a remarkable ecological recovery. A US\$6 million rehabilitation effort funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), have restored a mosaic of critical habitats at the core of the wetlands—habitats that were degraded beyond recognition before project activities began a few years ago.

Water is being pumped back to the basin of the oasis, providing habitats for a spectacular array of wildlife that once made Azraq famous among nature lovers around the world.

Thousands of khaki-clad tourists are once again visiting the Azraq region every year to savour its lush vegetation that is set like an emerald island amidst one of the driest deserts in the Middle East. Visitors thrill to dramatic scenes of water buffaloes, blue-necked ostriches, Nubian ibexes, dozens of varieties of dragonflies, and archaeological sites including the world-renowned desert castles. "Many of the birds for which the oasis was renowned are coming back," said Chris Johnson, Director of Development of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), a non-governmental organization devoted to the protection of nature in Jordan. "Over 160 bird species have returned to the wetlands." Johnson also noted the re-introduction of the Killifish, a fish species found nowhere else in the world. A breeding programme for this fish is now under way in the Azraq wetlands.

"We have created new jobs ranging from reserve management staff, rangers, ecologists, community liaison officers to arts and craft workshop managers," Johnson said. "By creating these jobs, the RSCN hopes that the local community will support its efforts to protect the Azraq wetlands and the Shaumari wildlife reserve," said Lina Al-Fayez, the Azraq Wetland Reserve Manager. The project is also improving livelihoods in the local community. A series of workshops trained young women in the production of handicrafts and a variety of sweet foodstuffs made from locally-grown dates, all for sale in the reserve's nature shop.

A visitor centre, including educational rooms and a nature shop for locally-produced handmade gifts, now stands tall amid spring-fed marshes and pools. Guided tours and desert safaris are planned for the protected areas of Azraq and nearby Shaumari wildlife reserve, which is the first wildlife reserve in Jordan and a breeding centre for the Arabian oryx, one of the most endangered animals in the world.

For centuries, the Azraq oasis has been heralded as a unique green paradise in the middle of the water-scarce Kingdom of Jordan. Located in the country's eastern desert, the oasis once supported rich biodiversity and was a major stopover for hundreds of thousands of migrating birds during their seasonal flights. Increased demand for water in the greater Amman area—with about half of Jordan's 5.5 million people—and agricultural use, including hundreds of illegal wells for farming, resulted in large-scale pumping from the Azraq basin. By 1993, after more than 20 years of water pumping, the springs had dried up so completely that fires burned across the parched landscape.

Even though the restoration of the Azraq oasis succeeded in re-creating critical habitats for the fauna and flora in the region and building community support, a long-term solution will require fundamental changes in national water policy to ease pressure from growing urban demand. The Government of Jordan is moving in that direction. A large-scale water management project to supply 100 million cubic metres per year of additional water to Amman will be launched soon. The requests for proposals to build the 325 kilometre-long pipeline from the Disi aquifer in southern Jordan to Amman were issued in August. The anticipated cost of construction of the pipeline, which will be implemented over a four-and-a-half year period, is \$600 million.

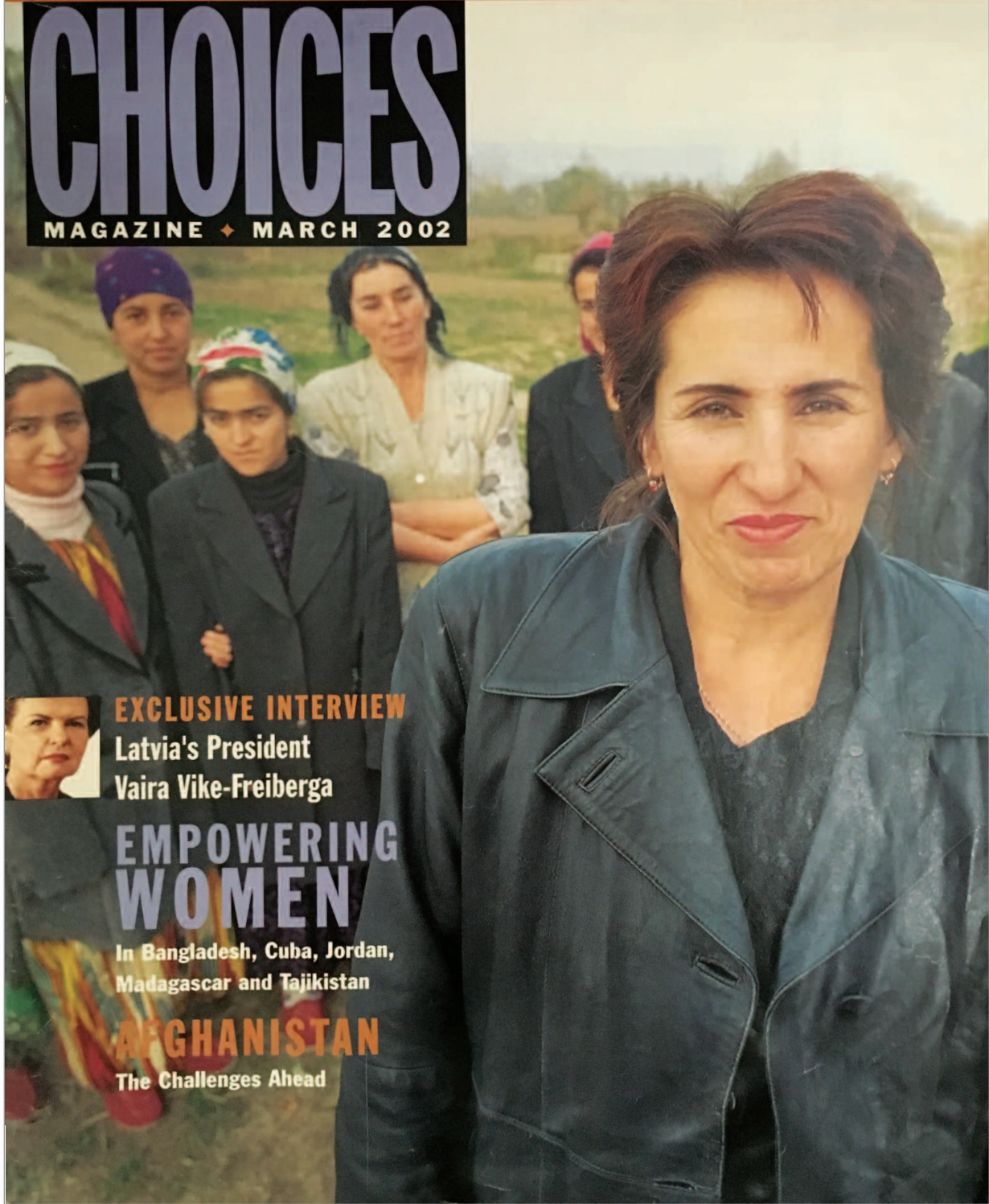
“The government is contributing \$200 million of the total financing, with the rest expected to come from the private sector,” said Dr. Kamal Khdir, Director of Water, Environment and Tourism Department in the Ministry of Planning. “This project will hopefully relieve pressure from pumping water from the Azraq wetlands.”

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CHOICES

MAGAZINE ♦ MARCH 2002



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Latvia's President
Vaira Vike-Freiberga

EMPOWERING WOMEN

In Bangladesh, Cuba, Jordan,
Madagascar and Tajikistan

AFGHANISTAN

The Challenges Ahead



Restoring an Oasis Strengthens Communities in Jordan

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS GOUDE

AZRAQ, JORDAN

The Azraq oasis was heralded in times past as a unique green paradise.

Located in Jordan's eastern desert near the border with Iraq, it once supported a rich biodiversity and was a stopover for hundreds of thousands of migrating birds. But increasing demand for water in the greater Amman area (home to half of Jordan's 5.5 million people) led to large-scale pumping of the Azraq basin in recent decades. By 1993, after more than 20 years of intensive extraction, the underground springs giving life to the oasis had dried so completely that wildfires burned across a parched landscape.

Today, the Azraq ("blue" in Arabic) wetlands are staging a remarkable recovery thanks to a multifaceted project co-financed and managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its

capacity as an implementing agency for the Global Environment Facility (GEF). GEF's role is to provide grants and concessional funding to eligible countries for initiatives that protect the global environment and promote sustainable economic growth. Other partners include various Jordanian Government agencies and the country's Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). As water has been replenished, "many of the birds for which the oasis was renowned are coming back," according to Chris Johnson, Director of Development for RSCN. "Over 160 bird species have returned to the wetlands, among them blue-necked ostriches and Nubian ibexes."

But it is not just an ecological transformation that has occurred. "Clearly, the GEF-UNDP project has had an impact on biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation in Azraq," says Nadia Mohammad Juhari, a senior environmental protection expert and the GEF coordinator in the Ministry of Planning. "The impact is most pronounced in such areas as income-gen-

erating opportunities for women, and increased public awareness of the value of protected areas in an arid region."

Life-changing experience

To ensure sustainable livelihoods in the local community, a programme to benefit local Bedouin and Druse women has been developed. For example, as part of an eco-tourism strategy, young single women have been trained to make handicrafts from reeds in the oasis, in the form of school bags, water bottles and decorative boxes featuring local wildlife motifs, which also feature on delicately painted ostrich eggs that the women fashion. "All the designs have been taken from ancient rock carvings found around Jordan's protected areas," says Johnson.

"My whole life has changed now because of this project," says Samiha Tarabay, a 27-year-old Druse woman from the village of South Azraq, a tradi-

Bridge to the past and a better future.

tional caravan stopping point close to the Iraqi border. She explained that like many women of similar age in her village, she had never before had a paying job, or had lived away from her parents. Now, equipped with new skills and an income, she can afford to have a place of her own and enjoys the experience and self-esteem of a productive working life.

Meanwhile, although the Azraq oasis project has revived habitats critical for the survival of fauna and flora in the region,

325-kilometre pipeline will run from the Disi Aquifer in southern Jordan; the four-and-a-half year construction project is expected to cost an estimated US\$600 million.

"The government is contributing \$200 million of the total financing, with the rest expected to come from the private sector," says Kamal Khdir, Director of the Water, Environment and Tourism Department in the Ministry of Planning. "This project will hope-



Women of South Azraq village say they are proud to have paying jobs and enjoy economic independence for the first time.

succeeded in creating new livelihoods for women, and built strong community support for those goals, long-term solutions will require fundamental changes in national water policy to ease pressure from growing urban demand for water supplies. The *Government of Jordan* is moving in that direction. A large-scale water management project to supply an additional 100 million cubic metres per year to Amman is to be launched. The

fully relieve pressure from pumping water from the Azraq wetlands." Institutions that have helped manage the Azraq Oasis Conservation Project include Jordan's Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Agriculture,



University of Jordan, General Corporation for Environmental Cooperation and RSCN.

"The RSCN has provided a positive working environment and dynamic leadership for the past few years," says Costante Muzio, UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan. "They plan to expand work on pumping water back into the oasis, strengthening the ecosystem and promoting eco-tourism. So far, however, the water flow is just enough to support 10 percent of the wetlands that once existed. That's why an international commitment is needed to sustain the project." ■

Nicholas Gouede is a communications officer in UNDP New York.



Left and above: Remarkable restoration of the Azraq oasis heralds better life for inhabitants after decades of environmental ruin.

Handicrafts on sale.

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DAM-L Global Efforts To Protect Transboundary Waters (fwd)

- *To:* dam impacts discussion list <dam-l@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca>
- *Subject:* DAM-L Global Efforts To Protect Transboundary Waters (fwd)
- *From:* "..." <dianne@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca>
- *Date:* Tue, 6 Nov 2001 14:04:30 -0500 (EST)
- *Reply-To:* dam-l@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca
- *Sender:* wncr-dam-l@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca

----- Forwarded message from svarghese@iatp.org -----

Return-path: <svarghese@iatp.org>
Received: from mail.iatp.org (iatp-2.InnovSoftD.com [208.141.36.66])
by lox.sandelman.ottawa.on.ca (8.8.7/8.8.8) with ESMTTP id RAA08991
for <dianne@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca>; Mon, 5 Nov 2001 17:57:05 -0500 (EST)
From: svarghese@iatp.org
Received: from mail.iatp.org [208.141.36.110] by mail.iatp.org with ESMTTP
(SMTPD32-7.04) id A8DC790B0218; Mon, 05 Nov 2001 16:56:09 -0600
Content-Type: text/plain
Date: Mon, 05 Nov 2001 16:44:58 -0600
Subject: Global Efforts To Protect Transboundary Waters
To: dianne@sandelman.ottawa.on.ca
Message-ID: <200111051656531.SM00440@mail.iatp.org>

Right to Water (right-to-water@iatp.org) Posted: 11/05/2001 By svarghese@iatp.org
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Global Efforts To Protect Transboundary Waters

US\$100 Million Approved for Black Sea Ecosystem Rehabilitation Project
New York, 1 October 2001 -- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will be implementing a \$100 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) fund for a Strategic Partnership over a six-year period to reverse nutrient over-enrichment and toxic contamination of the Danube/Black Sea basin. The Strategic Partnership, which will begin implementation in the fall of 2001, comprises three sets of interventions aimed at reducing nutrient emissions from the agricultural, industrial, and municipal sectors:

- A regional project for the Black Sea to be implemented by UNDP and UNEP.
- A regional project for the Danube River basin to be implemented with UNDP assistance.
- An investment programme with the World Bank for the entire Danube/Black Sea basin.

<http://www.sandelman.ottawa.on.ca/lists/html/dam-l/2001/msg00474.html>

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The UNDP projects focus on national legal and policy reform for basin-wide nutrient reduction, strengthening monitoring systems, updating information on the status of the Danube River and Black Sea, development of environmental indicators, enhancing public participation, and strengthening capacities of the Black Sea and Danube secretariats. UNEP will provide assistance in updating the Black Sea Convention in line with the Global Programme of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities. The World Bank will support investments aimed at reducing nutrient emissions, such as improved wastewater treatment, agricultural reform and wetlands restoration.

"This strategic partnership represents an innovation in the design of multi-country, multi-donor programmes that address transboundary waters issues that has the potential to be scaled up to other regions," said Andrew Hudson, the UNDP-GEF Principal Technical Adviser for International Waters. "The project reflects UNDP-GEF's strategy to assist participating countries in utilizing the full range of technical, economic, financial and institutional measures needed to secure an integrated approach to sustainable management and use of shared water resources."

The long-term objective of the joint project is to assist the beneficiary coastal countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine) and their 10 upstream neighbours in the basin, to take measures to reduce nutrient levels and other hazardous substances to such levels necessary to permit Black Sea ecosystems to recover to similar conditions as those observed in the 1960s.

UNDP-GEF's International Waters programme reflects an emerging tradition of cooperative international waters management. It addresses a wide spectrum of issues within the world's transboundary freshwater and marine environments including river basins, enclosed seas, large marine ecosystems (LME) and groundwater systems. The emphasis of the programme is on such inter-linked aspects of water management as scarcity, pollution reduction, biodiversity protection, habitat loss, and control of invasive species. These issues in turn have direct linkages to UNDP focus areas of poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, conflict prevention and governance.

In Lake Chad and the Nile, Okavango, and Niger River basins of Africa, UNDP-GEF assistance signals a further willingness to resolve and prevent tensions over water use and distribution by developing an integrated approach to land and water resource management that addresses both human and ecosystem needs. In the Okavango, UNDP is assisting the Okavango Commission in the development of a Strategic Action programme aimed at equitable sharing of the basin's water resources including protection of the globally significant biodiversity of the downstream Okavango Delta.

The international science community has identified a set of approximately 50 LME characterized by their unique biology, chemistry, bathymetry and hydrography. Over 95 percent of the world's commercial fish catch takes place within these LME's, which also serve a critical role in regulating climate and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. UNDP-GEF is providing assistance to nearly 80 countries bordering on 14 shared LME's to create and strengthen institutions, reform policies and laws and broaden stakeholder involvement towards the sustainable management of these vital marine habitats. UNDP-GEF's \$6 million industrial water pollution control project in the Gulf of Guinea LME, implemented in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), helped to

strengthen institutional capabilities at the national and regional level to prevent and remedy pollution in the region and facilitate active participation of non-governmental organizations in project activities.

At the global level, UNDP-GEF is partnering with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in a project (GloBallast) aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries to respond to the growing threat from invasive marine species transported in ship ballast water, which have already caused billions of dollars in damage and threatened ecosystem stability in a number of locations, including the Black Sea. UNDP is also working with UNIDO in the development of a project aimed at reducing mercury emissions to shared waterways from artisanal gold mining, with concurrent health and livelihood benefits to local mining communities. Since its creation as a pilot programme in 1991, UNDP-GEF has been actively involved in the global action on water in many developing countries. Through more than 30 water-related projects involving over 110 nations, UNDP-GEF is playing a prominent role in catalyzing innovative strategies to address transboundary water issues. It has forged numerous partnerships with other UN and Bretton Woods agencies such as the World Bank, UNEP, IMO, UNIDO and the European Union, and allocated over \$500 million (including co-financing leveraged) to international waters efforts.

About the Global Environment Facility

The GEF provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries and economies in transition for projects designed to protect the global environment.

GEF projects encompass a variety of activities that address climate change, biological diversity, international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer.

Activities in land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation as they relate to the four focus areas, are also eligible for funding. GEF projects are implemented by UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank. Its home page is: <http://www.gefweb.org>

About the United Nations Development Programme

UNDP is committed to the principle that development is inseparable from the quest for peace and human security. With offices in 132 countries, the UNDP mission is to help countries carry out development programmes in democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, information and communications technology, and HIV/AIDS. Its home page is: <http://www.undp.org>

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Fuel cell buses to offer relief for polluted mega-cities

Monday, 1 October 2001: A US\$60 million initiative supported by UNDP and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) will introduce fuel cell powered buses in six major cities in developing countries to help reduce urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The five-year programme will provide Beijing, Cairo, Mexico City, New Delhi, Sao Paulo and Shanghai with 46 buses powered by fuel cells to assess the viability of the technology.

"UNDP has always been keen to support innovative projects that will help resolve the severe air pollution problems faced by many cities around the world," said Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP Administrator. "The challenge now is in exploring ways and means to commercialize this promising technology for widespread use in developing countries." "Bringing fuel cell buses to these cities will hopefully spur the development of fuel cell industries, while simultaneously pioneering new ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving local air quality," said Emma Torres, UNDP-GEF Acting Executive Coordinator.

In addition to the \$60 million committed by the GEF for the programme, participating governments and the private sector are expected to provide \$140 million, said Richard Hosier, the UNDP-GEF Principal Technical Adviser for Climate Change.

Studies indicate that replacing all diesel buses in developing countries with fuel cell buses operating on hydrogen by 2020 could cut 440 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year

For further information, please contact Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office, or Richard Hosier, UNDP-GEF.



United Nations Development Programme

Communications Office

PRESS RELEASE

INTEGRATING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INTO POVERTY PLANS IS CRITICAL FOR LONG-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, UNDP'S DIABRÉ TELLS KOBE MEETING ON DISASTER REDUCTION

Kobe, Japan, 18 January 2005: Natural disasters exert an enormous toll on socio-economic growth and development in the developing world. They pose a significant threat to prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, warned Zéphirin Diabré, UN Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), speaking at the [World Conference on Disaster Reduction](#) (WCDR) in Kobe.

"It may seem counter-intuitive to some-but certain development policies and programs actually generate new disaster risks," said Mr. Diabré.

In his address today to the opening of the High Level Round Table, Mr. Diabré emphasized the need to recognize the complex relationship between disaster and development. Citing a recent UNDP publication, "Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development," he identified four key insights from UNDP's work: a) disasters can wipe out decades of development gains; b) disaster losses interact with and aggravate other development related stresses and shocks; c) it is the poor and marginalized who suffer disproportionately from the impact of disaster; and d) development alone does not make people less vulnerable to disaster—rather it is the development paths taken by individuals, communities and nations that determine whether disaster risk is reduced or increased.

Mr. Diabré asserted that UNDP, as the lead UN development agency, would work with development partners to help governments "disaster proof" their development initiatives by incorporating disaster risk reduction and management into their development strategies. He called on all participants to recognize that disaster risk is a global problem requiring global solutions and to join UNDP in collectively addressing the challenges.

Over 4,000 representatives from states around the world are meeting to review the implementation of the [Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action](#), which was adopted at the [World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994](#).

The conference is expected to motivate and guide governments and policy makers to pay more attention to identifying practical and concrete ways to incorporate disaster risk reduction into poverty alleviation and development strategies. This will be crucial for achieving the [MDGs](#) and sustainable human development. The conference will also raise awareness of the urgency to focus on the vulnerable, taking into account community needs to address disaster risk, as well as emphasize action at global, regional, national and local levels for the development of a culture of prevention. The meeting comes at a crucial time as the international community is making decisions about how to respond to the tsunami disaster in Asia.

UNDP currently supports capacity building programmes for disaster risk management in over 40 countries in Africa, Arab States, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and the CIS as well as post-disaster recovery plans and operations in over 30 countries. It also administers the UN Inter-agency Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP).

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Please also visit our website: www.undp.org/dpa/journalists

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UNDP is the United Nations worldwide development network. It advocates change and provides countries with access to the knowledge, skills and resources their populations need to improve their lives.

Cameroon: Foundation Helps Communities Protect Cameroon Mountains Biodiversity

New York — UNDP is supporting activities by the Cameroon Mountains Conservation Foundation to protect the area's unique biodiversity by helping local communities manage forest resources and improve their livelihoods. UNDP is providing US\$300,000 for the initiative.

The Cameroon Mountains, lying in the western part of the country, are the highest range in West Africa. The region's forests have been designated by Conservation International as one of the world's 25 biodiversity "hot spots" that need special attention to safeguard endangered species.

Many villages in the mountains are isolated, and their people are among the one-third of Cameroonians who survive on less than a dollar a day.

They depend on the mountains for resources such as firewood, honey, medicinal plants and game for food, and have strong cultural bonds to the forests. The mountains are also a vital source of water for many inhabitants.

Among the animals living in this unique environment are primates, including chimpanzees and gorillas, mountain elephants and a number of rare bird species. Over the years, however, forests have been cleared for farming and grazing, leading to drying up of streams and the disappearance of wild life.

The Cameroon Mountains Conservation Foundation has received \$6 million from the Global Environment Facility on the understanding that it will mobilize an equal amount from donors and partners. To aid this effort, UNDP hosted a round table in June for representatives of donor and government agencies in Yaounde, the capital, and is following up to marshal support for the Foundation.

Tanyi Mbianyor Clarkson, Minister of the Environment, urged support for the Foundation's mission, noting that its work is carried out within the framework of the Government's Forest Environment Sectoral Programme, supported by the World Bank.

Other donors to date include German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) which has allocated \$2.1 million for the Foundation, the UK Department for International Development \$740,000, and the Forest Environment Sectoral Programme \$620,000, reports UNDP Resident Representative Patricia de Mowbray.

The Foundation is cooperating with communities to improve forest management to conserve resources, protect endangered species and improve livelihoods by promoting eco-tourism and marketing of local products.

The foundation also works with villagers to monitor the ecology and social and economic conditions in the area.

These activities contribute to Cameroon's efforts to reach two of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals for 2015: halving severe poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability.

For further information please contact Peter Ngu Tayong, UNDP Cameroon, or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office.

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

25 MARCH 2002

Cape Verde: Forum Unifies Desertification Priorities in Advance of Johannesburg Summit

PRESS RELEASE

Praia, Cape Verde — An international forum held in Praia, Cape Verde, earlier this month produced a unified position among countries most affected by desertification. The position, reflected in the Praia Declaration, will be presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will take place in Johannesburg this summer.

"It is evident that arid countries are the ones most affected by poverty," said Joseph Byll-Cataria, UNDP Resident Representative in Cape Verde.

"That's why UNDP considers its ongoing efforts to integrate environmental protection and anti-desertification programmes into national poverty-reduction strategies as extremely important."

During the four-day meeting, 150 officials from more than 60 countries, including 34 environment ministers and several representatives of OECD member countries, discussed implementation of the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its relationship to the fight against poverty. They also examined ways to eliminate bottlenecks that still hinder the implementation of national efforts to combat desertification. Over 170 countries are now parties to the convention.

The forum, organized by the Government of Cape Verde, UNDP and the UNCCD Secretariat, "is the starting point for the Johannesburg marathon," said Maria Madalena Brito Neves, the Cape Verde Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Praia Declaration lays down guidelines for the discussions expected to take place during the WSSD. The document underlines the fact that desertification exacerbates poverty, saying that "the poverty nexus is tied with desertification and drought in a vicious cycle characterized by land degradation and loss of resources."

The declaration recommends that WSSD consider combating desertification and promoting natural resources management as a main component of poverty reduction strategies. It also calls for more cooperation at sub-regional and regional levels to ensure transboundary arid ecosystems management and dissemination of best practices.

The declaration also encourages South-South initiatives that support the sharing of experience and technology. It calls for the integration of products originating in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid dry areas into world trade, and for UNCCD to be adopted as the appropriate tool to combat poverty in such areas.

Hama Arba Diallo, UNCCD Executive Secretary, said: "We have to use Johannesburg to help combat desertification and poverty so that we can meet the expectations of the more than a billion human beings who on a daily basis face the manifold risks and dangers caused by drought and desertification."

He also expressed the desire for UNDP to play an even more prominent role, shoulder-to-shoulder with governments, civil society and communities, in building their capacity to formulate national programmes of action and implement them effectively.

Participants in the forum asked President Pedro Pires of Cape Verde, to present the Praia Declaration during the WSSD and to advocate its adoption as part of the summit's conclusions.

For further information, please contact Kadidia Ledron, UNDP Cape Verde or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP's Communications Office.

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

9 JANUARY 2003

Chad: Neighbourhood committees help clean up capital

PRESS RELEASE

New York — Neighbourhood sanitation committees are getting help from United Nations Volunteers and UNDP to clean up N'Djamena, capital of Chad and home to 800,000 people.

The committees are selling 420 waste containers provided by UNDP to households and organizations to raise funds for their work.

They have arranged for rubbish collection via 20 centres and carried out small-scale sanitation initiatives, installed public latrines and built donkey carts to carry rubbish in an outlying area. These activities have created more than 100 jobs.

The UNDP Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE) has allocated \$70,000 for the project. The next phase in February will set up four rubbish transit stations.

LIFE operates in 12 countries on five continents, providing small grants for projects that improve local environments and alleviate poverty by creating employment opportunities.

The project team includes one international and four national UN Volunteers, who helped establish the committees and a municipal environmental steering committee. UN Volunteers provide funding for office and other project expenses.

Pabamé Mahamat Lao, a UN Volunteer, said the project encourages people to participate in efforts to clean up their neighbourhoods to reduce the health risks caused by unsanitary conditions. He urged community leaders to persuade people to use the new containers as a convenient way of collecting refuse.

Haoua Gamané, assistant to the mayor, noted that sales of the waste containers will raise additional resources for the committees' work. Promoting use of the containers will help improve the quality of life and upgrade environmental sanitation in the city, she said.

The project reflects the partnership between the city and UNDP, said Adam Abba, president of the coordinating office of the sanitation committees. "The initiative is helping clean up N'Djamena by removing rubbish in the streets and public places, and use of the containers is another step in improving public sanitation," he said.

For further information, please contact Mahamadou Coulibaly, UNDP Chad, or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office.

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

1 JUNE 2004

Mali: Initiative to Help Mali Reduce Toll of Natural Disasters

New York — The Niger and Senegal rivers that flow more than 2,200 kilometres through Mali offer vital resources for development, but heavy rains often trigger floods, such as those during the last two years, that take a toll on lives and property. The country also faces threats such as droughts, livestock diseases and infestations of locusts.

One of the world's poorest countries, Mali is all the more vulnerable because it lacks a disaster prevention planning and management framework. To remedy this, the Government, UNDP and other partners are helping the General Directorate of Public Safety and local authorities to meet nature's challenges.

The initiative was launched recently in Koulikoro, an industrial centre that is vulnerable to flood damage. It is a hub for rail, road and water transport on the Niger, north-east of Bamako, the capital.

Support for the two-year, \$650,000 project comes from the Government, local authorities, UNDP and other partners. They will coordinate with civil society organizations, the Ministry of the Interior, local communities and the UN country team to strengthen national rapid reaction capabilities.

Abdalah Fascoye, President of the Special Delegation of Koulikoro, welcomed the initiative, pointing out that the whole town would benefit from regional natural disaster management.

The project comes out of the consensus reached at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the work of the regional bureau of the secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, said Anatole Sangaré, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Internal Security and Public Safety. The Government is therefore including public safety as a dimension of public policy, particularly within the framework of its anti-poverty strategy, he said.

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Kalfa Sanogo said that UNDP is pleased to cooperate with the Government on the project, which will put in place tools for local, regional and national planning to manage disaster risks effectively and reduce communities' vulnerability significantly.

The initiative will set up a legal framework for managing disaster risks and strengthen the staff skills and organization of the General Directorate of Public Safety and some of its offices. Communities will get information and training on how to prevent and respond to disasters, and local and regional authorities will get help in disaster response planning.

It will also promote exchange of information between national and regional authorities, and work with civil society, community organizations and local authorities to help them prepare disaster prevention plans.

UNDP is providing \$350,000 for national and international experts, training and equipment, and will work closely on the project with other UN partners, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the UN Institute for Training and Research, and the World Food Programme.

For further information please contact Mahamadou Coulibaly , UNDP Mali, or Nicholas Gouede , UNDP Communications Office.

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