

56th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 25 – 27 March 2025

UNEP/CMS/StC56/Doc.8

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

I. Introduction

1. The report is submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the 56th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), to be held in Bonn, Germany from 25 to 27 March 2025.
2. The report provides an update on the programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the CMS Secretariat since the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 12 to 17 February 2024. It also covers the administrative and financial management support provided to the CMS Secretariat by UNEP. The present report focuses on the period between August 2023 and December 2024.

II. Programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the CMS Secretariat

Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

3. The sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA-6)¹ was held from 26 February to 1 March 2024.
4. A key highlight of UNEA-6 was the supplementary agenda item on “*Cooperation with MEAs*”² which was considered through the organization of an “*MEA Day*”³ held on 28 February 2024. MEA-related side events were held on the last three days of the conference and MEAs exhibitions ran throughout the UNEA week. The overall goal of the supplementary agenda item was to strengthen the engagement of MEAs in UNEA-6 and subsequent sessions, in order to promote coherence between the resolutions of the Assembly and the decisions of the governing bodies of MEAs, while fully respecting the autonomy of the MEAs and without introducing new and additional requirements for the contracting Parties to the MEAs. The agenda item attracted high level participation by Member States, Presidents of MEA governing bodies including the CMS COP-14 Chair, HE Mr Aziz Abdukhakimov, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the MEA Secretariats, including the CMS Secretariat and other stakeholders. Preparation of the agenda item was done in consultation with MEA Secretariats through the

¹ [Sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA-6\)](#)

² [Supplementary agenda item on Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements](#)

³ [Multilateral Environmental Agreements Day](#)

MEA focal points network in which the CMS Secretariat participates. The outcomes of the agenda item on Cooperation with MEAs are expected to be brought to the attention of the governing bodies of the MEAs as appropriate. Furthermore, the agenda item has been included in the provisional agenda for the seventh session of the UN Environment Assembly.

5. At UNEA-6 Member States adopted several resolutions relevant to CMS including Resolution 6/4⁴ on *Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments*, Resolution 6/6⁵ on *Fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements*, and Resolution 6/15⁶ on *Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution*.

Support for strengthening cooperation, coordination and synergies between biodiversity related conventions

6. UNEP acts as the Secretariat for the “Bern Process” which aims to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between biodiversity-relevant conventions, contributing to the effective and efficient implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). It builds on lessons from Bern I⁷ and Bern II⁸ consultations on the post-2020 GBF and is recognized by CMS in Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP14) on “Synergies and Partnerships.”⁹

7. In response to recent intergovernmental calls directed to UNEP to continue the Bern Process, UNEP in close collaboration with the Swiss Government, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the conference co-chairs from Mexico and Sweden, organized the ‘Bern III Conference on the biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant conventions on implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework’, which took place from 23 to 25 January 2024 in Bern, Switzerland. The conference brought together representatives of Parties and secretariats of sixteen MEAs, including CMS, as well as a range of other stakeholders, organizations, and individual experts. Three background documents were prepared to inform the conference discussions¹⁰ including a cross-mapping paper¹¹: “Key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs” that highlights interlinkages between goals and targets of the KM-GBF and the strategies of 14 MEAs, including those of the CMS. In

⁴ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/008/07/pdf/k2400807.pdf>

⁵ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/007/71/pdf/k2400771.pdf>

⁶ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/008/25/pdf/k2400825.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/de6d/6f08/e6f5ab406bf39019f9d5db62/post2020-ws-2019-06-02-en.pdf>

⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35906/Bern2rep21.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

⁹ UNEP/CMS/Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP14): [cms_cop14_res.11.10_rev.cop14_synergies-and-partnerships_e.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44500/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%201%20-%20Mandates.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

¹⁰ Mandates for the Bern Process and cooperation in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44500/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%201%20-%20Mandates.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; Relevant Meetings:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44499/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%202%20-%20Meetings.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>; Key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44506>

¹¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44506/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%203%20-%20Cross-mapping%20MEA%20strategies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

the run-up to the Bern III Conference, participants were also invited to submit case studies on good collaborative practices at national, regional, or global levels.¹² A report outline of the Bern III Conference outcomes has been made public and introduced to governing body meetings of relevant MEAs.¹³

8. UNEP, in collaboration with key partners, facilitated discussions on the outcomes of the Bern III Conference at UNEA-6 (high-level event 29 February 2024, Nairobi)¹⁴ and the following MEA COPs: CMS COP-14 (side-event 14 February 2024, Samarkand), CBD COP-16 (Cooperation Day 31 October 2024, Cali),¹⁵ UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP-29 (side-event 19 November 2024, Baku),¹⁶ UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP-16 (side-event 6 December 2024, Riyadh).

9. The rollout of the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) to support knowledge management for reporting to MEAs continued. In response to government requests, three national workshops were held in China (September 2023), Nigeria (November 2023), and Ghana (August 2024), with participation from national focal points for CMS. Furthermore, two regional workshops for the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) (April 2024) and South-Asian (September 2024) countries were held, facilitating synergetic approaches to MEA reporting. DaRT's latest technical enhancements primarily aim to support Parties bridging data gaps for national reports to MEAs and visualize linkages of MEA strategic plans. The DaRT website was revamped, the ability to tag content with taxonomic terms from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility introduced and an integration with the upgraded Online Reporting System (ORS) established, which now allows users to draw on DaRT content when filling Reporting Templates.

10. In 2024, UNEP-WCMC, within the framework of UNEP's European Union- Global Public Goods and Challenges (EU-GPGC) Scaling-up Actions to Realize Synergies for Biodiversity Project, successfully completed the final upgrade of the ORS¹⁷, resulting in significant redevelopment that included enhanced interoperability with DaRT, a unified backend, the resolution of existing technical issues, integration of valuable new features, and improved usability for national reporting by Parties and MEA Secretariats.

11. UNEP, with inputs from CMS, CBD, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS), Minamata Conventions as well as the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for francophone Africa, convened a 'Capacity Building Workshop: Implementation of biodiversity and chemicals and waste multilateral environmental agreements' from 26 to 28 November 2024. The event aimed at strengthening the implementation of global environmental commitments and goals – such as those in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework and Global Framework on Chemicals – through the coherent and synergistic implementation of MEAs at the national level. Additionally, it emphasized the role of knowledge products and national legal frameworks in supporting the implementation of MEAs, highlighting opportunities for obtaining support through the Fifth Montevideo

¹² <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44499/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%20%20-%20Meetings.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>; Key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44506>

¹³ Bern III Conference Report: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/45489>

¹⁴ [UNEA-6: MEAs Cooperation and the GBF: insights from the Bern III conference](#)

¹⁵ [Cooperation Day | IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#)

¹⁶ [Broadening cooperation among the MEAs: Insights from the Bern III Conference | UNFCCC](#)

¹⁷ [Login - Online Reporting System](#)

Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law.

12. UNEP hosts the United Nations Information Portal on MEAs (InforMEA), serving as a centralized platform for comprehensive access to MEAs information. The CMS Secretariat continues to actively support InforMEA by providing guidance on outreach and visibility, interoperability and data exchange, e-learning, and semantic management. In addition, the Secretariat participates in the InforMEA Initiative Annual Steering Committee Meeting and, in 2024, played a key role in discussions on generative artificial intelligence (AI), document indexing, system interoperability – including Application Programming Interface (API) documentation and hosting challenges – and overall platform enhancements. The CMS e-learning course, developed in consultation with the CMS Secretariat and hosted on InforMEA, has attracted 1,078 enrollments from 128 UN Member States, with 555 men, 419 women, and 104 other participants. Notably, 40% of learners have successfully completed the course and earned certificates, demonstrating strong engagement with UNEP's and CMS's digital learning initiatives.

African Elephant Fund (AEF)

13. The African Elephant Fund (AEF) is a multi-donor trust fund established to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). UNEP serves as the Secretariat for the fund.

14. At CMS COP-12, the Parties endorsed the AEAP as the principal strategy for elephant conservation and management under the Convention. The parties further endorsed the revised Action Plan (AEAP 2023) at CMS COP-14.

15. Since the inception of the AEF, 67 projects implemented across the range States have been completed as at December 2024.

16. A new AEF Steering Committee was elected by the African elephant range States in July 2024 to serve for the next three years (2024 - 2026). Zimbabwe and Zambia, representing the southern Africa sub-region, also serve as chair and vice-chair of the Committee. Cameroon and the Central Africa Republic, Tanzania and Rwanda, and Nigeria and Burkina Faso, represent the central, east and west Africa sub-regions respectively. The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany compose the donor representatives, with the European Commission and France as observers. UNEP, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and CMS Secretariats also continue to serve as ex-officio members.

17. Two formal and four informal virtual AEF Steering Committee meetings have been held in the period between July 2023 and December 2024.

18. The AEF project proposal evaluation and selection criteria and the project proposal template have been revised to align with the updated African Elephant Action Plan. The revised guidelines also now require project proponents to incorporate gender, environmental and social considerations when designing and submitting their projects.

19. A mapping study of organizations and initiatives working in the field of African elephant conservation was conducted. The outcomes informed the development of a draft strategic approach for the AEF which is under discussion by the AEF Steering Committee, intended to guide the future strategic operations of the Fund.

20. At the request of the African elephant range States, the AEF Secretariat participated as an observer and technical expert at the CITES African Elephant Dialogue meeting held on 23 – 26 September 2024 in Maun, Botswana. The AEF Secretariat delivered a presentation on the status of the implementation of the AEAP through the AEF.

21. The AEF Secretariat, in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), organized a joint side event at CMS COP-14 (12 February 2024). The event aimed to bring together stakeholders from the government, international non-governmental organizations, and non-profit sectors to exchange knowledge and experiences on opportunities and strategies for increasing financing for sustainable wildlife conservation.

The Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation (CAMCA) project

22. The Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation (CAMCA) project, funded by the Germany and led by UNEP, is working with communities and governments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to increase the resilience of flagship mountain species – Snow Leopard, Argali, Bukhara deer, Asiatic Ibex, Tian Shan Maral, Tian Shan Brown Bear – and associated ecosystems to climate change and related threats.

23. The goal of the CAMCA project is to contribute to the increased climate change resilience of wildlife and people and to achieve greater conservation of biodiversity by:

- Providing technical assistance, advice and knowledge to improve the understanding of climate change vulnerability of flagship species, their habitats and vulnerability to climate change-related drivers;
- Developing and testing participatory tools and methods for ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and climate change-informed wildlife management;
- Establishing incentives for EbA and climate change-informed wildlife management to ensure long-term sustainability; and
- Communicating and raising awareness about the options and benefits of EbA and climate change-informed wildlife management.

24. Specific contributions to CMS include the updating of the Central Asian Mammals Migration and Linear Infrastructure Atlas, the species action plans for the Argali and Bukhara Deer, and the revision of the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) Programme of Work.

25. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are Parties to CMS and to a number of its regional instruments (e.g. Bukhara Deer Memorandum of Understanding, Argali Action Plan, etc.), and participate in CAMI which facilitates regional cooperation for the conservation of migratory species.

Support to Great Apes

26. The secretariat of the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), provided by UNEP, plays a vital role in advancing the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Gorilla Agreement through various strategic initiatives.

27. UNEP and the GRASP Secretariat have been actively engaged in the execution of the CMS Gorilla Agreement via the Vanishing Treasures project, funded by the Government of Luxembourg. This initiative has been

instrumental in developing a comprehensive management plan for the Nkuringo buffer zone surrounding Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, aiming to minimize human-wildlife conflict and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices in both Uganda and Rwanda. Phase II of this project has been approved and will commence in 2025.

28. Furthermore, UNEP is spearheading the regional component of the Global Environment Facility (GEF 7) Congo Basin Landscapes Initiative. This initiative encompasses a variety of activities that directly contribute to gorilla conservation, including monitoring human and wildlife health, combating illegal trade in great apes, and analyzing the key drivers of deforestation, with a particular emphasis on agricultural practices.

29. Additionally, UNEP is implementing the Congo Peatlands Project, supported by funding from the German International Climate Initiative (IKI). This initiative aims to enhance the conservation of the Lac Tèlè Community Reserve in the Republic of Congo, which is home to some of the highest densities of gorillas worldwide.

30. In December 2023, GRASP convened its council meeting alongside the CMS Meeting of the Parties of the Gorilla Agreement. Following this gathering, GRASP partners, including CMS, undertook a comprehensive review of the global strategy for great ape conservation, establishing key priorities for the entire partnership, many of which directly contribute to the successful implementation of the CMS Gorilla Agreement.

Jaguar Conservation

31. *Global Wildlife Programme and the GEF 7 Jaguar Projects:* The GEF 7 project in Panama, executed by UNEP, has achieved significant milestones, including the installation of 750 camera traps to estimate jaguar density across 141,000 hectares, as well as the implementation of management plans on farms to mitigate human-jaguar conflicts.

~~32.~~ *GEF and Ecological Corridor Programs:* In partnership with organizations such as WWF, various projects are being developed under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) program. These projects include the establishment of two jaguar corridors in the Amazon and Magdalena Medio regions of Colombia, with a feasibility study in 2024, aiming for implementation in 2025.

III. Administrative and financial management matters

33. **Programme Support Cost (PSC) Income:** The staff of the administration and funds management unit of the CMS Secretariat are funded by the CMS Programme Support Cost (PSC) allocation. Due to the unpredictable nature of the PSC income, UNEP continues to urge the CMS Secretariat to fund fixed long-term costs, such as administrative staff salaries, from the core budget and other sources of income.

34. **Settlement of contributions:** Parties are encouraged to settle their assessed contributions in full early in the year to guarantee continuity of operations. Those Parties that are in arrears are requested to engage with the CMS Secretariat in order to settle outstanding contributions.

35. **Payment of Contributions through the UN Development Programme (UNDP):** In June 2024, UNON issued a circular on Guidelines for Depositing Small Value Contributions (not exceeding USD 50,000)

through UNDP Country Offices. The Guidelines have been prepared primarily to accommodate low value contributions from MEAs administered by UNEP. Where a contribution cannot be remitted to the recipient via regular avenues such as electronic funds transfer (EFT) or check, the Guidelines provide for an alternative option for payment of low value contributions.

36. **Payment of Contributions by Corporate Credit Card:** At CMS COP 13, Parties requested UNEP to provide alternative modalities that better facilitate settlement of small assessed amounts by Parties. UNEP initiated the process of exploring alternative payment modalities including the feasibility of utilizing the current online payments platform.

37. **Partnership Policy and Procedures:** On 29 June 2024, the UNEP Executive Director issued a new Partnership Policy effective from 29 September 2024. The new Partnership Policy applies to all Partner Categories and Partnership Modalities, and at all stages of the Partnership management process at UNEP and UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats. The Policy sets the principles and guides the processes, whereas the Procedures guide the practical steps to operationalize the Policy. The new Partnership Policy was developed in close consultation with UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats. UNEP Procurement and Partnerships Unit in the Corporate Services Division provided preliminary training to Administrative Officers in UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats in September 2024 and continues to provide tailored training as needed. Implementation of the new Policy begins with a one-year transition period and changes to relevant Procedures will, as far as possible, reflect feedback received from users. UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats may also develop their own policy to govern partnerships provided such policy is consistent with the UNEP Partnership Policy.

38. **Human Resources:** UNEP provides guidance and support in implementing best practices in human resources management, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. In the year 2024, UNEP assisted CMS in processing numerous position management requests (including creation, reclassification, and extension of position validity), requests related to recruitment (including approval of job openings, job advertisements and selections for different staff and non-staff categories); and requests related to personnel administration (including processing of lateral assignments, transfers, resignations, separations, special post allowance and exceptional extensions of Consultants and Individual Contractors (CICs) and temporary appointments). UNEP also provides oversight support for UN Secretariat hired CICs' contracts issued for the CMS Secretariat within the same period, ensuring such recruitments are conducted in accordance with UN and UNEP regulations and rules.

39. The UNEP MEAs Unit under the Corporate Services Division provided back up to Fund Management Officers (FMOs) during leaves of absence in Q1 and Q2 2024. This included day-to-day certification and approval of all administrative matters and specific, tailored support to the CMS Secretariat.

40. At the 14th Conference of the Parties of the Convention, Parties were invited 'to consider the feasibility of financing Junior Professional Officers...to the Secretariat to increase its capacity.'¹⁸ The Junior Professional Officers (JPO) Programme would enable young professionals, funded by their Governments, to support CMS Secretariat activities and can also serve as a tool to enhance geographical diversity, with some donors financing

¹⁸ [UNEP/CMS/Resolution 14.2](#)

candidates from developing countries. In January 2024 and 2025, as every year, UNEP, which coordinates the JPO programme for all UNEP-affiliated entities, issued calls for JPO proposals to all UNEP Directors as well as Heads of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats including the CMS Secretariat. All proposals were uploaded on the UNEP JPO Portal for the Member States to review.

41. **Oversight:** The UNEP Operations and Risk Management Unit (ORMU) in the Corporate Services Division provides coordination services between UNEP and various audit, evaluation, and oversight bodies such as the Board of Auditors, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the Joint Inspection Unit for streamlined and efficient ongoing audit reviews and to ensure timely implementation of audit recommendations. OIOS audited the CMS secretariat in 2024 which resulted in 5 recommendations, none of which were critical. As of 15 January 2025, the status of the recommendations is as follows: 5 recommendations are under implementation all with target implementation dates in 2025. The recommendations requested the CMS Secretariat to (1) ensure enhanced completeness and accuracy of documentation for meetings and conferences; (2) develop an action plan to increase the number of Parties to the Convention; (3) develop an action plan to implement the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Internal Control Policy ; (4) explore payment options for unpaid contributions; and (5) assess the necessity and scope of a potential evaluation policy.

42. UNEP has started work on implementation of the United Nations Secretariat ERM policy and framework, its monitoring and development. Initial consultations between CMS Secretariat and ORMU have been conducted. Risk Focal Points are scheduled to be trained, with further support in pipeline to ensure the drafting of a Risk Register and Treatment and Response Plan.

43. **Legal:** The UNEP Legal Unit in the Corporate Services Division provides corporate legal advice and solutions, reviews standard and non-standard legal instruments, drafts legal instruments as appropriate; represents the Organization/Administration before the Management Advice and Evaluation Section (MAES) and the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and provides advice on issues pertaining to liability/indemnity, privileges and immunities, interpretation and application of constitutive, legislative and other instruments governing UNEP's programmes of work with various Implementing Partners, amongst other things. The Unit continues to deliver reliable and consistent advice on the use of legal instruments, non-standard contribution agreements with donors, and contractual modalities for engaging with Implementing Partners as requested by the CMS Secretariat. In particular, the Legal Unit assisted the CMS Secretariat in (a) reviewed matters which concerned the interpretation and application of UNEP's internal policies (i.e. Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework); and (b) provided relevant legal advice on global frameworks.

44. **Supply Chain Management:** The UNEP Procurement and Partnerships Unit (renamed as of October 2024) in the Corporate Services Division facilitates the effective provision of goods and services to meet the organization's needs. All low value acquisitions are managed by CMS Secretariat directly. All other acquisitions raised by CMS Secretariat requisitioners come to the Unit for review and internal execution or routing to service providers in line with the Delegation of Authorities for procurement. In the year 2024, UN Secretariat procurement teams processed 61 purchase orders (POs) for the CMS Secretariat. Of these, approximately 48% were processed by the UNEP Procurement and Partnerships Unit with an average

of 3 working days* from PO creation to approval. The main supply chain services support for CMS Secretariat is provided by UNEP Procurement and Partnerships Unit that can further engage with two designated service providers, United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office in Geneva. Procurement and Partnerships Unit also provides guidance and briefings to the CMS Secretariat on supply chain operations, while currently explores the possibility of holding an onsite workshop in 2025. Procurement and Partnerships Unit and the CMS Secretariat continue to engage on a regular basis.

**except the outliers*

45. **Support to Multilateral Environmental Agreements:** In 2018, the UNEP Executive Director decided to provide extra administrative support to the secretariats of UNEP-administered MEA secretariats through the establishment of a dedicated unit (MEAs Unit) within the Corporate Services Division and under the supervision of the Division Director. Following the retirement of the initial Principal Advisor and Head of Unit, a new officer was appointed as of 1 June 2023. The purpose of the Unit has been revised as follows:

The Unit aims to facilitate effective and timely advice on administrative services which support the achievement of the objectives of UNEP-administered MEAs within the parameters of UN Secretariat regulations and rules, and by sharing knowledge and best practices across MEA secretariats. The Unit works closely with administrative staff in UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats to implement decisions made by parties and upon request by governing bodies, performs bench-marking exercises and/or assessment studies.

46. Support provided by the Unit includes interpretation of policy, guidelines and procedures; human resources; budget and finance administration; corporate legal advice; supply chain management; audit coordination and risk management; information and communications technology; and backstopping of administrative staff, and treasury functions for multilateral funds. In the reporting period, the Unit has developed Standard Operating Procedures aimed at bringing precision to administrative processes, coordinated the process between UNON and UNEP Corporate Services Division to issue UNON Guidelines for Depositing Low Value Contributions through UNDP Country Offices, and initiated a UNEP-wide process to ensure consultation of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats in the development of UNEP corporate policies of programmatic and administrative relevance.

47. Furthermore, to increase and improve knowledge sharing of best practices on administrative-related matters, the Unit has organized quarterly meetings with the Chief Administrative/Fund Management Offers of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats and circulates weekly tips of relevance to them.

48. **Support during 14th Conference of the Parties (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, February 2024):** During COP 14, the MEAs Unit was represented by the Principal Advisor and Head of Unit and was supported virtually by UNEP Finance Management Section and Programme and Budget Unit in the Corporate Services Division during the vetting of the 2024-2025 Budget by the Contact Group until its approval by the COP, ensuring effective and efficient business continuity.

49. **The UN Secretary-General reforms on management** have been an effective instrument for improving efficiency and effectiveness of

administration and engagement across the United Nations. The UNEP Executive Director reaffirms the commitment and engagement in the UN reform processes and wishes to assure parties that through the engagement and oversight of the Division of Corporate Services, the CMS Secretariat has an appropriate and effective avenue for having their perspectives and needs included in policy decisions as well as benefitting from efficiency gains introduced in a manner which allows the secretariat to maintain its focus on the Programme of Work including deliverables outlined by the meeting of parties. In pursuit of this goal, the UNEP Deputy Executive Director issued a memorandum in August 2024 requesting that all UNEP Divisions and Offices consistently consult with, and where applicable, include/refer to UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats in the context of proposals for new or revised policies, guidelines, or manuals, the establishment of working groups, focal point networks, and trainings of programmatic and administrative relevance.
