

2012: Road to Rio+20 - Fresh Opportunity to Scale-Up Sustainable Development?

Wed, Jan 4, 2012

2012 also marks the 40th anniversary of the environment programme of the UN



2012 will mark some major milestones in the race to realize sustainable development as nations navigate the final laps on the Road to Rio+20.

2012 will mark some major milestones in the race to realize sustainable development as nations navigate the final laps on the Road to Rio+20.

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) as it is formally known and now scheduled for later in June will address two over-arching themes-a Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and an institutional framework for sustainable development.

RIO+20, envisaged as a summit involving heads of state, comes 20 years after the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 that set the course for contemporary sustainable development and established the climate change, biodiversity and desertification treaties as well as a forum on forests.

It also comes four decades after the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment that led to the establishment of UNEP-thus 2012 also marks the 40th anniversary of the environment programme of the UN.

2012 has also been designated as the "International Year for Sustainable Energy for All" by the UN's General Assembly. The year is aimed at creating an enabling environment for the

promotion and use of new and renewable energy technologies, including measures to improve access to such technologies.

Highlights of major activities for the first half of 2012 also include:

January

- Second Session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 14-15 January.
- The Fifth World Future Energy Summit (WFES) will be held from 16-19 January, also in Abu Dhabi. WFES will concentrate on energy innovation in policy implementation, technology development, finance and investment approaches, and existing and upcoming projects.
- The Global Conference on Land-Oceans Connections (GLOC): Towards Greener Coastal Economies will be held in Manila, Philippines from 23-24 January. The conference will seek to ensure that a contribution from the linked marine and freshwater communities is fed into the Rio+20 process. A new UNEP report on the "Green Economy in a Blue World" will be launched during the conference.
- From 25-29 January, 2012, the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting will convene in Davos, Switzerland under the theme "The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models." At the meeting, leaders will return to their core purpose of defining what the future should look like, aligning stakeholders around that vision and inspiring their institutions to realize that vision.
- From 30 January to 01 February, the Intergovernmental Meeting to Negotiate and Endorse UNEP's Global Environment Outlook-5 Summary for Policy Makers will be held in Gwanju, Republic of Korea.

February

- The 18th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean will be held from 31 January to 03 February in Quito, Ecuador.

Here ministers will review the implementation of the Rio 1992 commitments and agreements, and deliberate on new, emerging and priority issues for the region and other issues on the road to Rio+20.

They are also expected to discuss cooperation on sustainable consumption and production, environmental indicators and the way forward in negotiating a regional framework agreement on atmospheric pollution that includes emissions of short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs) such as methane, black carbon, ozone precursors and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

- The UN General Assembly will hold a thematic debate on preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in New York. The exact date of the debate is to be determined.

- UNEP in cooperation with UN Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) will hold a global summit on Business Perspective on Sustainable Growth: Preparing for Rio+20 from 14-16 February in New York.

The summit, convened by KPMG International will seek to craft a forward-looking agenda to focus on global green growth. Its outcomes will be shared at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

- The 12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will be held from 20-22 February. During the meeting, UNEP will launch the GEO-5 Summary for Policy Makers as a contribution to Rio+20.

March

- Bankers, insurers and investors in the North America region will gather for GLOBE 2012 starting 14-16 March in Vancouver Canada as a contribution to Rio+20- GLOBE 2012 is hosted by the GLOBE Foundation in collaboration with the UNEP Finance Initiative.
- World Water Day will be marked on 22 March 2012 under the theme 'Water and Food Security'.
- The UN University (UNU), in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Australian Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) will organize a meeting on Climate Change Mitigation with Indigenous Peoples: Practices, Lessons Learned and Prospects from 26-28 March in Cairns, Australia.

April

- The second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Equitable Benefit-sharing Arising from their Utilization (ABS) will be held in Delhi India from 9-13 April.
- UNEP in cooperation with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other organisations will convene the second session of the plenary meeting for the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Panama from 16-21 April.

May

- With the theme of "The Living Ocean and Coast," the Expo 2012 will run from 12 May to 12 August in Yeosu, Republic of Korea. The Expo will seek to provide a learning opportunity to the public as well as present solutions to environmental challenges and propose measures for the sustainable use and development of marine resources.
- The fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) will be held from 14-18 May in La Rochelle, France.

- Marine Biodiversity will be the theme for this year's International Day for Biodiversity to be marked on 22 May.
- Co-hosted and convened by the University of Arizona (US) and the Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA) of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Climate Adaptation Futures: Second International Climate Change Adaptation Conference 2012 will be held in Tucson USA from 29-31 May.

June

- The World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability will be held from 1-3 June in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil in advance of Rio+20.

The meeting, involving those engaged in the development, interpretation and enforcement of law including Chief Justices and senior judges, Attorneys-General and Public Prosecutors and Auditor-Generals, will focus on the law's role in promoting the goals of sustainable development.

- With the theme 'Green Economy-Does it include you?', World Environment Day 2012 will be commemorated on 05 June, in Brazil in advance of Rio+20.
- The Third and final PrepCom for UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) will be held on 13-15 June in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.
- The Global Ocean Forum will organize "Oceans Day" during the thematic days immediately preceding the UNCSD or Rio+20 now scheduled between 20-22 June in Rio de Janeiro.