

EC-ACP CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME ON MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAs)

The EC-ACP Programme is a Programme on Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for African, Caribbean and Pacific ACP Countries. The EC is the funding Agency for the Programme and has established it in answer to the needs of ACP countries particularly those of Africa to effectively meet their obligations under MEAs.

The overall objective of the programme is to promote environmental sustainability in the ACP countries thereby contributing to sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.

The EC is the Funding Agency for the Programme and UNEP the overall Coordinator. The AUC is the Hub for the African component of the programme and the programme is housed at the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, manned by a four-person staff. The Programme which is of a life span of 48 months covers 48 African ACP countries.

The specific objective for the African component is to strengthen the capacities of the Commission of the African Union in its coordination and leadership role on environmental issues on the continent, enhance the capacities of the Regional Economic Communities and African ACP countries to effectively implement their obligations and commitments under global and regional environmental agreements and other international legal instruments.

Additionally, support to the implementation of specific MEAs is provided under four sub-components, namely Clean Development Mechanism, Combating Desertification, Sound Management of Chemicals and clean up of obsolete pesticides.

The capacities of African negotiators in international negotiations, their ability to manage chemicals in a sound manner, their capacities to address issues related to desertification and accumulation of obsolete pesticides are also expected to be built or strengthened through the EC ACP MEAs Programme. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in its Johannesburg meeting of June 2008 fully endorsed the EC ACP MEAs Programme and urged the full participation of African countries in its implementation, so as to take ownership of the Programme.

As a requirement for the effective implementation of the EC ACP MEAs Programme, the capacity development needs of Africa ACP countries with regard to MEAs implementation and enforcement needed to be determined through desk top studies and needs assessment workshops. The outcome of the needs assessment exercises indicated that capacity development in the four areas of environmental concerns (notably biodiversity, pollution, climate change, water management issues and land degradation) was needed in:

- negotiation skills
- awareness raising
- institutional strengthening
- development of adequate regulatory and legislative frameworks
- mainstreaming of MEAs into development policies and programmes
- use of information-exchange systems
