

# The LVEMP II Civil Society Watch E-bulletin

A Monthly from the **East African Sustainability Watch Network** comprising: Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Network (SusWatch Kenya)

**December 2017**

## **The 3rd United Nations Environment Assembly: A Growing Marketplace for the Private Sector** *(Adopted from the Global Forest Coalition blog by Isis Alvarez)*



**A delegate openly expresses concern during the GMGF**

The 3rd United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) whose theme focused around “pollution,” was celebrated from December 4-6, 2017. Several activities prior to UNEA-3 happened the week before, starting with the Global Major Groups & Stakeholders Forum (GMSF) from November 27 – 28, 2017; followed by the Science-Business-Policy Forum from November 29 - 30; then, from December 1 - 3, the 3rd the Open-Ended Committee of Representatives (OECPR) (which is composed of all accredited Permanent Representatives to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which is in charge of preparing the meetings of the UN Environment Assembly and regularly reviews the implementation of its decisions.

UNEA-3 passed 13 non-binding resolutions and three decisions. Among them were moves to address marine litter and microplastics, prevent and reduce air pollution, cut out lead poisoning from paint and batteries, protect water-based ecosystems from pollution, deal with soil pollution, and manage pollution in areas hit by conflict and terrorism – *the UN's first ever resolution on conflict pollution.*

While most other UN conventions/treaties have been ongoing for several years, UNEA is a relatively ‘new’ process emerging from decisions at Rio+20. As it unfolds, it gains more global attention and begins to be recognized as an important driver of the environmental pillar of sustainable development, key for the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the heart of the UN’s General Assembly Agenda 2030. In fact, 4 of the adopted Resolutions at UNEA-3 are directly related to the SDGs / High Level Political Forum (HLPF), while a Resolution on Mainstreaming Biodiversity made a clear link with other very relevant and important process: The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Certainly, such synergies are very urgently needed in the multilateral policy agenda.

However, a different kind of similarity is evident in many of these environment-related UN policy fora: the so-called ‘corporate take-over’ of the UN, which goes in hand with the closing space for civil society engagement. And UNEA is not an exception. However, in beating pollution the private sector needs to play an important role but not in taking over the role of an institution whose mandate doesn’t fall in the promotion of private companies escorting them from being held accountable from the numerous environmental and social disasters they have caused due to their unsustainable practices.

Ignoring the key role of civil society condemns us to continue to drown in our own man-made pollution and excluding us from solutions; indigenous peoples, local communities, women’s and youth groups, citizens initiatives, among others, have shown the power of the people and deliberately leaving us ‘outside the room’ is irrational. It seems like the new normal in all UN institutions is to let businesses rule the fate of humanity exempted from any social and environmental responsibility.

**Read more:** *The 3rd UNEA-3: a growing marketplace for the private sector:* <http://tinyurl.com/y9ch7s4q>

**Read more:** *IISD reporting on the 3rd Meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN Environment Programme and UNEA-3:* <http://enb.iisd.org/unep/oecpr3-unea3/>

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## In a nutshell: Outcome from the Third United Nations Environment Assembly



Juliet Gracey from Uganda presented UNEA's 2 million+ #BeatPollution Campaign pledges to the President of UNEA-3

The Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) convened from 4-6 December 2017 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya, under the overall theme “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet.” Over 4,300 delegates participated in UNEA-3 and its related events, including 1,197 delegates from more than 170 Member States, 711 representatives of Major Groups and other stakeholders, and 94 intergovernmental organizations.

*For the first time, UNEA delegates also adopted a negotiated Ministerial Declaration by consensus, with numerous speakers attributing this achievement to the leadership of UNEA-3 President Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta (Costa Rica) and the inclusive and transparent approach adopted over the 18-month intersessional period as well as during the meeting itself.*

Many delegates and observers noted that in focusing on a theme that resonates greatly with the public, as evidenced by more than 2.3 million pledges garnered from individuals across the world in the #BeatPollution campaign, UNEA has firmly positioned itself as the world’s voice on the environment, while strengthening the environmental pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, the adoption of a resolution on UNEA’s contribution to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was broadly welcomed

The UNEA-3 President Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta (Costa Rica) opened UNEA-3 on Monday morning, 4 December. Introducing the overall theme, “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet,” he underscored that the most vulnerable are those at greatest risk from the negative impacts of pollution. Welcoming the 2.3 million individual pledges garnered to date under UNEP’s #BeatPollution campaign, he called on delegates to act now to address “a problem that we all created and that we can all fix.”

*UNEA-3 passed 13 non-binding resolutions and three decisions.* The resolution on marine litter and microplastics, inter alia urges all countries and other stakeholders to responsibly use plastic while endeavoring to reduce unnecessary plastic use, and promote research and application of environmentally-sound alternatives. The resolution encourages cooperation between governments, regional bodies, the private sector, and civil society, including through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and its regional nodes.

Here are **5 ways you can cut down your personal plastic footprint** starting this festive season as one practical way to domesticate the UNEA-3 draft resolution on marine litter and microplastics

- ✓ **Carry a reusable bottle:** Carrying a reusable bottle is a great way to cut your plastic (disposable bottles) use and save money too!
- ✓ **Say NO to plastic straws:** Next time you order a drink at a party or pub, think about whether you need a straw – and if you don’t, just say **NO!** You can also ask your local pub / retail shop to stop adding straws to drinks as standard
- ✓ **Avoid excessive food packaging especially single use plastics that are a public health menace**
- ✓ **Say NO to disposable cutlery**
- ✓ **Carry a shopping bag**

Adopted from Greenpeace UK: <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/9-ways-reduce-plastic-use/>

**Read** the adopted Ministerial Declaration, Resolutions and Decisions (un-edited) from: <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/>

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## EACSOFF Launches Regional Project to Advocate for Implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance



Ms Mary Makoffu (Director of Social services at the EAC) giving the opening speech; Ms Martha Makenge – EACSOFF giving her remark; selected participants holding a summary of the Charter at the Launch

The East African Civil Society Organizations' Forum (EACSOFF) in collaboration with ActionAid's Global Platform has launched a three-year project for advocating African Charter through CSOs action

The Project, among others, will mobilise the East African Civil Societies (CSOS) to support African Governance Architecture (AGA) through advocating for implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) within the region. The AGA is the overall continental framework for promoting, nurturing, strengthening and consolidating democracy and governance in Africa. The African Union adopted the ACDEG in January 2007 to promote democracy, rule of law and basic human rights, ensure democratic rule and constitutional changes of power through free, fair and transparent elections.

Speaking at the Launch event that was held at the EAC Secretariat in Arusha on December 11, 2017, Ms. Mary Makoffu - Director of Social Services at the EAC underscored the importance of upholding the rule of law and democratic principles as part of the ongoing integration, while engaging the various stakeholders including the youths. She added that, 'governance cuts across all sectors of the EAC integration process'.

Ms. Martha Makenge – Acting Chief Executive Officer of EACSOFF highlighted the goal and objectives of the regional project, not that the project intends to hold Governments accountable to what they signed up in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. ' Since EAC citizens, including the youth have limited knowledge on the AGA, EACSOFF saw a need to scale up their skills, knowledge and active participation in monitoring it,' Martha added.

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance has 53 clauses that centre on democracy, rule of law and human rights; the culture of democracy and peace; democratic institutions, democratic elections, sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of Government; political, economic and social governance; and mechanisms for application.

The East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum (EACSOFF) is an autonomous umbrella body of all non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in East Africa. Its primary objective is to build a critical mass of knowledgeable and empowered civil society in the region in order to foster their confidence and capacity in articulating grassroots needs and interests to the East African Community and its various organs, institutions and agencies. Founded in 2007, EACSOFF exists to champion East Africa people-centeredness in the social, economic and other East African integration processes.

Read more about the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*: <http://tinyurl.com/ybh7td3n>