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Session VI: **Moving Forward: Building Back Better with view to Implement the Sustainable Development Goals**

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SUPPORTING A GREEN AND RESILIENT RECOVERY

Fostering better management of natural resources - One of the fundamental challenges highlighted by the pandemic is to better manage natural resources. Today, the materials required for the much-needed green energy transition are often concentrated in a few countries only. These resources include copper, cobalt, lithium or rare earth elements that are used in solar photovoltaics, batteries, electric vehicle motors, wind turbines, and fuel cells. This is also the case for some key materials used in medicines

Building a resilient, circular economy - promoting the circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the UNECE region will be the theme of the sixty-ninth Session of the Commission, to be held in April 2021, which will build upon strong engagement from all sectoral Committees as well as from the private sector. The region's circular material use rate has improved in recent years, but it remains at just 11.2% in the EU, according to the latest available data. In Europe and Central Asia, only around one third of waste materials are recovered through recycling and composting.

Promoting nature-based solutions - UNECE supports countries of the region to harness cost-effective nature-based solutions, such as restoring degraded and deforested landscapes. This can bring significant benefits for climate action, biodiversity, and unlock green economic growth opportunities. UNECE has already assisted countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia in their commitment to restore over 3 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 and is working to scale up commitments across the region through the ECCA30 initiative.

UNECE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS TO SUPPORT COUNTRIES' RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Ensuring access to water and sanitation - A major challenge with this pandemic is to ensure universal access to clean water and sanitation - a first line of defence against infectious diseases.

Supporting Environmental Assessment - UNECE's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment can help ensure that environmental and health considerations are taken into account in countries' economic and regional development planning, including through obligatory consultation of environmental and health authorities, and the public. This allows a cohesive, integrated national approach that goes beyond the limits of individual economic sectors.

Upholding environmental democracy - The UNECE Aarhus Convention supports countries in: (a) providing effective public access to information related to COVID-19 matters, related impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, on other objects of the environment and on human health; (b) ensuring effective procedures of public participation in decision-making. (SDG targets: 16.3; 16.7; 16.10)

Clean air for healthy lives - The UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution contributes to **improving air quality** by setting emission targets for a number of key air pollutants. The Gothenburg Protocol is the first legally binding agreement containing obligations to reduce short-lived climate pollutants (fine particulate matter, including black carbon, and ground-level ozone precursors: nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) and other key air pollutants (ammonia, sulphur).

PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH – ACHIEVING THE SDGs WHILE INTEGRATING COVID-19

Coherence of approaches between **Protocol and 2030 Agenda:**

✓ Addressing the whole water and sanitation cycle

✓ Focus on intersectoriality

✓ Focus on inequalities

✓ Countries set their own targets

✓ Follow-up and review of progress

Concrete targets for **COVID-19 prevention, recovery and future preparedness** can be set on:

✓ Equitable access to water and sanitation

✓ WASH in schools and health-care facilities

✓ Environmental surveillance in wastewater

✓ Any other WASH aspect covered by Protocol target areas

Such targets would contribute to the 2030 Agenda

COVID-19 considerations for Protocol

Response › Recovery › Preparedness › Sustainability

- **Convene dialogue on experiences with WASH @ COVID-19**
  - 2020-2021 Webinar Series under the Protocol

- **Scale-up "culture of hygiene" in all settings**
  - Promote good practices in schools and health facilities
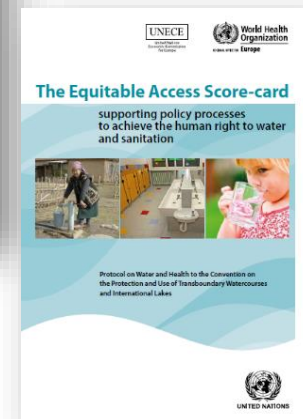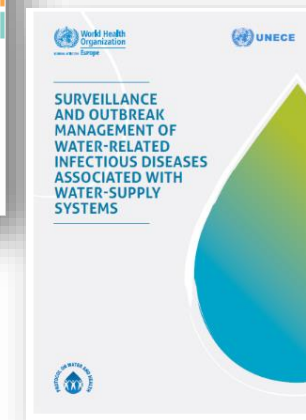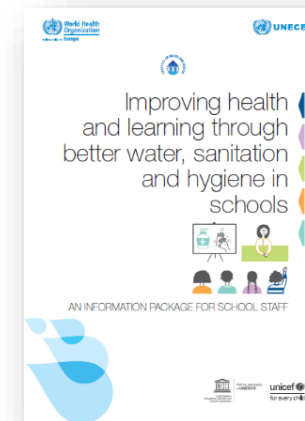 - Support situation assessments

- **Analyse inequalities in access to essential WASH services under the pandemic**
  - Access for disadvantaged groups
  - Affordability of services and materials

- **Strengthen COVID-19 sensitive target setting**
  - Reflection of gaps and lessons learnt
  - Strengthen recovery, preparedness and long-term sustainability

- **Strengthen health system capacities**
  - Establish effective surveillance and response systems
  - Explore wastewater monitoring as early warning system

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

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Third **Environmental Performance Review of Uzbekistan** unveiled recently.

Many recommendations will support a post-pandemic green recovery, while also accelerating achievement of SDGs, for example:

- The Cabinet of Ministers should
  - In order to support the introduction of green technologies in industry, (a) Create economic and financial incentives for industrial enterprises to move towards green technology (b) Foster the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups focused on green technology. [rec. 15.1 -> SDG 9.4]
  - Give a mandate on education for sustainable development (ESD) to the State Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection, including promoting ESD in non-formal and informal education and in-service training. [rec. 5.6(a) -> SDG 4]
  - Ensure the development and adoption of a legal framework, allowing for the establishment of a national certification and labelling system that is recognized internationally, for organic agricultural production. [rec. 13.1 -> SDG 2.4]

- The State Committee on Statistics should:
  - Make publicly available on its website the environmental statistics it collects
  - Promote the development of environmental SDGs indicator methodologies and exchange of international experience in reporting on the environmental dimension of the SDGs
  - Increase the number of environment-related SDGs indicators made publicly available online.

Roadmap for implementing recommendations in Uzbekistan being developed with technical assistance from RPTC

https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=53764

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

2 ZERO HUNGER

UN INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

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Issue-based Coalition on Environment & Climate Change provides a regional platform for 18 UN agencies, co-chaired by UNECE, UNEP & UNESCO, to

- Promote coordinated support to all member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- Support UN Country Teams in the region on environmental and climate change issues

1. An online collection of guides by IGOs on COVID-19, the environment & climate change

2. Preliminary responses to questions asked by Resident Coordinator Offices on the impact of COVID-19 on the environment (17 June 2020)

3. Summary recommendations on COVID-19 recovery (20 August 2020)

4. Compendium of measures to green post-pandemic recovery (November 2020)

- to speed recovery, build back better and accelerate achievement of SDGs
- responds to a request by Resident Coordinators; funded by Regular Programme on Technical Cooperation
- 20 measures (initially), each with a brief description, a summary of costs and benefits, a case study showing how done in practice, key related SDG targets and a set of resources

https://www.unece.org/runcwelcome/issue-based-coalitions/environment-and-climate-change.html

Thank you!

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