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UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, along with UNEP Green Economy Team Leader Pavan Sukhdev, will preview the Green Economy report at an informal briefing accessible via teleconference at 8:30 am EST on Monday, 17 May. To join the call, please dial +1-212-963-9806 or 963-0052. Media in New York are welcome to join Mr. Steiner in his office in 2 UN Plaza on East 44th Street for a light breakfast at that time.

Turning the Tide on Falling Fish Stocks—UNEP-Led Green Economy Charts Sustainable Investment Path

Preview Report Also Spotlights Opportunities for Transforming Water and Transport Sectors as Governments Meet for Rio+20 Preparatory Committee

New York, 17 May 2010—Investing around \$8 billion a year in rebuilding and greening the world's fisheries could raise catches to 112 million tonnes annually while triggering benefits to industry, consumers and the global economy totalling \$1.7 trillion over the next 40 years.

These are among findings of a new, landmark report being compiled by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and economists entitled the Green Economy-- part of which was previewed today in New York.

The investment, some of which can be covered by phasing down or phasing out some of the \$27 billion-worth of fishing subsidies currently in place, is needed to dramatically reduce the excess capacity of the world's fishing fleets while supporting workers in alternative livelihoods.

Funding is also required to reform and re-focus fisheries management, including through policies such as tradable quotas and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas, in order to allow depleted stocks to recover and grow.

Such measures, backed up by bold and forward-looking investments, would not only generate important economic and environmental returns. They would also assist in fighting poverty by securing the primary protein source of close to one billion people.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director, said today: "Fisheries across the world are being plundered, or exploited at unsustainable rates. It is a failure of management of what will prove to be monumental proportions unless addressed."

“The lives and livelihoods of over half a billion people, linked with the health of this industry, will depend on the tough but also transformational choices Governments make now and over the years to come,” he added.

“The Green Economy preview report presented today offers a way of maximizing the economic, social and environmental returns from rebuilding, reforming and sustaining fisheries for current and future generations. The scenarios recognize that millions of fishers will need support in retraining and that fishing fleets must shrink. But this needs to be set against a rise in catches, an overall climb in incomes for coastal communities and companies, improvements in the health of the marine environment and ultimately hundreds of millions of people whose incomes and livelihoods are linked to fishing,” he added.

The final Green Economy report, which will cover 11 sectors from agriculture and waste to cities and tourism, will be published in late 2010. Today’s preview, launched during the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Rio+20 meeting in Brazil in 2012, covers marine fisheries, water and transport.

Fisheries—Facts and Figures

- It is estimated that there are currently 35 million fishers and more than 20 million boats actively engaged in fishing.
- Fisheries directly and indirectly support 170 million jobs and \$35 billion in incomes to fishing households annually.
- If post-fishing activities are factored in, along with an assumption that one fisher has three dependents, then about 520 million people or eight per cent of the global population are supported by fisheries.

Mismanagement, lack of enforcement and subsidies totalling over \$27 billion annually have left close to 30 per cent of fish stocks classed as “collapsed”—in other words yielding less than 10 per cent of their former potential.

- Only around 25 per cent of commercial stocks—mostly of low-priced species—are considered to be in a healthy or reasonably healthy state.
- On current trends, some researchers estimate that virtually all commercial fisheries will have collapsed by 2050 unless urgent action is taken to bring far more intelligent management to fisheries north and south.

The report estimates that of the \$27 billion-worth of subsidies, only around \$8 billion can be classed as ‘good’ with the rest classed as ‘bad’ and ‘ugly’ as they contribute to over-exploitation of stocks.

Fisheries—A Green Economy Strategy

Under a Green Economy response, aimed at reducing the global fishing effort to a ‘maximum sustainable yield’, an estimated reduction of excess capacity is required, because current capacity is 1.8 to 2.8 times what is needed.

These reductions could be achieved through careful targeting of the most ecologically damaging surplus capacity, so that of the estimated 20 million vessels and 35 million fishers deployed in this sector, the livelihoods of those that are artisanal and poor are treated equitably.

The report estimates that an investment of between \$220 to \$320 billion world-wide is required equal to around \$8 billion a year but that this investment would:-

- Raise total income of fishing households, including those engaged in artisanal fishing, from \$35 billion to around \$44 billion a year
- Increase annual profits for fishing enterprises from \$8 billion to \$11 billion annually
- Increase the marine fisheries catch from about 80 million tonnes to 112 million tonnes a year worth \$119 billion annually versus the current \$85 billion

“Discounting this flow of benefit over time at 3 per cent and 5 per cent real discount rates, gives a present value of benefit from greening the fishing sector of \$1.05 trillion and \$1.76 trillion, which is three to five times the high-end estimate of \$320 billion as the cost of greening global fisheries,” says the preview report.

Water—Facts and Figures

‘Global water stocks are in decline and demands on them are growing. Water scarcity is becoming a global phenomenon that will challenge the security of nations. Addressing this gap provides an opportunity for investments and for water to become a major economic sector in a Green Economy,’ says the preview report.

Water supply is expected to be 40 per cent less than what will be needed in terms of demand by 2030 if there are no improvements in the efficiency of water use.

It argues that attaining the Millennium Development Goals as they relate to water and sanitation would lead to global economic gains of nearly \$750 million a year as a result of less working days lost to illness among adults.

Improved access to water and sanitation would also lead to global gains of \$64 billion linked to less time spent accessing such services.

Investments are needed in not only increasing supply through low cost measures such as rainwater harvesting but also through reforms of the sector and investments in ecological infrastructure including forests and wetlands that perform important hydrological functions.

- The report cites an innovative policy and ‘micro-infrastructure’ development in Western Jakarta, Indonesia.

Here, a private utility called Palyja is providing water to informal homes via community-based organizations with water connection support from the NGO MercyCorps and USAID's Environmental Service Programme.

The community signs a supply contract with the water company which in turn supplies water to multiple households via a single community metre at discount prices.

“The community gets reliable access to an affordable water supply, while Palyja supplies a large number of houses with water at much lower overhead and administrative costs,” says the Green Economy preview report.

Green Economy—Transport

The environmental, social and economic impacts of transport can amount to around 10 per cent of a country's GDP, according to the preview report.

- Transport currently consumes more than half of global liquid fossil fuels
- Transport emits nearly a quarter of the world's energy related CO2 and generates more than 80 per cent of developing country cities' local air pollutants
- More than 127 million fatal traffic accidents, mainly in developing countries, are linked with transport
- Chronic congestion is resulting time and productivity losses

Unless urgent action is taken to seize a different development and investment path, these costs will grow as the global vehicle fleet climbs from around 800 million to between two and three billion by 2050.

The preview report cites multiple choices countries and cities can make, including investment in public and non-motorized transport; alternative fuels and a substitution of physical transportation with telecommunications technology.

The Green Economy preview report says the stimulus packages, triggered by the financial crisis of 2008-2009, have begun a shift towards green transport.

- Transport is one of the major recipients of this extra spending amounting to roughly 12 per cent of the just under \$3.2 trillion spent by all surveyed Governments.
- Of this, rail and public transport represent 45 per cent; low carbon vehicles, five per cent; roads 33 per cent and airports, 14 per cent—in other words 50 per cent of the global transport stimulus spending could be termed 'green'.

“Funding for non-motorized transport such as sidewalks and bicycles is explicitly mentioned in the stimulus packages of the Republic of Korea and Norway,” says the preview report.

Notes to Editors

The Green Economy preview report, including draft conclusions from the full report to be published later in the year, builds on the Global Green New Deal/Green Economy Initiative launched in 2008.

The preview report is a contribution to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee meeting taking place at the UN Headquarters in New York 17-19 May 2010.

The preview report can be accessed at www.unep.org/greeneconomy

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