



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNCSD Intersessional Delegates Discuss Green Economy and Institutional Framework Themes



The dais during the UNCSO First Intersessional Meeting

The first Intersessional Meeting for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSO) convened from 10-11 January 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. During the meeting, delegates listened to: a summary of the findings of the Synthesis Report on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges; and panels on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Delegates then engaged in interactive discussions with the panelists. As delegates left UN Headquarters before 6:00 pm on the second and final day, hoping to avoid the impending snow storm, most seemed satisfied that the first Intersessional meeting had provided a relaxed setting to learn and discuss the concept of green economy and the existing institutional framework, including associated problems, and they were encouraged to attend PrepCom II with concrete proposals on how to address such problems as well as adopt the UNCSO rules of procedure (<http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/ism1/>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Ethics, Justice and the Convention on Biological Diversity

By Balakrishna Pisupati and Doris Schroeder⁽¹⁾

Abstract

The International Year of Biodiversity (2010) ended on a very positive note for the global conservation community. History was heralded at the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10) in Nagoya, Japan.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

The Role of Ecosystems in Developing a Sustainable Green Economy

(UNEP, 2010) Released as the second issue of the UN Environment Programme's Policy Series on Ecosystem Management, the paper discusses how investments in ecosystems can result in benefits at the local and global levels, while at the same time enhancing people's livelihoods (<http://www.unep.org/ecosystemmanagement/UNEP/PolicySeriesonEcosystemManagement/tabid/5820/EntryId/51/The-role-of-ecosystems-in-developing-a-sustainable-Green-Economy.aspx>).

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► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Banner courtesy of UNCS D 2012

UNCS D Preparations Ongoing

Recent preparations for UNCS D have included the publication of a number of newsletters and background reports, and convening of meetings. The second issue of “Green Economy Update,” for example, notes the release of advance, unedited copies of two “companion reports,” the Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the Conference, and the Report of the Secretary-General on the Objectives and Themes of the Conference. It also reports that the forthcoming “Green Economy Report” from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which presents assessments of green sectors using economic analysis and modeling approaches, is due to be presented to the UNEP Governing Council meeting, taking place from 21-15 February 2011, in Nairobi, Kenya. Two reports already issued are: “Patents and clean energy: bridging the gap between evidence and policy,” by UNEP, the European Patent Office and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD); and “Fisheries Subsidies, Sustainable Development and the WTO,” by UNEP (<http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/uncsd-secretariat-issues-second-issue-of-green-economy-update/#more-56553>).

In addition, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) have prepared a Concept Note that outlines how UN Country Teams can support approximately 60 countries in preparations leading to the 2012 UNCS D (Rio+20) event (<http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/undesa-and-undp-propose-project-to-support-national-efforts-for-uncsd/#more-56800>).

In related news, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carib-

bean (ECLAC) organized a meeting of government-designated experts of Latin America and the Caribbean, under the title “A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.” Experts and officers from ECLAC, UNEP, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and others participated in the event. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the UNCS D offers a unique opportunity to present the elements of a new development paradigm, observing that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication must be discussed in the context of regional circumstances, which in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean includes addressing inequality. A distinction was made between ecological economy and green economy. It was stated that a green economy should lead to sustainable consumption choices through mechanisms for ensuring that the social and environmental costs of unsustainable choices were borne by the consumer (<http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/dmaah/noticias/noticias/4/41684/P41684.xml&xsl=/dmaah/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/dmaah/tpl/top-bottom.xsl>).

Preparations for CSD 19 Underway

Advance, unedited drafts of the Secretary-General’s Background Reports for the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM, 28 February-4 March 2011) and 19th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 19, 2-13 May 2011) have been released, and a briefing on preparations for these events was recently held at UN Headquarters.

Recently posted reports address policy options and actions for expediting progress in implementation of the the-

matic issues under discussion at CSD 19 (transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Patterns), as well as policy options and actions related to interlinkages and cross-cutting issues. Additional reports for the session include: the report from the Intersessional Senior Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Development of Lithium Resources in Latin America: Emerging Issues and Opportunities; the report from the Intersessional Meeting on Solid Waste Management in Africa; a compilation of major groups’ priorities for action on the CSD 19 thematic cluster of issues; and the draft programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 for the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_docucsd_19.shtml). An additional intersessional meeting that will feed into CSD 19 was the Annual General Meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals, and Sustainable Development, in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1-4 November 2010 (<http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/intergovernmental-forum-proposes-mining-policy-framework-for-csd-19/#more-56178>).

Also in preparation for the IPM and the CSD 19 sessions, an informal briefing was organized at UN Headquarters on 16 December 2010. The organization of work and preparations for each of these meetings was reviewed, including the intersessional meetings contributing to these sessions. It was noted that, on the final day of the IPM, a multistakeholder dialogue will discuss “advancing the implementation of sustainable development” and “expectations from CSD 19 within the context of Rio+20, given the apparent linkages between the themes of current cycle and green economy.” In January 2011, Panama will host an intersessional meeting on SCP (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_pdfs/csd-19/Summary-of-CSD-and-IPM-briefing.pdf).

► INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP and Global Mercury Partnership Convene Workshop, SCP Website Launched

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), together with the Global Mercury Partnership, convened the Global Forum on Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining (AGSM) from 7-9 December 2010, in Manila, the Philippines. Key messages from the Global Forum included: that AGSM is recognized as a complex global development presenting chal-

lenges and opportunities globally and is linked to broader social and environmental issues with external costs to society; the ASGM community can take concrete steps to reduce the mercury demand in the long and short term, including technical options for seeking mercury use and release reductions, as well as non-mercury technologies; and that lack of access to formal credit markets due to the informal nature of their practice makes financing a challenge for miners (IISD RS Sources).

In other UNEP news, the Programme’s Regional Office for North America (UNEP RONA) has launched a webpage that focuses on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the North American region. The webpage highlights SCP case studies from North America and serves as a platform for information on SCP in the region. It offers links to more information on UNEP RONA’s SCP work and other key regional SCP activities, consultations and meetings (http://www.rona.unep.org/about_unep_rona/scp/index.html).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

The meeting made several landmark decisions on issues of conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. Of these decisions, the adoption of the Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (termed the 'Nagoya Protocol on ABS') stands out as one of the most important achievements of the Convention.

With close to 16 years of negotiations on the issue of ABS, time has come for the contracting Parties to the CBD (193 countries as of January 2011) to implement ABS provisions in earnest. Simplistically put, the ABS Protocol represents the 'win-win' interests of both the developed and developing countries. The 'Grand Bargain' aims for a fair sharing equilibrium between the users and the providers of genetic resources. The CBD is an instrument of collaboration between Parties that aspires to achieve justice between generations as well as justice between nations: justice between generations through the conservation of biodiversity and justice between nations through the sharing of benefits between the providers and the users of genetic resources.

Nowhere are ethics and considerations of justice more powerful than at the global level, providing the foundation for forward-looking, widely supported, international legal frameworks aimed at improving livelihoods and contributing to sustainable development. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an urgent requirement for attaining intergenerational justice that demands sustained, engaged international collaboration.

With the Nagoya Protocol on ABS opening for signature in New York at the United Nations on the 2nd of February 2011, one needs to reflect on how countries can better understand and interpret the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol to ensure national self-interests balance with requirements of global justice. UNEP in collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire produced a report addressing the issues of ethics, justice and equity within the CBD in time for COP 10 to help focus on issues of ethics and equity in the final text of the Protocol. The report can be accessed at <http://unep.org/delc/PDF/publicationEthicsJusticeandCBD.pdf>

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"The report will make an excellent contribution towards enhancing our understanding of justice and the CBD. This issue is coming up repeatedly in discussions and it will be great to have a resource one can use for guidance."
Dr. Rachel Wynberg, Deputy Director Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town

"This is a new perspective for many CBD hands and I can't wait to hear their reactions. An excellent piece! I hope all those who read the report will react and hopefully think further."
Tim Hodges, Co-Chair, UN CBD Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing

Editor's note: MEA Bulletin invites articles from practitioners, MEAs and academics on issues that are of interest across the MEA community. Please contact the Editor, lynn@iisd.org, for further information.

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE



Image courtesy of the Government of South Africa

UNFCCC Focuses on Post-Cancún Activities

The UNFCCC Secretariat is finalizing meeting reports from the UN Climate Change Conference, which took place in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November-10 December 2010. The meeting consisted of the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) and the sixth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 6), as well as the 33rd sessions of both the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the 15th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the 13th session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group for Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA). In 2011, the UNFCCC Secretariat will focus on

activities relating to the implementation of the Cancún agreements and prepare for COP 17 and COP/MOP 7, which will take place in Durban, South Africa, at the end of the year.

In other news, as part of its routine activities, the UNFCCC Secretariat has published the national greenhouse gas inventory submission reports of Belarus and Australia (http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/3594.php#beg).

IPCC Recruiting Communications and Media Relations Programme Manager

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has published a vacancy announcement for a Communications and Media Relations Programme Manager. For the position, experience is required in defining and managing high-profile communication challenges,

as well as an ability to undertake effective media outreach programmes (<http://www.wmo.int/pages/vacancies/documents/1783E.pdf>).

62nd Meeting of ExCom Approves ODS Destruction Project

The 62nd meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montréal Protocol convened in Montréal, Canada, from 29 November-3 December 2010. For the first time, the ExCom considered and approved a large number of HCFC phase-out management plans (HPMPs), in line with the HCFC guidelines adopted at its 60th meeting. The ExCom also took a decision reiterating the inclusion of institutional strengthening funding in HPMPs is subject to the performance-based targets, and reminding Article 5 countries that institutional strengthening funding remains available as stand-alone projects. The ExCom also approved a pilot demonstration project on ozone depleting substance (ODS) waste management and disposal in Cuba, which is expected to provide lessons for future ODS disposal projects. The ExCom approved US\$525,200 to destroy a total of 45.3 metric tons of ODS waste (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/files/62/6262.pdf>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Building the Foundations for Sustainable Nutrient Management

(UNEP, 2010) Published by the UN Environment Programme on behalf of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM), this booklet focuses on the use, effects and management of two key nutrients, namely nitrogen and phosphorous. It commends the following cornerstones: building of a shared interest and agenda among and within countries; engaging stakeholders and building partnerships; and communicating and mainstreaming best practice tools and integrated approaches to guide cost effective decision making (http://www.gpa.unep.org/documents/building_the_foundations_for_english.pdf).

Environmental Effects of Ozone Depletion and its Interactions with Climate Change: 2010 Assessment

(UNEP, 2010) This report outlines the complex interactions between climate change and the ozone layer, including changes in atmospheric conditions that affect the chemical production and loss of stratospheric ozone (http://ozone.unep.org/Assessment_Panels/EEAP/EEAP_Executive_Summary_1_Nov_2010.pdf).

Latin America and the Caribbean - Atlas of Our Changing Environment

(UNEP, 2010) The Atlas includes over 200 satellite images to highlight the most pressing environmental issues in Latin America, and is expected to be used as a tool to formulate future actions and public policies on sustainable development (http://www.cathalac.org/lac_atlas/).

FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



ITTC-46 Chair Daniel Birchmeier gavelled decisions during the closing session of Council

ITTC 46 Agrees on Collaborative Initiative with CBD, Arrangements for Council Sessions

The 46th session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC 46) and the associated sessions of its four Committees, which convened from 13-18 December 2010, in Yokohama, Japan, concluded with compromises on two outstanding issues: the Collaborative Initiative between the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to conserve tropical forest biodiversity, and financial arrangements for hosting Council sessions outside of ITTO headquarters in Yokohama. After several rounds of discussion, Consumer and Producer groups decided that ITTC 47 will take place in Antigua, Guatemala, from 9-14 November 2011. ITTC 48 will take place in Yokohama in November 2012, and ITTC 49 will take place in Libreville, Gabon, in 2013. In preparation for ITTC 47, the Consumer group elected Joachim Bilé Allogho, Gabon, as Chair, and the Producer group elected Clara Boonstra, Netherlands, as Vice-Chair of the session. The Council adopted several other decisions, including on: the selection of Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities to receive funding; the re-appointment

of Emmanuel Ze Meka as Executive Director until 5 November 2015; the celebration of International Year of Forests (IYF) and ITTO's 25th anniversary in 2011; procedures to respond to additional funding opportunities; and a multi-donor mechanism to facilitate enhanced cooperation between the ITTO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/ittc46/>).

UNCCD Organizes Workshop on Impact Indicators

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) organized a technical workshop on impact indicator refinement from 16-17 December 2010, in Bonn, Germany. Scientists, experts, managers and practitioners at the event discussed how to refine the set of impact indicators that was provisionally accepted at the ninth session of the Conference of Parties to the UNCCD. Participants also shared their experiences in using impact indicators, particularly in the context of multilateral environmental agreements. Presentations, which are posted online, addressed, *inter alia*: UNCCD impact indicators; indicators under the Convention on Biological Diversity and potential synergies with the UNCCD; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and terrestrial ECVs (essential climatic variables) synergies with the UNCCD; Global Environment Facility land degradation focal area indicators; the approach of the Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel; European Environment Agency impact indicators; the Food and Agriculture Organization Land Degradation Assessment in the Drylands project experience; and development of a global indicator system (<http://www.unccd.int/science/announce/ImpactIndicators.php>).

CHEMICALS AND WASTES

SAICM Invites Comments on Data Protection Tool

The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is requesting comments on the recently developed electronic data collection tool. According to SAICM, data reported by stakeholders will be aggregated on a regional and global basis and the Secretariat will analyze the information reports and identifying major trends. Comments on the tool should be submitted by 31 January 2011 to saicm@unep.org (<http://www.saicm.org/index.php?menuid=34&pageid=299>).



Logo courtesy of the Stockholm Convention

Stockholm Releases Second Round of National Reports

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has released the National Reports submitted by parties pursuant to article 15 of the Convention. Reports were submitted by 40 of the 172 parties to the Convention and include information on countries' progress in implementing the requirements of the Convention (<http://chm.pops.int/Countries/NationalRe>

[ports/SecondRoundofPartyReports/tabid/1315/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://chm.pops.int/Countries/NationalReports/SecondRoundofPartyReports/tabid/1315/language/en-US/Default.aspx)).

Rotterdam Releases Decision Guidance Documents

The Rotterdam Convention Secretariat has released Decision Guidance Documents (DGD) on the candidate chemicals to be assessed by the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (COP 5), scheduled to convene from 20-24 June 2011, for listing on Annex III. These chemicals include chrysotile asbestos, endosulfan, alachlor and aldicarb (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=b&id=171&sid=27&tid=41>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD Closes International Year of Biodiversity, Prepares for Upcoming Meetings

The International Year of Biodiversity was closed in a ceremony in Kanazawa, Japan, on 18 December 2010. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement on the occasion, calling for building on the momentum generated in 2010 (http://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/kikaku/closing2010/index_e.html).



Closing Event for the International Year of Biodiversity
Date: Sat 18th Dec 2010, Sun 19th December 2010
Venue: Kanazawa International Convention Center
Photo: UN Photo/Markus Schloesser

IYB Closing Event
(graphic courtesy of the Ishikawa Prefectural Government)

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has circulated the official report, including all decisions and outcomes, of the tenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP 10). The official text of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the CBD has been made available on the UN Treaty Section website in all UN official languages, in preparation for the ceremony of its opening for signature, to be held on 2 February 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-10/official/cop-10-27-en.pdf>; <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2010/11/20101127%2020-08%20PM/Ch-XXVII-8-b.pdf>).

In other ABS-related news, the Secretariat has initiated preparations for the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the ABS Protocol, to be held from 6-10 June 2011, in Montréal, Canada, by inviting parties to designate a focal point for the Committee and to nominate two representatives from each of the UN regions to serve on its Bureau. The Secretariat has also circulated the meeting's agenda, including capacity building, awareness-raising and compli-

ance-related issues (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2010/ntf-2010-220-abs-fp-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2010/ntf-2010-224-abs-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-001-abs-icnp1-en.pdf>).

In preparation for other upcoming meetings, the Secretariat has invited nominations for the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020, which is anticipated to meet in June 2011; and for the Asia-Pacific regional consultation and capacity-building workshop on REDD+ including relevant biodiversity safeguards, scheduled for 15-18 March 2011, in Singapore City, Singapore (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2010/ntf-2010-219-strategic-plan-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2010/ntf-2010-218-redd-en.pdf>).

Finally, the CBD Secretariat and BirdLife International signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 December 2010, in Tokyo, Japan, to support implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2010/ntf-2010-226-birdlife-en.pdf>).

CMS Finalizes Action Plan on Migratory Grassland Birds of South America

The Convention on Migratory Species of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP/CMS), in collaboration with BirdLife International and Asociación Guyra Paraguay, have adopted an action plan to ensure the conservation of migratory grassland birds and their habitats in South America. The action plan focuses on protecting and managing habitats for the migratory grassland birds by identifying new protected areas, providing financial incentives to local cattle ranchers, coordinating monitoring and research of grassland biodiversity among countries, conducting

threat assessments, raising awareness, and enhancing international cooperation towards developing a legal framework for the preservation of grasslands. The agreement is the result of a one-day meeting in Asunción, Paraguay, between government representatives, scientists and conservationists (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2010/pressreleases/CMS_Grassland_Birds_South_America_clean.pdf).

In other CMS-related news, the Secretariat visited Tunisia to observe activities undertaken toward the conservation of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, a project under the framework of a Concerted Action approved by the CMS Scientific Council and funded by the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2010/12_dec/tunisia_reintroduction.pdf).

CITES Prepares for Animals Committee Meeting

In preparation for the 25th meeting of the Animals Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the CITES Secretariat has issued a notification including pertinent information, including on registration, documentation and financial assistance (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E002.pdf>).

In addition, the Secretariat has issued a notification highlighting the relevant decisions of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on non-detriment findings, including the outcomes of the International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings. Following a request from the Animals and Plants Committees, parties are urged to report specific findings and observations on the outcomes of the workshop, including how they could be improved and cases where they have proven to be particularly useful (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E004.pdf>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

IDB Approves Regional Climate Change Capacity Building Project

On 4 January 2010, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a regional climate change capacity building project to support countries in Latin America in addressing the impacts of climate change on their economies. The US\$1 million project will provide technical capacity to countries in Latin America to help them attain a deep understanding of the relationship between climate change and economic, social and environmental development, as well as the existence of economic, so-

cial and institutional conditions, so that the necessary policies may be put into place (<http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project,1303.html?id=RG-T1910>).

GEF CEO Endorses Projects on Protected Areas, Integrated Resource Management and Biosafety

During the month of December, Monique Barbut, Global Environment Facility (GEF) CEO, endorsed several biodiversity related projects prior to their final adoption and implementation by GEF Agencies. Full sized projects endorsed include: a wetlands conserva-

tion project in Sierra Leone; sustainable forest, biodiversity and water management in Ecuador's Ibarra-San Lorenzo Corridor; strengthening the conservation role of Togo's national system of protected areas; integrating the sustainable management of fauna corridors into Niger's protected area system; strengthening Seychelles' protected area system through NGO management modalities; and development of national monitoring and control system for living modified organisms and invasive alien species in Cameroon (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/geffsp/geffmsp>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

New Ramsar Sites Designated; Advisory Mission Conducted in Spain

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) reported that the Governments of the US, Belarus and Italy have designated new Wetlands of International Importance. The US designated Humbug Marsh in Michigan as its 28th Wetland of International Importance; Italy designated Palude del Brusà – Le Vallette, an alluvial plain, as its 52nd Wetland of International Importance; and Belarus designated the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve as its ninth Wetland of International Importance (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-rs-2december/main/ramsar/1-26%5E24892_4000_2__; http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-rsbelarus/main/ramsar/1-26%5E24891_4000_2__).

In other Ramsar news, from 28 September-1 October 2010, the Ramsar Secretariat executed its 68th Advisory Mission in Mallorca, Spain, to assess the conflictual situation created by the development of a golf course in a former dune area at the edge of the coastal Ramsar Site S'Albufera de Mallorca. The mission consisted of four experts,

representing the regional authorities of the Balearic Islands, the Spanish Ramsar administrative authority, and the Convention Secretariat. It analyzed the likely impacts of the golf course development on the ecology and hydrology of the wetland ecosystem, and provided advice about the possible sustainability of the golf course project. Based on interviews with stakeholders and documentation provided by different sources, the Mission formulated 12 recommendations in a report that was formally approved by the Spanish Ramsar Authority. The report concludes that the ancient dune system affected by the golf course development is a functional part of the Ramsar Site ecosystem of international importance, and that it is therefore advisable to rapidly restore its degraded functions for the sake of the unique elements of Mediterranean biodiversity that depend on this site. The report further proposes to establish a dialogue between the different interest groups to find sustainable tourist development solutions (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/es/ramsar-news-ramrpt68/main/ramsar/1-26%5E24890_4000_2__).

Furthermore, the Ramsar Secretariat has reported that Albania's Small

Grants Fund Project, titled "Bringing together all stakeholders of the Lake Shkodra Region," was successfully concluded a few months ago. The project, which was funded through a contribution by the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, aimed to improve the management of the Lake Shkodra Region by implementing Ramsar management principles, create awareness, and strengthen the institutional cooperation between Albania and Montenegro (http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-sgfalbania-monte/main/ramsar/1-26%5E24900_4000_0__).

UNDOALOS Updates Regular Process Website

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has updated the webpage of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (regular process). The webpage includes information on the General Assembly *Ad Hoc* Working Group of the Whole, scheduled to take place from 14-18 February 2011, in New York, US (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm).



Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, Belarus' ninth wetland of international importance (photos courtesy of the Ramsar Secretariat)

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **CSD Intersessional Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production:** 13-14 January 2011. Panama City, Panama. http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml
- **Second Meeting of the ITPGR Working Group on Compliance:** 17-18 January 2011. Rome, Italy. http://www.planttreaty.org/gbnex_en.htm
- **Joint IPCC WGI and WGII Expert Meeting on Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Biology and Ecosystems:** 17-19 January 2011. Okinawa, Japan. <http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/meetings/workshops/index.html>
- **First Meeting on Implementation of CBD Plan of Action:** 17-19 January 2011. Montpellier, France. <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>
- **Effective Participation in the Work of the POPs Review Committee (POPRC) and Chemicals Review Committee (CRC):** 19-21 January 2011. Colombo, Sri Lanka. <http://www.pic.int/PublicCalendar/Calendar.htm>
- **Ninth Session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 9):** 24 January-4 February 2011. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff9/>
- **Second Session of the INC to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury:** 24-28 January 2011. Chiba, Japan. <http://www.iisd.ca/mercury/inc2/>
- **Third Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns:** 26-27 January 2011. Cairo, Egypt. <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/events/>