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# MEA BULLETIN

A newsletter on the activities of key multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their secretariats  
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## RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

### ► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

#### CITES STANDING COMMITTEE CONVENES



The 54th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee had a record attendance of more than 300 delegates.

The 54th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) convened from 2-6 October 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland, attracting over 300 delegates. The meeting's agenda included: the CITES Strategic Plan for 2008-2013; preparation for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-14); financial matters; review of the scientific committees; and trade and conservation issues in species including great apes, elephants, tigers, sturgeon and bigleaf mahogany. The SC approved the Secretariat's estimated expenditures for 2006, and set a deadline for the submission of comments on the CITES Strategic Plan 2008-2013. It also agreed, *inter alia*, to: defer consideration of trade in tigers to COP-14; review timber trade in Peru and Malaysia at future SC meetings; designate Japan as a trading partner for the one-off sale of ivory stockpiles from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, but not to proceed with the sale at this point; and withdraw the recommendation on suspending trade in the four Caspian Sea sturgeon species, but not to revise the 2006 caviar export quotas (<http://www.iisd.ca/cites/sc54/>).

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#### RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

##### THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2007: DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEXT GENERATION

(World Bank, 2006) The World Bank released this report during its Annual Meetings in Singapore. It suggests that developing countries that invest in better education, healthcare and job training for young people between the ages of 12 and 24 could produce surging economic growth and reduce poverty (<http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2007>).

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#### GUEST ARTICLE

##### Piloting synergistic implementation of MEAs in Africa

By Alexandra Karekaho, UNEP Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF)<sup>1</sup>

##### Abstract

For the last decade, "Synergy" has been a frequently used catch word in the environment and natural resources sector. Synergy is seen as the way forward for effective environmental management.

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► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

**NORTHERN CETACEANS AND SAIGA ANTELOPE MEETINGS HELD, CMS STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINATES ADDITIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCILLORS**

The first session of the fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) – an agreement adopted under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) – took place from 18-20 September 2006, in Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands. The Meeting was adjourned and is expected to reconvene for a second session, to be held in The Hague, the Netherlands, in mid-December 2006. The meeting laid the groundwork for an increase in ASCOBANS activities in the coming years. Participants discussed and adopted resolutions on numerous issues, including: the implementation of the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan); the further development of a recovery plan for the North Sea; the extension of the agreement area approved at MOP-4 (and expected to enter into force in 2007); the possible extension of the scope of the agreement to cover all species of cetaceans (including great whales) in the area; scientific workshops; and outreach and educational work. The second session of MOP-5 in December 2006 is expected to focus on budgetary issues and institutional arrangements for the Secretariat (IISD sources; <http://www.ascobans.org/index0501.html>).

The first meeting of the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*), a cooperative initiative between CMS and CITES, was held on 25-26 September, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was preceded by a technical workshop, held on 23 September. In development for almost five years under the auspices of CMS, the MoU entered into effect on 24 September, when Kazakhstan signed, joining Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The technical workshop and the MoU meeting have provided the possibility to collect new information on the Saiga's conservation status: the overview report indicates that the



The striped dolphin. Photo courtesy of ASCOBANS.

previous severe decline in the global Saiga population has stabilized since 2002 with increases reported for some populations. The meeting also endorsed a medium term international work programme, which prioritizes activities under the MoU's action plan on a range wide and population basis, and provides a road map for the range States, consumer/trading countries, interested organizations and the donor community to organize their activities in support of the MoU's implementation. Finally, the meeting helped achieve a sense of ownership in the process and partnership within the research and conservation communities both within and between the range States and consumer countries such as China (IISD sources; [http://www.cms.int/species/saiga/1st\\_saiga\\_range\\_states\\_meeting.htm](http://www.cms.int/species/saiga/1st_saiga_range_states_meeting.htm); [http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/Saiga\\_sep06\\_E.pdf](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/Saiga_sep06_E.pdf)).

The 31st meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (28-29 September, Bonn, Germany) heard reports on the accession of new Parties to the Convention and on intersessional activities since November 2005, as well as reports from Committee members and observers. It also discussed: issues regarding the 2010 biodiversity target; cooperation with other conventions; developments regarding the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza; and a work plan and priorities for 2007-2008 and beyond. The Committee identified as a top priority the development of new agreements regarding grassland birds of South America and cetaceans in the Eastern Atlantic. Amongst existing Agreements, it prioritized those protecting Saiga antelope, the Central Asian Flyway, and Gorillas in western, central and east Africa, western African turtles and elephants, and Pacific Island cetaceans. The meeting also discussed a high-level hunting party in Niger in September 2006, resulting in the presumed killing of a large number of protected animals. A closed session, reserved for Committee members, observer States and senior CMS Secretariat officers, agreed on the conditions for a possible merger of the ASCOBANS Secretariat with the CMS Secretariat, changes to Secretariat manpower and organization, and a

resolution regarding additional scientific councillors, approving the nominations of Zeb Hogan, Barry Baker and Alfred Oteng-Yeboah as Scientific Councillors for fish, by-catch and African fauna respectively. It was proposed that the next meeting of the Standing Committee would take place from 6-7 September 2007, while CMS COP-9 would convene from 9-21 November 2008. The meeting concluded with agreement on a statement to support the new East Asia/Australasian flyway partnership (IISD sources; [http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/31st\\_stc\\_meeting/31st\\_stc\\_documents.htm](http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/31st_stc_meeting/31st_stc_documents.htm)).

**CBD SECRETARIAT RELEASES MEETING REPORTS, ANNOUNCES NEW BCH FEATURES**

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat has released the report of the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Consortium of scientific partners on biodiversity (8-9 September 2006, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, UK). The Consortium consists of the National Museum of Natural History of France, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development of Saudi Arabia. The meeting reviewed relevant ongoing activities of partner institutions and identified priority areas for collaborative activities. Participants also finalized the organizational structure and *modus operandi* of the consortium (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/biodiv/cspbsc-01/official/cspbsc-01-01-en.pdf>). The CBD Secretariat has also released the report of the meeting of the Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 biodiversity target (15 September 2006, Gland, Switzerland) (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/biodiv/hoatf-01/official/hoatf-01-03-en.pdf>). Finally, the CBD Secretariat has announced new features available in the October 2006 release of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), including: a section on information-sharing, which provides improved access to the Biosafety Information Resource Centre, the recently released directory of biosafety organizations, and a database of country profiles; a facility to search all types of decisions, declarations and notifications, and information about finding field trials not covered by the Advance Informed Agreement procedure; and a section on reporting (<http://bch.biodiv.org/news/news.shtml>).



Logo courtesy of CBD



Long-finned pilot whales. Photo courtesy of ASCOBANS.



RESEARCH AND RESOURCES *(cont.)***CARROTS AND STICKS FOR STARTERS: CURRENT TRENDS AND APPROACHES IN MANDATORY AND VOLUNTARY STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

(UNEP, 2006) UNEP jointly prepared this report with KPMG's Global Sustainability Services. Following an overview of selected standards and case studies from five regions, the report argues in favor of an approach coupling mandatory regulation and voluntary standards for better corporate reporting on environmental and other non-financial performance (<http://www.unep.fr/outreach/reporting/docs/Public-UNEP-KPMG-Report-FIN.pdf>).

**THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT: TRENDS AND PROCESSES**

(UNEP and GPA, 2006) The UNEP/GPA Coordination office released this report, which will be presented to governments attending the second intergovernmental review of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) (16-20 October, Beijing, China). The report says good progress has been achieved in persistent organic pollutants, radioactive substances and oils. It notes mixed progress in heavy metals and sediment mobilization, and worse progress in sewage, nutrients, marine litter and the physical alteration and destruction of habitats. The report estimates that an additional \$56 billion is needed annually to address the global wastewater problem and qualifies sewage as the most serious issue within the GPA framework ([http://www.gpa.unep.org/document\\_lib/en/pdf/report2-webversion\\_\(global\\_so\).pdf](http://www.gpa.unep.org/document_lib/en/pdf/report2-webversion_(global_so).pdf)).

**SCIDEV.NET DESERT SCIENCE RESOURCE**

(SciDev.Net, 2006) This online resource offers a collection of articles on deserts and drylands, including peer-reviewed policy briefs on issues such as human impact, access to water, conservation of biodiversity and the role of international conventions (<http://www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierItem&Dossier=25&CFID=2067561&CFTOKEN=98255093>).

## ► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

**OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES DOCUMENTS FOR UPCOMING MOP**

In preparation for the 18th Meeting of the Parties (MOP), which will convene from 30 October-3 November in New Delhi, India, the Ozone Secretariat has released a number of documents, including: the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel's (TEAP) final evaluation of methyl bromide critical use nominations; draft decisions on methyl bromide regarding laboratory and analytical critical uses, and on cooperation with the International Plant Protection Convention on quarantine and pre-shipment; a feasibility study on monitoring the transboundary movement of ozone-depleting substances (ODS); information provided by the parties regarding compliance; the report of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund; the report of the Ozone Secretariat's workshop on the IPCC/TEAP special report; and a revised proposal on the disclosure of interest guidelines for the Protocol's technical bodies. TEAP's final evaluation of methyl bromide critical use nominations is likely to be a particularly important agenda item at the 18th MOP. The evaluation has recommended transition times for some nominated critical uses that are different than those in parties' nominations, prompting a minority statement on the part of four members of the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee in the released evaluation of nominations (<http://ozone.unep.org/highlights.asp>).

**UNFCCC SECRETARIAT ISSUES DOCUMENTS, CDM EXECUTIVE BOARD CONSIDERS WORK PLAN**

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat's preparations for the UN Climate Change Conference in Nairobi in November are continuing, with officials notifying countries of a 13 October deadline for nominations for representatives ([http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_12/guide\\_for\\_participants/items/3794.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_12/guide_for_participants/items/3794.php)). The Secretariat has also published a number of pre-meeting materials in recent days, including an addendum on the in-session workshop, submissions from South Africa and Canada on the review of the Protocol under Article 9, and a report of the workshop on reporting methodologies in the context of Protocol Article 3.14 (adverse impacts of emissions reductions on developing countries) (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/awg2/eng/misc02a01.pdf>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/cmp2/eng/misc03a01.pdf>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/sbi/eng/27.pdf>).

The Executive Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) convened for its 26th meeting in Bonn, Germany, from 26-29 September 2006. It focused on the work plan, and considered elements such as accreditation of operational entities, methodologies for baselines and monitoring, and issues relating to CDM afforestation and reforestation project activities (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/026/>).

## ► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

**RAMSAR ANNOUNCES DESIGNATION OF WETLAND SITES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE, POSTS CREHO PROGRESS REPORT**

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced that Hungary has designated three new sites as wetlands of international importance. The first site, Nyirkai-Hany, is part of the Fertő-Hanság National Park, which was recently restored to create a new wetland area that contributes to maintaining and restoring biodiversity. The two other sites, Rába valley (Rába-völgy) and Felső-Kiskunsági szikes puszták (Upper Kiskunság alkaline steppes), extend the existing site now renamed as Lakes of Tata ([http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.hungary\\_nyirkai.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.hungary_nyirkai.htm)). The Ramsar Secretariat has also re-



New Hungarian Wetland of International Importance. Photo courtesy Tobias Salathé, Ramsar.

leased the progress report from the Ramsar Regional Center for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO) in Panama, which



New Hungarian Wetland of International Importance. Photo courtesy Tobias Salathé, Ramsar.

details the activities of the Center for the period January to September 2006 ([http://www.ramsar.org/creho/creho\\_report\\_2006\\_e.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/creho/creho_report_2006_e.pdf)).

**UNDOALOS RELEASES FISH STOCK REVIEW CONFERENCE REPORT**

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has released the Report of the Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which took place from 22-26 May 2006, in New York, US (A/CONF.210/2006/15) ([http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/review\\_conf\\_fish\\_stocks.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm)).

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## GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

This is based on the "assumption that the global environment is naturally synergistic and that any approach to environmental problem solving would be more efficient and more effective if this factor were used to greater advantage." More so, most of the environmental-related agreements and treaties, in addition to UN conferences such as the Rio Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, call for a more synergistic approach to environmental management if poverty reduction and sustainable development are to be attained. Many agencies have responded to this call and put in place measures and initiatives to this effect.

One example of such a project is UNEPs' efforts in four African countries to build capacity to implement the Rio multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), i.e. the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). With funding from the Belgium Government, DGEF is assisting Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in a pilot project for "Capacity Building to Alleviate Poverty through Synergistic Implementation of the Rio Multilateral Environment Agreements."

The project has two main objectives: 1) Improve capacity to report, plan and implement the MEAs in an integrated manner and focus on poverty alleviation goals through training, access to information and sharing of lessons and best practices; and 2) Demonstrate the value added of implementing MEAs synergistically while benefiting local communities and ecosystems.

Five major outputs are anticipated from the project. The first is the establishment of an operational National Conventions Coordination Committee (NCCC) to provide a framework for individual and institutional collaboration for the synergistic implementation of MEAs. Second, a *Manual on Integrated Reporting and Coordinated Response to the Conventions* will be developed. Third, convention focal points and environment practitioners will receive training on MEAs and synergy issues.

*Continued on page 5*

## ▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

### IMO CELEBRATES WORLD MARITIME DAY 2006, MARINE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER SHIP RECYCLING

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has celebrated the World Maritime Day, marked annually on 28 September. This year took the theme "Technical Cooperation: IMO's response to the 2005 World Summit" (<http://www.imo.org/>).

The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) will hold its 55th session from 9-13 October 2006 in London, UK, and will consider a draft ship recycling convention, as well as ballast water management and air pollution from ships. Other items on the MEPC's agenda include amendments

to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention), in particular the designation of the Southern South African sea area as a Special Area under Annex I of the Convention, and the revision of MARPOL Annex III Regulations for the prevention of pollution by harmful substances carried by sea in packaged form. The MEPC will also consider amendments to the Guidelines for the transport and handling of limited amounts of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk on offshore supply vessels and the Draft revised Guidelines on implementation of effluent standards and performance tests for sewage treatment plants (<http://www.imo.org/>).

## ▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

### WTO HOLDS PUBLIC FORUM 2006

The World Trade Organization (WTO) held its Public Forum 2006 under the title "What WTO for the XXIst Century?" on 25-26 September 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. The forum gathered a wide array of civil society organizations to voice their concerns about the failure of the Doha Round and the future of the international trade regime. In a panel on opportunities and challenges for further strengthening the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment in the Doha round, Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director, noted the need to move forward in multilateral trade negotiations, as the suspension of Doha translated into the suspension of the global environmental governance discussions. Among other issues, participants discussed: the design of a sustainable development roadmap for the WTO; sustainability and environmental impact assessment of trade negotiations; and trade, environment and development implications of fisheries subsidies ([http://www.wto.org/english/forums\\_e/public\\_forum\\_e/programme\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum_e/programme_e.htm)).



Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director

### GEF PRESENTS COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE FOCAL AREAS

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has followed up the GEF Replenishment Agreement with a table of resources to be made available for the biodiversity and climate change focal areas (US\$1,000 million each), according to the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF). Allocations include US\$100 million to support projects within the Small Grants Program and cross-cutting capac-

ity building programs and projects, and an equal amount to support regional and global projects in both focal areas. The remaining US\$1800 million will be distributed among a group of countries with individual country-indicative allocations and the rest of the countries as "a group" ([http://gefweb.org/Documents/RAF\\_Public\\_Disclosure\\_Document\\_15Sep2006.pdf](http://gefweb.org/Documents/RAF_Public_Disclosure_Document_15Sep2006.pdf)).

### WORLD BANK FUNDS AVIAN FLU PREVENTION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, AND SOLAR THERMAL POWER IN MEXICO

The World Bank recently approved a US\$13 million grant to the West Bank and Gaza, supported in part by the World Bank's Avian and Human Influenza Facility, for a project to minimize threats posed to humans by avian influenza in domestic poultry (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21065228~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>). The World Bank has also approved a grant for US\$49.35 million to install a Hybrid Solar Thermal Power Plant in Mexico. The Agua Prieta II project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and is set to be the first Integrated Solar Combined Cycle System using solar parabolic trough technology to enter the electricity market in Mexico and Latin America. (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21081484~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

### IDB SUPPORTS INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CHILE

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a US\$45.2 million loan for the second phase of the "Orígenes Program" for the integral development of 1,000 rural indigenous communities. The project will support intercultural bilingual education, intercultural medicine and productive projects (<http://www.iadb.org/news/articledetail.cfm?artid=3327&language=En>).



## GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Fourth, a cross-cutting information site (website/portal) will be developed to disseminate lessons learned and best practices. And fifth, a Micro Grants Programme that demonstrates MEA synergies and the linkages between MEAs and poverty at the community level will be established.

Read the Full Article at:  
<http://www.iisd.ca/MEA-l/guestarticle14.htm>

*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](mailto:lynn@iisd.org), for further information.*

<sup>1</sup> United Nations University (UNU). 1999. *Inter-Linkages: Synergies and Co-ordination Between Multilateral Environmental Agreements*. Tokyo, Japan.

## ► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**DSD ORGANIZES MEETINGS ON HYDROGEN ENERGY AND INDICATORS**

The International Seminar on the Hydrogen Economy for Sustainable Development was co-organized by the Government of Iceland and the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). It convened in Reykjavik, Iceland, from 28-29 September 2006, and provided an opportunity for energy policy makers and representatives from governments, industry and academia, from both developed and developing countries, to exchange information on recent progress in the development and application of hydrogen energy technologies. The seminar also provided participants an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the sustainable development and use of geothermal energy in Iceland. Over 80 participants from 20 countries heard presentations on the conditions

for energy development in various developing countries and explored possibilities for expanded international cooperation. A report of the Seminar will be available soon (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/energy/op/workshops.htm>).

DSD also gathered 30 experts from developing and developed countries as well as from international organizations to participate in an expert group meeting on indicators of sustainable development (ISD) in New York from 3-4 October 2006. Participants finalized the review of the ISD of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD). The meeting agreed on a revised set of indicators, which will be published to provide improved guidance for countries to develop, implement and review their national ISD. The meeting also discussed avenues for a widespread dissemination and adaptation of these indicators by countries (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/isd.htm>).

## ► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**UNGA DISCUSSES MDGs AND ENVIRONMENT**

On 2 October 2006, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) discussed the proposal by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to incorporate the 2010 biodiversity target into the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was contained in his 2006 Report on the Work of the Organization. The US expressed concern about amending the MDGs that were identified in the outcome of the 2005 World Summit as those that had been agreed at the 2000 Millennium Summit. The Netherlands expressed "full support" for the inclusion of new MDG targets in the Secretary-General's report, and encouraged the Secretariat to begin to formulate the indicators that would measure progress in the new goals and further develop the framework for their implementation. Ethiopia supported the proposed new goal. IUCN-the World Conservation Union recommended that the anticipated recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System Wide Coherence relating to environmental matters – in particular water, desertification, biodiversity, climate change and deforestation – be taken up in developing organizations' work programmes (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10510.doc.htm>).

UNGA President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa has outlined the work programme for the Assembly's 61st session and announced an informal thematic debate for the UN, donor and recipi-



UNGA President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa. Photo courtesy of UN News Centre.

ent countries, NGOs and the private sector, focusing on global development. Emphasizing the importance of all aspects of the UN reform process, she proposed that the debate, to be held by the end of December 2006, review practical measures and strategies aimed to advance efforts to achieve the MDGs ([www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=20169&Cr=general&Cr1=assembly](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=20169&Cr=general&Cr1=assembly)). In a letter to the permanent missions (5 October 2006) on the work programme, Rashed Al Khalifa proposed resuming UNGA consultations on environmental governance after the release of the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, in light of the interconnection between some aspects of the report and the environmental issues considered by the UNGA consultations.

**UNEP ADDRESSES POST-CONFLICT ASSESSMENT, HONORS GRASSROOTS ANTI-DESERTIFICATION INITIATIVES**

An international team of experts led by UNEP has started a post-conflict environmental assessment in Lebanon. The team's work will add to the ongoing assessment of the oil spill on the Lebanese coast, and focus on wider impacts on underground and surface water supplies, coastal contamination and land fertility ([www.unep-map.org/archivio/all\\_languages/webdocs/press/PressRelease\\_61002\\_LebanonAssessmentUNEPmission.doc](http://www.unep-map.org/archivio/all_languages/webdocs/press/PressRelease_61002_LebanonAssessmentUNEPmission.doc)). UNEP also has announced that it will award the 2006 Sasakawa Prize to two grassroots initiatives involved with combating desertification and land degradation. Rodrigo Vivas Rosas of the Inter-institutional Consortium

for Sustainable Agriculture in Colombia and the Tenadi Cooperative Group in Mauritania will receive the prize on 30 October 2006 (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=487&ArticleID=5361&l=en>).

**UNEP-GRID ARENDAL HOSTS MEAs FOR SEMINAR ON ARCTIC**

UNEP-GRID Arendal and the standing committee for Parliamentarians of the Arctic region co-hosted a High-Level Seminar on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and their Relevance in the Arctic in Arendal, Norway, from 21-22 September 2006. Participants included representatives of the CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar, Basel Convention, UNEP Regional Seas Programme, the UNFCCC, Espoo Convention, Aarhus Convention, Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention on Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) as well as representatives of the Arctic parliamentarians, UNEP WWF and representatives of Arctic indigenous peoples. The discussions focused on the role of the MEAs in the Arctic and how to increase their effectiveness. Among the solutions discussed were the importance of promoting better outreach to politicians and the community, dialogue at the national level between convention implementers, and use of the unique structures of the Arctic region, such as the Arctic Council ([http://www.ramsar.org/wm/w.n.unep-gridarendal\\_arctic.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wm/w.n.unep-gridarendal_arctic.htm); <http://polar.grida.no/activities.cfm?pageID=3>).

## ► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

**ROTTERDAM CONVENTION CONSIDERS CHRYSOTILE ASBESTOS**

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC COP-3) (9-13 October 2006, Geneva, Switzerland) has gathered officials from over 100 governments to decide whether to add chrysotile asbestos – which accounts for some 94% of global asbestos consumption – to a trade “watch list” that already contains 39 hazardous substances, including all other forms of asbestos (<http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pic/cop3>).

**STOCKHOLM CONVENTION PREPARES FOR BAT/BEP MEETING**

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has announced that the date and venue for the Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Best Available Technologies and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) have changed. The meeting will be held in Geneva, Swit-

zerland from 19-24 November 2006, and the agenda has recently been published ([http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/bat\\_bep/EGBATBEP2/meetingdocs/Provisional%20agenda\\_2\\_1\\_rev.pdf](http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/bat_bep/EGBATBEP2/meetingdocs/Provisional%20agenda_2_1_rev.pdf)). The Secretariat has also posted a test website of the prototype of the Electronic Reporting System (online ERS). The website is addressed to Stockholm Convention Official Contact Points and governmental officers responsible for national reporting, providing them with the opportunity to make preliminary tests before entering real data in the system, and will be available until 15 October 2006 (<http://www.pops.int/instructions/index.htm>).

**BASEL CONVENTION SECRETARIAT HOLDS EXPANDED BUREAU MEETING**

The Basel Convention Secretariat held the Third Meeting of the Expanded Bureau of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7) in Geneva, Switzerland, from 6-7 October 2006. Participants discussed preparations for the upcoming COP-8, along with requests for guidance and

organizational matters (<http://www.basel.int/meetings/frsetmain.php?meetingId=2&sessionId=34&languageId=1>). The Secretariat has announced that a Pre-session Meeting of the Small Intersessional Working Group on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Other Technical Matters will convene on 26 November 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya.

**SAICM SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR QSP MEETING**

The SAICM Secretariat has posted documents for the Second Meeting of the Quick Start Programme (QSP) of the Trust Fund Implementation Committee (18 October 2006, Paris, France) ([http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsp/qsp\\_tf2/qsp\\_tf2.htm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsp/qsp_tf2/qsp_tf2.htm)). The Secretariat has also announced that the Czech Republic and UNEP Chemicals Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, with support from Germany, are organizing a symposium on illegal international traffic in hazardous chemicals (6-8 November 2006, Prague-Pruhonice, Czech Republic) (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/uneppsaicm/default.html>).

## ► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

**UNCCD HOSTS MEETING TO SELECT DROUGHT MANAGEMENT CENTRE HOST**

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) hosted a meeting with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at which Slovenia was selected to host the new Drought Management Centre for South-Eastern Europe. The Centre will: serve as an operational centre for South-Eastern Europe for drought preparedness, monitoring and management; prepare drought monitoring and forecast products; promote and strengthen technical and scientific capacity for drought preparedness, monitoring and management in participating countries; and help implement UNCCD in drought preparedness, monitoring and management, in particular to work out national drought strategies (<http://www.wmo.int/news/news.html>).

**UNFF PREPARES FOR EXPERT MEETING, ADDRESSES FOREST OWNERSHIP IN WEB FORUM**

In preparation for the *ad hoc* expert group meeting that will consider the content of the non-legally binding instrument (11-15 December 2006, New York, US), the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat has posted a provisional agenda and the terms of reference for the group's work (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-nlbi.html>). The Secretariat has also posted the third discussion topic in a series of online discussion fora. The latest discussion, which is soliciting comments from 6-13 October 2006, focuses on the question “How do ownership structures affect sustainable forest management: what strategies can be considered to secure forest tenure?” (<http://esaconf.un.org/WB/?boardID=unff>).

**ITTO-SPONSORED CDM WORKSHOP CONVENES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Ghana Forestry Commission and the Forest Research Institute of Ghana have hosted an international workshop on the CDM that considered opportunities and challenges for the forest sector in Sub-Saharan tropical Africa (2-5 October 2006, Accra, Ghana). The workshop covered a range of issues related to investment opportunities in natural forest ecosystems and renewable energy in Sub-Saharan Africa. International experts, potential investors and other stakeholders discussed strategies to assist Sub-Saharan Africa's involvement in forestry-related CDM projects and activities to mitigate the impacts of climate change (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=1136>).

## ► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Mary Pat Silveira reached the UN's mandatory retirement age and has left the **UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)**, where she was the Chief of the National Information, Monitoring and Outreach Branch. Kathleen Abdalla, who had recently been appointed Chief of the Programme Coordination, Major Groups and Partnerships Branch, DSD, has been tapped to take over Silveira's Branch. Abdalla is also continuing to serve as officer in charge of the Programme Coordination, Major Groups and Partnerships Branch.



Kathleen Abdalla

## ► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **THIRD CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION (PIC COP-3):** 9-13 October 2006. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.pic.int/en/ViewPage.asp?id=420>
- **EIGHTH GLOBAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL SEAS CONVENTIONS AND ACTION PLANS:** 13-14 October 2006. Beijing, People's Republic of China. [http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/RS\\_Global\\_Meetings/default.asp](http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/RS_Global_Meetings/default.asp)
- **SECOND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES:** 16-20 October 2006. Beijing, China. <http://www.gpa.unep.org/>
- **EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL:** 30 October 2006 - 3 November 2006. New Delhi, India. <http://hq.unep.org/ozone/Events/meetings2006and2007.asp>