



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF EXPERT GROUP CONSIDERS DRAFT TEXT OF A NON-LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON FORESTS



Dais at the close of the UNFF *ad hoc* expert group. L-R: Pekka Patosaari, Director, UNFF Secretariat; UNFF Chair Hans Hoogeveen; and Jorge Illueca, UNFF Secretariat

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) *ad hoc* expert group on the consideration of the content of the non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) on all types of forests convened from 11-15 December 2006 at UN headquarters in New York. Over 300 participants, including government-designated experts from member States and representatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, intergovernmental organizations and Major Groups, completed a first reading of a composite draft text of the NLBI, focusing on, *inter alia*, monitoring, assessment and reporting, means of implementation, adoption/subscription, and national measures contributing to the Global Objectives on forests. The draft text will be forwarded, along with a revised and consolidated version prepared by the Secretariat, to UNFF at its seventh session for consideration (<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/ahnbl/>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

MAINSTREAMING PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY WITHIN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROCESS IN TANZANIA

(IIED, December 2006) This paper, authored by Tom Blomley, describes Tanzania's Forestry and Beekeeping Division's experiences in institutionalizing participatory forestry. The author outlines challenges for the process against the backdrop of the government's decentralization and local government reforms, and draws lessons that have been learned from this process (<http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/14536IIED.pdf>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Invasive Species: Multilateral Opportunities for Sectoral Integration

By Stas Burgiel, Ph.D., Senior International Invasive Species Policy Advisor, The Nature Conservancy

Abstract

The notion of cross-cutting issues and the need for sectoral integration are now common buzzwords in multilateral environmental fora, yet moving beyond words to actual collaboration has proven a challenge both nationally and internationally.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

MAKING PROGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A REVIEW OF OVER 150 MDG COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

(UNDP, 2006) This report, jointly launched by UNDP and UNEP, indicates that most countries are not on track to reach Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability) by 2015. It charts countries' efforts towards more environmentally sustainable development planning and demonstrates that progress can be accelerated when country-specific MDG targets are tailored (<http://www.undp.org/fssd/docs/mdg7english.pdf>).

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING: BENEFITS FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING AND EMERGING ECONOMIES

(UNEP FI, 2006) A product of the UNEP Finance Initiative's Sustainability Management and Reporting (SMR) Project, this report provides guidance on environmental and sustainability reporting for financial institutions in developing and emerging economies, and identifies benefits stemming from implementing SMR, including revenue growth, access to capital, and cost savings (http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/documents/smr_benefits_dec2006_01.pdf).

GOVERNANCE TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE FOREST BUSINESS: GUIDANCE ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF FOREST BUSINESS AND THE ETHICS TO WHICH THEY GRAVITATE

(IIED, 2006) This paper, authored by Duncan Macqueen, seeks to clarify what "responsible forest business" might mean, proposing a bigger and bolder idea of responsibility than many notions of corporate social responsibility. It suggests broader ethical consideration of what business is responsible for, who business is responsible to and over what time frame business is responsible. The paper ends with some practical steps to improve governance towards responsible forest business (<http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/13531IIED.pdf>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

ITTO POSTS PRESENTATIONS FROM LATIN AMERICAN INVESTMENT FORUM

The "Latin American tropical forest investment forum: issues and opportunities for investment in natural tropical forests" convened from 23-24 November 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil, and focused on private sector investments in natural tropical forests in Latin America. The Forum, jointly organized by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), ABIMCI (Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Madeira Processada Mecanicamente), and the Brazilian Government, was attended by close to 100 participants. Key presentations were made and panel discussions held on issues affecting investment in tropical natural forests, including: the role of governments and international organizations in enabling an investment climate; new investment tools and approaches; ecosystem service payments; and analysis of country investment opportunities. The ITTO Secretariat has now posted presentations and the summary of recommendations online (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=2865>).

UNCCD CONTRIBUTES TO MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES AT CLOSE OF IYDD

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat and its Global Mechanism (GM) have contributed to a number of events during the final months of the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD). A round table discussion organized by the Secretariat at UN headquarters in New York, US, assessed the UNCCD process and identified challenges ahead



Mostafa Tolba co-chaired the round table on "Assessing the UNCCD process and identifying challenges ahead."

on 1-2 November 2006 (<http://www.unccd.int/convention/NYroundtable/menu.php>). The GM co-financed a workshop in Rome, Italy, on the Economic and Social Costs of Desertification from 4-5 December 2006. The UNCCD Secretariat is cooperating with the Earth Council and others in the launch of an on-line course on "Desertification - A Global Challenge for Local Action," which is part of a training and skills development programme on land degradation. A special module has been designed for UNCCD National Focal Points to support them in reviewing and enhancing their countries' National Action Plans (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/earth-council-launches-interactive-e-learning-course-on-desertification->).

Together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UNCCD Secretariat organized an International Workshop on Climate and Land Degradation in Arusha, Tanzania, from 11-15 December 2006. More than 50 delegates from 28 countries and five UN agencies took part in the workshop, at which UNCCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo noted that "early warning systems would become more and more critical in the context of global warming." Diallo also highlighted the importance of developing further collaboration with WMO in the battle against desertification. The workshop's results will be presented to the eighth Conference of the Parties, expected to take place in October 2007 (<http://www.wmo.ch/web/wcp/agm/wocald/>; http://www.wmo.int/web/Press/PR_767_E.doc).

The Secretariat also joined with other partners to organize the "Joint International Conference Desertification and the International Policy Imperative" in Algiers, Algeria, from 17-19 December 2006. This conference built on the IYDD initiatives to highlight the underpinnings that are necessary to enable successful strategies in dryland communities (<http://www.inweh.unu.edu/inweh/drylands/DraftProgramme-9Aug2006.pdf>; <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/desert/jicd/>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC PUBLISHES POST-NAIROBI DEADLINES

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat has published a document that notes the deadlines set by the COP, COP/MOP and subsidiary bodies in Nairobi for submissions of information and views requested by parties. The document covers 35 different issues and/or deadlines in 2007 and 2008, on topics ranging from the Ad Hoc Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol to reducing deforestation in developing countries. The first deadlines in 2007 relate to the international transaction log (31 January) and climate change mitigation (7 February) (<http://unfccc.int/files/par->

[ties_and_observers/notifications/application/pdf/061206_mess_parties.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/par-ties_and_observers/notifications/application/pdf/061206_mess_parties.pdf)).

US PROMULGATES RULE TO IMPLEMENT DECISION TAKEN UNDER MONTREAL PROTOCOL

On 12 December 2006, the US Environmental Protection Agency finalized a rule allowing the production and import of methyl bromide, an ozone-depleting gas used as a pesticide, for approved critical uses during 2007,



Logo courtesy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

SCIENTIFIC FACTS ON DESERTIFICATION

(GreenFacts, 2006) This website offers a summary of the Desertification Synthesis Report prepared by the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. It seeks to make the information in this scientific report understandable to a non-scientific audience (<http://www.greenfacts.org/en/desertification/index.htm>).

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF CEO PROPOSES CHANGES AT COUNCIL MEETING

The Global Environment Facility's (GEF) CEO Monique Barbut opened the 5-8 December 2006 Council meeting in Washington DC, US, with a proposed "Five Point Sustainability Compact to Increase Efficiency and Impact." Her proposal included: shifting from a project-driven to a programmatic approach by focusing strategies on a clear set of priority issues for the global environment; reducing the current project pipeline in half; appointing an "Ombudsman" in the GEF Secretariat to respond to country concerns or complaints; and redesigning the project approval cycle to reduce it from 66 to 22 months.



GEF CEO Monique Barbut. Photo courtesy of GEF.

On project cycle and modalities, the GEF Council noted that "the GEF activity cycle is not effective, nor efficient, and that the situation has grown worse over time; nor is it cost-effective." Therefore the Council requested the Secretariat to consult with all the GEF entities and present options for a new project cycle, with the objective of processing a proposal from identification to start of imple-

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

Continued from page 2

mentation in less than 22 months without compromising project quality or undermining financial accountability. This procedural change should: focus the project identification phase on establishing project eligibility, resource availability, country endorsement and agreed agency comparative advantage; move the work programme from being project-based to being programme-based in line with GEF strategies and policies; allow projects to be endorsed by the CEO on a rolling basis; and expedite the project cycle.

The Council also adopted decisions on other issues, including decisions to: adopt objective criteria for project selection, pipeline management and cancellation; recommend that the fourth GEF Assembly designate GEF as the financial mechanism for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and further consider the roles and comparative advantages of GEF agencies. On 8 December, the Council also approved new projects within the Climate Change Convention's Special Climate Change Fund and Least Developed Country Fund (SCCF and LDC Funds).

Regarding focal area strategies, the Council approved a biosafety strategy and invited countries to comment on draft strategies for focal areas by 15 January. The biosafety

strategy will integrate the biodiversity focal area strategy, once this is approved, and is geared at enhancing the cost-effectiveness of capacity building efforts to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety by requiring all new projects to perform a stock-taking assessment and determine clearly defined targets (http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_30/CouncilMeetingDecember2006.html).

parties to the Protocol at their meeting in November 2006, the rule specifies which crops can access newly-produced or imported methyl bromide under the "critical use exemption" and makes over 6.2 million kilograms of methyl bromide available under this exemption in 2007. Unlike in the US, a new regulation is not needed to allocate methyl bromide under this exemption in the European Community, though the European Commission will issue a decision in 2007 defining permitted critical uses (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ozone/ods.htm#fumigation>).

GEF APPROVES NEW COUNTRIES FOR SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

The new Steering Committee of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), comprising the GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies and Executing Agencies, held its first meeting on 11 December 2006, in Washington DC, US. Among the most important decisions taken was the meeting's designation of 21 new countries as eligible for grant funding from the SGP. The newly eligible countries are: Algeria, Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Laos, Liberia, Maldives, Nigeria, Paraguay, Seychelles, Tajikistan, Togo, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela (http://gefweb.org/Whats_New/New_SGP_Countries.htm).

▶ BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CMS ESTABLISHES PARTNERSHIP WITH TUI TO PROTECT DOLPHINS, WELCOMES 100th PARTY

As part of its "2007-Year of the Dolphin" initiative, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the European travel group TUI established a partnership in order to undertake a major public awareness campaign on various threats to dolphin survival, such as by-catch and habitat degradation (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/12_Dec/CMS_TUI_yod07_E.pdf).

On 1 December 2006, the CMS Secretariat announced the 100th party accession of the Republic of Yemen. The country has a population of nearly 22 million people and its biodiversity includes a number of endangered species (<http://www.cms.int/news/>

[PRESS/nwPR2006/november/Yemen_profile.pdf](http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2006/november/Yemen_profile.pdf)).

CBD AFRICAN WORKSHOP ADOPTS STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY

Held from 12-15 December 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, the African Regional Workshop on Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity was organized by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and FAO, in partnership with the World Agroforestry Centre, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, Bioversity International and the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture. The Workshop reviewed the CBD Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for

the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and discussed their application to agricultural biodiversity. It also addressed assessment of ecosystem services and financial costs and benefits associated with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The meeting adopted the Nairobi Statement on Sustainable Use of Agricultural Biodiversity, which underscores the need for: strategies to protect indigenous crop and livestock germplasm, and wild resources important for the rural poor; partnerships linking farmers, pastoralists and livestock managers with research institutions, government agencies, NGOs and the private sector; and involvement of indigenous and local communities in national and international negotiations (<http://www.iisd.ca/af-rica/biodiv/arwsu/>).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Invasive species, one of the top three threats to biodiversity, are a prime example for cross-sectoral work given their impacts on trade, agriculture, livelihoods, transport and a range of economic industries. With globalization, the increased movement of people and goods has facilitated the introduction of invasive species to practically every corner of the world as shipping becomes faster and the range of goods and markets expands. Mitigating their threats and preventing new introductions is a challenge that extends well beyond the reach of environmental agreements into other areas of international law.

Failure to coordinate can hamper progress, as evidenced by the continued controversy over the trade-related implications of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) guiding principles on invasive species initially "adopted" in 2002. However, there is currently an opportunity to move forward by taking stock of ongoing international policy efforts, identifying gaps and developing plans to coordinate future work. The CBD's next Conference of the Parties (COP-9, May 2008) will conduct an in depth review of work on invasive species. This could include a joint programme of work that builds on recent work on gaps and inconsistencies by establishing ties with other international processes that could best develop guidance in specific areas.

Within the field of multilateral environmental agreements, there is already some cooperation across conventions on invasive species, including the CBD, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on Migratory Species. Looking more broadly, key areas of international law calling for cooperation include: trade, food and fiber production and transport. Coordination is also needed with other processes addressing human health, local livelihoods and sustainable development.

Such collaboration is particularly important for the CBD's in depth review, as the Convention itself does not have the resources, expertise or jurisdiction

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CHEMICALS AND WASTES



Basel COP8 convened in the high-level segment to address the COP theme of "Creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes."

BASEL CONVENTION ADOPTS E-WASTE DECLARATION

The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-8) to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal convened from 27 November to 1 December 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, and was attended by over 500 participants. COP-8 considered several reports on activities within the Convention's mandate and adopted a declaration on e-waste and more than 30 decisions on, *inter alia*: the 2007-2008 programme of work; the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including consideration of the work and operations of the Basel Convention Regional and Co-ordinating Centres, as well as the Basel Convention Partnership Programme; synergies and cooperation in the environmental field; e-waste and end-of-life equipment; ship dismantling; legal matters; technical matters; financial issues and the budget; amendments to the general technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of persistent organic pollutants wastes; guidelines for ESM of wastes; technical guidelines for ESM of a variety of chemicals; the 2007-2008 work programme of the Open-Ended Working Group; and the election of new members of the Compliance Committee and its work programme. COP-8 opened against the backdrop of the toxic waste dumping incident in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This brought into focus the need for delegates to address not only the meeting's theme, "Creating innovative solutions through the Basel Convention for the ESM of electronic wastes," but also to tackle the core issues of the Convention, including the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, strengthening the Convention's implementation, the budget, and resource management and sustainable financing (<http://www.iisd.ca/basel/cop8/>).

SAICM REGIONAL MEETINGS DISCUSS FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Regional meetings on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) have recently convened in Spain and Latvia. The SAICM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Spanish Ministry of Environment, organized the first EU-JUSSCANNZ (Japan, the US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand) meeting on SAICM in Barcelona, Spain, from 20-22 November 2006. The meeting was attended by over 100 participants, who agreed on future coordination arrangements, including informal consultations, and welcomed the early establishment of the SAICM Quick Start Programme (QSP) Trust Fund and the holding of regional SAICM meetings. Participants also recognized the need for increased funding commitments to SAICM. The EU-JUSSCANNZ countries also considered the Secretariat's proposal for a business plan for the QSP and a possible scientific conference. A number of other issues were left to be discussed at subsequent meetings, such as the reporting procedure for SAICM implementation, criteria and level of participation in the SAICM open-ended legal and technical working group, and the SAICM Global Plan of Action (http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/EU_Jusscannz/nov_06/default.htm). The SAICM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Latvian Ministry of Environment, organized a Central and Eastern European regional meeting on SAICM in Riga from 4-6 December 2006. Key outcomes of the meeting included the establishment of a "bridging group" for regional coordination, development of terms of reference for the SAICM regional focal point and regional representatives on the QSP Executive Board, a regional position on financial considerations for SAICM, and support for the development of a QSP business plan (http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/cee/dec_06/default.htm).

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

to address the full range of environmental, trade, transport and health issues posed by invasive species. However, it can help ensure that other relevant institutions are at the table, provide guidance for unaddressed gaps, and serve as a conduit for communicating this information to governments. The CBD in depth review provides this opportunity, which can ensure a truly cross-sectoral approach toward invasive species.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle18.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, for further information.

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN DESA ORGANIZES WORKSHOP FOR AFRICAN WATER UTILITY EXPERTS

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN HABITAT) organized a Capacity Building Workshop on Partnerships for Improving the Performance of Water Utilities in the Africa Region, to discuss implementation of the global water and sanitation agenda in the African context. The workshop, which convened from 6-8 December 2006 at the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya, was attended by over 90 senior water experts representing governmental and inter-governmental organizations and the private sector from over 36 countries. Participants developed a Nairobi Statement, which states the need to, *inter alia*: develop and implement programmes to overcome limited technical, financial and institutional

capacities; promote the commitment, support and participation of all stakeholders to improve the performance of water utilities; increase finance to improve and extend safe and adequate access to water and sanitation for all; recommend separation of the dual functions of regulatory and operational activities that will improve the performance of public utilities in delivering water and sanitation services; implement actions regarding benchmarking of utilities, such as establishing criteria for customer satisfaction, evaluating the performance of utility managers, serving the poor and creating gender balance in the utilities; and develop and institutionalize partnerships to promote the exchange of experiences and facilitate contact among utilities (<http://www.iisd.ca/africa/water/wpa/>; http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/water/workshop_africa/workshop_africa.htm).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNGA COMMITTEE APPROVES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTIONS, PRESIDENT OUTLINES STATUS OF UN REFORM AND CONVENES DEBATE ON MDGs

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) Second Committee (Economic and Financial) concluded its session on 6 December 2006, after adopting draft resolutions on, *inter alia*: the Implementation of Agenda 21; the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea; the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme; and the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The Committee was not able to reach consensus on a draft resolution on Climate Change, due to a provision endorsing a link of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's secretariat to the UN. The divisive paragraph and the resolution as a whole were later approved by recorded votes (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/gaef3173.doc.htm>).

In a letter to all member States, dated 1 December 2006, UNGA President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa outlined the current status of the different UN reform agendas. Regarding System-wide Coherence, she intends to begin informal consultations on how to proceed with consideration of the High-level Panel's report. On Environmental Governance, she noted that Co-Chairs Ambassador Berruga (Mexico) and Ambassador Maurer (Switzerland) have outlined plans to resume consultations mid-January 2007 (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/PGLetter.1Dec2006.pdf>).

Also related to the UN reform discussions, on 8 December 2006, Viet Nam was selected as the first pilot country in the "One UN" reform programme, which will seek to avoid fragmentation and duplication of work between different UN agencies by consolidating a single UN presence in countries. The Viet Nam pilot programme will comprise the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UN Volunteers (UNV) and the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The first joint programme is scheduled for the end of January 2007. Six other pilot countries will be selected later in December 2006 (<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/HAN2829.htm>).



A thematic debate "Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward" was convened on 27 November 2006 by UNGA President Sheikh Haya Rashed Al Khalifa. The debate brought together donor and recipient countries, as well as civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The key points put forward included: the need for partnerships to include governments, the public sector and civil society; scaling up interventions on the ground; and the importance of both donors and recipients to fulfill their respective commitments. According to IISD sources, many participants expressed satisfaction with the debate's broad participation and resulting concrete undertakings. Qatar will host a follow-up event to the thematic debate during the first half of 2007 (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/Summary27Nov2006.pdf>).

UNEP REVEALS PROGRESS ON IRAQI MARSHLANDS RECOVERY, DEVELOPS PORTAL TO TRACK TREE-PLANTING PLEDGES

The initial results from a UNEP-led project, "Support for Environmental Management of the Iraqi Marshlands," announced on 7 December 2006, reveal progress on marshlands recovery and in bringing clean water to marshland communities. The project has also organized a series of community-led environmental awareness campaigns and has established an internet-based information network (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=496&ArticleID=5450&I=en>).

UNEP has also developed a website through which governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations, farmers, selected private sector companies, local authorities and the public at large can enter tree-planting pledges related to UNEP's first global tree planting project. The project was launched on 8 November 2006, in Nairobi during the 12th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and is under the patronage of 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Wangari Maathai and Prince Albert II of Monaco. The project aims to plant and care for one billion trees world-wide during 2007. As of 19 December 2006, pledges had been recorded for 121,302,004 trees (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>).

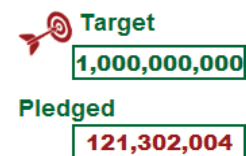


Image courtesy of the UNEP-Billion Tree Campaign

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

RAMSAR REPORTS ON SIXTH INFORMAL "EVIAN ENCOUNTER," CREHO FORUM AND SMALL GRANTS FUND WORKSHOP

The Ramsar Secretariat has reported that wetland and water experts, including ministerial focal points from all seven Carpathian countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine), gathered in Evian, France, from 15-17 November 2006, for the sixth Evian Encounter to define the fields of activities for 2007-2008 to be addressed by the Carpathian Wetland Initiative. These Encounters are part of the Ramsar Convention project financed by the Danone group, owner of the Evian mineral waters company. During the Encounter, which brought together senior officials of the Ramsar contracting parties and other relevant organizations in an informal setting, participants focused on the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, building on the out-



During the Evian Encounter, Slovakia announced its designation of the Caves of the Demanová Valley as its 14th Wetland of International Importance. Photo courtesy of Ramsar.

comes of the project "Network of Carpathian Protected Areas and Ramsar Sites" coordinated by the Slovak State Nature Conservancy, with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Secretariat indicated that, during the Ministerial Segment of COP-1 of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) in Kyiv from 11-13 December 2006, the Ramsar and Carpathian Conventions would sign a Memorandum of Understanding to guide further cooperation based on the outcomes of the Evian Encounter (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_evian_carpathian.htm).

The Ramsar Regional Center for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere (CREHO) organized a Forum on "The Fishing Industry, Tools for a Sustainable Future," on 20 November 2006, in Panama City. The Forum, organized with the support of the Global Compact-Panama, gathered representatives from the Panamanian fishing industry, environmental NGOs, and international organizations to address: the importance of wetlands in the fishing industry; successful initiatives to improve the environmental performance of fisheries; the Marine Stewardship Council certification; and the UN Global Compact approach to corporate social responsibility (http://www.ramsar.org/creho/creho_forum_fishing_e.pdf).

On 24-25 November 2006, a workshop within the framework of the Ramsar 2005 Small Grants Fund project "restoration and rehabilitation of the Wetland Region Bardaca" was held in the Bardaca area, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The workshop brought together over 30 representatives from ministries and the University of the Serb Republic in Banja Luka, natural museums, agencies, local authorities, NGOs and individual land-owners and focused on the next steps for the designation of the area as a Ramsar site and the elaboration of a draft management plan.

In addition, participants launched a booklet entitled "Bardaca - ecological values" and produced a film called "Bardaca yesterday - today - tomorrow," both of which are intended to raise public awareness and further local education (http://www.ramsar.org/sgf/sgf_rpts_bosnia1.htm).

UNGA ADOPTS SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES RESOLUTION

On 8 December 2006, the UNGA adopted by consensus the draft resolution (A/61/L.38*) on "Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN 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, and related instruments." In the resolution, the Assembly calls on States to take immediate action, individually and through regional organizations, to sustainably manage fish stocks and protect vulnerable deep sea ecosystems from harmful fishing practices. The UNGA also calls on all States to act in a precautionary manner and apply an "ecosystem approach" to the conservation, management and exploitation of fish stocks. The Assembly identified bottom trawling and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing as the most destructive fishing practices and threats to vulnerable marine ecosystems, to the detriment of sustainable fisheries, as well as the food security and economies of many States, particularly developing States. A number of countries and NGOs expressed disappointment that the text did not include a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling, but highlighted that it contains provisions that could bring an end to the destruction of deep sea ecosystems on the high seas by bottom trawl fishing over the coming years (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10551.doc.htm>; <http://www.savethehighseas.org/display.cfm?ID=150>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Peter Bridgewater, **Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat**, has indicated he will not seek a second term when his contract expires on 31 July 2007. Applications for this position will be accepted until 12 January 2007 (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.vacancy_ramsar_sg_e.htm).



► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **SHARED LEARNING AND REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: TECHNICAL MEETING:** 19-20 December 2006. Seoul, Republic of Korea. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/tmKorea/index.htm>
- **FIRST MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH:** 17-19 January 2007. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.unece.org/env/water/whmop1/info.htm>
- **MEETING OF THE CBD GROUP OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN/SOURCE/LEGAL PROVENANCE:** 22-25 January 2007. Lima, Peru. <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>