



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

IPCC WORKING GROUP II APPROVES NEW REPORT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II has approved its contribution to the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). The Working Group, which met in Brussels, Belgium, from 2-6 April 2007, went past its scheduled 5 April deadline, as delegates sought to finalize the report. However, after extensive discussions, participants approved "Climate Change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability," including the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) and the underlying report and Technical Summary. The



IPCC Plenary at work

key findings of the SPM emphasize the observed and projected impacts of climate change, including accumulating evidence that changes in many physical and biological systems are linked to anthropogenic warming. According to the SPM, observed and projected impacts of climate change include various changes in the natural environment, flooding and food and water shortages. Among other things, the SPM states that 20-30% of plant and animal species are likely to face extinction with temperature rises exceeding 1.5-2.5°C. It indicates that hundreds of millions of people will be exposed to increased water stress, many millions more people are anticipated to be exposed to flooding every year, and access to food in many African countries is projected to be severely compromised. The SPM also highlights other vulnerabilities and potential negative impacts of climate change on sustainable development. It states that adaptation will be necessary to the already unavoidable warming, but many impacts can be avoided, reduced or delayed by mitigation (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipwg2/>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

BUILDINGS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: STATUS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

(UNEP, April 2007) This report argues that the right mix of government regulation, energy saving technologies and behavioral change can significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the building sector, and thus stresses that the building sector, which accounts for 30 to 40 percent of total energy use, can play an important role in combating climate change (http://www.unep.fr/pc/sbc/documents/Buildings_and_climate_change.pdf).

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GUEST ARTICLE

The African High-Level Panel on Biotechnology: The African Union Seeks Advice on Modern Biotechnology

By Cyrie Sendashonga, Member of the High-Level Panel on Biotechnology and Regional Coordinator, CIFOR-Central Africa

Abstract

The development and application of modern biotechnology has opened up a wide range of possibilities, but these developments are characterized by increasing scientific complexity, policy uncertainty and public anxiety over potential benefits and risks.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

ONLINE ATLAS OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(World Bank, April 2007) This World Bank website allows a clear visualization of some of the world's development challenges by translating data into maps designed for a lay audience. The maps are derived from the Bank's World Development Indicators database, and depict progress toward meeting the eight Millennium Development Goals (<http://devdata.worldbank.org/atlas-mdg/>).

WHERE ENERGY IS WOMEN'S BUSINESS: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL REPORTS FROM AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC

(ENERGIA, 2007) This book, edited by Gail Karlsson for ENERGIA, an international network on gender and sustainable energy, is based on the results of multistakeholder consultations sponsored by ENERGIA in 19 countries in preparation for CSD-14 and -15 (http://www.energia.org/csd_book.html).

WATER QUALITY OUTLOOK

(Global Environment Monitoring System/Water Programme of UNEP, 2007) This report was launched on World Water Day 2007. It provides a snapshot of key water quality issues as they relate to achieving the Millennium Development Goals on water, sanitation and biodiversity. Targeted at decision-makers and water practitioners, the report calls on governments to share the responsibility for keeping the global and regional water environment under review (http://www.gemswater.org/common/pdfs/water_quality_outlook.pdf).

THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF REGIONAL PROGRAMS

(World Bank, 2007) This evaluation assesses World Bank support for regional development programs over fiscal years 1995-2005, based on evaluations of 19 regional programmes and a review of the Bank's total portfolio of some 100 regional operations. It finds that a majority of the programs evaluated have been or appear likely to be effective in achieving most of their development objectives, but suggests that stronger results could be achieved if regional programme support were better developed as an international development practice (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTOED/EXTREGPROPART/0,,contentMDK:21174399~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3300628,00.html>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC SET TO LAUNCH INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION LOG; CDM BOARD MEETS

The Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is set to launch an "International Transaction Log" (ITL) as part of its work under the Kyoto Protocol. The ITL is a computer-based system that is part of the trading infrastructure of the carbon market under the Kyoto Protocol, and links to countries' national registries. The ITL has been the subject of ongoing testing to ensure the necessary online security (http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/20070204_itl_on_track_english.pdf).



The UNFCCC reports that the ITL is "on track." (Photo courtesy of UNFCCC).

Meanwhile, the Executive Board of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) gathered for its 30th meeting, from 21-23 March 2007, in Bonn, Germany. The Board considered its work plan, including accreditation of operational entities, various methodological issues, and issues relating to afforestation and reforestation project activities. It also considered its management plan and resources for its work (<http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/030/index.html>).

In other UNFCCC-related news, a note from the Chair of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from non-Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC has been posted online. The note outlines discussions held during the Group's eighth meeting, held in Belize City, Belize, from 1-3 March 2007. The Group held a stocktaking exercise of its work programme for 2003-2007, and considered actions in response to requests from the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbi/eng/10.pdf>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbi/eng/10a01.pdf>).

The UNFCCC has also recently posted reports on the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009 (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbi/eng/08a01.pdf>) and views on how the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and

regional and international climate change research programmes (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbsta/eng/misc07.pdf>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbsta/eng/misc08.pdf>).

MONTREAL PROTOCOL MULTILATERAL FUND APPROVES NEW PROJECTS TO ACHIEVE CFC PHASE-OUT BY 2010

The 51st Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol convened from 19-23 March 2007 in Montreal, Canada. The Executive Committee approved US\$54.6 million for 32 developing countries to eliminate over 20,000 ozone depleting potential (ODP) of ozone depleting substances (ODS). China will receive US\$24 million to dismantle chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) production plants and end production of CFCs more than two years ahead of the 2010 deadline set by the Montreal Protocol. Smaller projects in Bolivia, the Seychelles, Paraguay and Zimbabwe will receive funding for the phase-out of CFC use in their refrigeration servicing sectors. The Executive Committee also established a number of priorities for unallocated funds in its budget, including support for new Parties to the Montreal Protocol, national ozone units in developing countries and accelerating the elimination of CFC production. It also requested the World Bank to analyze possible projects to accelerate production phase-out in developing countries ahead of the 2010 deadline (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1175285395977.htm>).

OZONE SECRETARIAT RELEASES DOCUMENTS IN ADVANCE OF JUNE MEETINGS

In advance of the upcoming Open-Ended Working Group meeting (OEWG-27), to be held on 4-7 June 2007, and the Dialogue on key future challenges faced by the Montreal Protocol (the Dialogue), to be held on 2-3 June 2007, the Ozone Secretariat has released numerous documents, including, *inter alia*, an agenda for the Dialogue, and an annotated provisional agenda and information note for OEWG-27 (<http://ozone.unep.org/highlights.shtml>).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNDP SUPPORTS CHINESE CLIMATE CHANGE EFFORTS

On 26 March 2007, in Beijing, China, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the governments of China and Norway signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which they agree to support a new project focusing on developing and implementing provincial programmes on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Entitled "The Provincial Climate Change Programme in China," the project will support efforts to implement China's national climate change programme in seven provinces. It is expected to be launched in



The signing ceremony for the Provincial Climate Change Programme in China was witnessed by Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, and Wen Jiabao, Premier of China. (Photo courtesy of UNDP).

mid-2007 (<http://www.undp.org.cn/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&catid=14&topic=20&sid=388&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

PAY – ESTABLISHING PAYMENTS FOR WATERSHED SERVICES

(IUCN-The World Conservation Union, 2006) IUCN launched this report on World Water Day, 22 March 2007. It sets out how water market and incentive schemes should be designed to maintain water resources, providing examples of systems already in place (<http://www.iucn.org/themes/wani/documents/pay.pdf>).

THE POLITICS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS FOR CORPORATIONS

(Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 2007) This paper, authored by David Kinley, Justine Nolan and Natalie Zerial, explores the politics behind the UN's Draft Human Rights Norms for Corporations, analyzing the norms' legal implications and likely future, and highlighting the ongoing debate about whether such corporate social responsibility standards should be voluntary or legally binding (<http://www.business-humanrights.org/Documents/The-Politics-of-CSR-by-Kinley-Nolan-Zerial-vol-25-1-2007.pdf>).

ASIAN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN AFRICA: TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(UNCTAD, 2007) This report, a joint undertaking between the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Development Programme, states that Asian investment in Africa is becoming an important and promising aspect of economic cooperation among developing countries. To reap the potential of expanding Asian interest, the report notes that African countries need to enhance their productive capacities in a variety of industries (http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/iteiia20071_en.pdf).

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT ABU DHABI

(UNEP/GRID-Arendal, March 2007) The first State of the Environment Report for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, produced by UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)/GRID-Arendal, was launched on 19 March 2007. The report identifies and analyzes key issues in environmental areas according to each of their Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact and Response, known as the UNEP DPSIR Model (<http://www.soe.ae/>).

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE CONVENED, G-77/CHINA AND NAM PRESENT CONCERNS

A Regional High-Level Consultation on UN System-Wide Coherence, organized by the governments of Indonesia and Norway, was held from 29-30 March 2007 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Over 150 participants, including government officials, UN representatives, civil society and academia, gathered with the objectives of enhancing the understanding of the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence among the Asia and Pacific countries, and identifying challenges and possible impacts of system-wide coherence implementation at the regional and national levels. The outcome of the consultation is expected to feed into UN General Assembly discussions later in 2007 (http://www.norway-un.org/Topics/reform/High+Level+Panel/20070402_hlp_press_jakarta.htm; <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/torjakarta.pdf>).

In a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon dated 29 March 2007, the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) have drawn attention to their concerns regarding the System-Wide Coherence report and the follow-up process. The letter stresses that the implementation of recommendations contained in the report should follow in-

depth intergovernmental consideration and agreement by the General Assembly, and states that several issues are not sufficiently covered, such as the quality and quantity of financial resources for operational activities, effective intergovernmental governance, and coordination and cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions and bilateral donors (http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/5491.html).

UNEP'S TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN MAKING STRIDES

The UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Billion Tree Campaign, which seeks to attract pledges to plant at least one billion trees worldwide during 2007, has recorded pledges of 834,696,015 trees as of 9 April 2007, with 8,856,008 trees already having been planted. The campaign recently was boosted through a student-founded campaign (<http://www.plant-for-the-planet.org>), which was launched on 28 March 2007 in Starnberg, Germany, and seeks to inform and encourage schools to make tree-planting pledges. Furthermore, at a press conference on 12 March 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, the Yves Rocher Group announced a pledge to plant one million trees in support of the campaign (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/index.asp>; <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>).

▶ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BRUNDTLAND TO ADDRESS CSD-15; CSD SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR SESSION

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which serves as the Secretariat for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), has released an updated organization of work for CSD-15, which includes new details on the ministerial roundtables, some intersessional activities and the opening of the High-Level Segment in the General Assembly Hall. Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the "Brundtland Commission"), which developed the report *Our Common Future* in April 1987, will address the opening session of the High-Level Segment (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/documents/annotations_new.pdf).

The CSD Secretariat has issued another call for case studies to include in the CSD-14/15 Matrix, which is an information tool developed by the CSD Secretariat to provide information on practical experiences in implementation

in the thematic areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/matrix_cover.htm). In addition, the CSD Secretariat has developed a re-designed and upgraded Sustainable Consumption and Production database, which includes information on existing initiatives plus 40 new initiatives and summaries of initiatives by sector (<http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/scp/public/Welcomedo>). A second "Innovation Brief" has also been released, which addresses "Developing Index-Based Insurance for Agriculture in Developing Countries" (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/innovationbriefs/no2.pdf>).

The CSD Secretariat helped organize a workshop for the Shared Learning and Review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Korea (12-16 March 2007, Seoul, Republic of Korea). This workshop provided government and non-government representatives from Asia-Pacific countries an opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices regarding National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD), particularly the Republic of Korea's NSSD experience, and to develop recommendations for the Republic of Korea (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/tmKorea/workshop.htm>; <http://pcsd.go.kr/eng/strategy.html>).



Gro Harlem Brundtland, Chair of the Brundtland Commission, will address the CSD on the 20th anniversary of *Our Common Future*. (Photo courtesy of WHO).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES *(cont.)***WORLD'S TOP 10 RIVERS AT RISK**

(WWF, March 2007) This report lists the top ten rivers that are dying as a result of climate change, pollution and dams, and summarizes the findings of eight global assessments to identify the threats mentioned with the greatest frequency, namely: water infrastructure such as dams; over-extraction of water; climate change; invasive species; over-fishing; and pollution (<http://assets.panda.org/downloads/worldstop10riversatriskfinalmarch13.pdf>).

FOREST GOVERNANCE LEARNING GROUP UPDATE

(FGLG, 2007) The Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG), an informal alliance of in-country teams and international partners currently active in ten countries, has released its fourth Update. The Update describes activities over the last year and the path ahead, including focusing on an international synthesis of key issues on local land tenure and forest resources access (http://www.iied.org/NR/forestry/documents/FGLG_Update_April07.pdf).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

ROTTERDAM'S CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS PESTICIDES FOR PIC PROCEDURE

At the Third Chemical Review Committee (CRC-3) of the Rotterdam Convention, which met from 20-23 March 2007, in Rome, Italy, the committee of experts took steps to include two pesticides in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure under the Convention. Endosulfan, commonly used in cotton farming, was recommended due to the unacceptable risks it poses to workers and to the environment. Tributyl tin compounds, used in anti-fouling paints for ship hulls, were recommended because they enter the marine environment, particularly in enclosed harbors, where they are toxic to fish, mollusks and other organisms. The fourth Conference of the Parties (COP-4) in 2008 will decide whether to accept the Chemical Review Committee's guidance (<http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=t&id=170&sid=1>; <http://www.pic.int/INCS/ReportCRCs/C15/English/K0761094%20CRC3%20report%20FINAL.doc>).

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION PREPARES FOR COP-3

The Stockholm Convention Secretariat has released a number of documents in preparation for COP-3 (30 April-4 May 2007, Dakar, Senegal), including the reissue, for technical reasons, of documents related to the Stan-

dardized Toolkit for Identification and Quantification of Dioxin and Furan Releases (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_3/meetingdocs/default.htm).

BASEL CONVENTION REQUESTS COMMENTS FOR REVIEW OF REGIONAL CENTRES

COP-8 to the Basel Convention requested the Open Ended Working Group to review the operation of the Basel Convention's regional and coordinating centres, to enhance the combined effectiveness and capacity of the centres and the Secretariat. To assist in this review, the Basel Convention Secretariat has invited Parties to submit comments by 30 April 2007 on the review's objectives and scope (<http://www.basel.int/convention/rfc/rfcCOP8.html>).

SAICM RELEASES SECOND DRAFT QSP BUSINESS PLAN

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) has released the second draft of the business plan, which will be considered by the Quick Start Programme (QSP) Executive Board at its 23-24 April 2007 meeting. Comments on the second draft should be communicated in writing by 22 April 2007 (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/qsp/QSP%20BP%202nd%20draft%2029%20March%202007.pdf>).

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD HOSTS MEETINGS ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE, CITIES AND THE 2010 TARGET

A roundtable discussion on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change convened from 19-20 March 2007, in Montreal, Canada. Discussions between members of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), representatives of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and experts on interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change explored the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and discussed two emerging issues: reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries, and biofuels and the associated impacts on biodiversity, climate change, food security and development. The report of the meeting of experts will be submitted for consideration to SBSTTA-12, which is scheduled to convene from 2-6 July 2007 in Paris, France, and will develop draft guidance on how to integrate relevant climate change impacts and response activities into the programmes of work of the Convention (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/press/2007/pr-2006-03-22-ipcc-en.pdf>).

At the initiative of the Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, the Mayors' meeting on the contri-

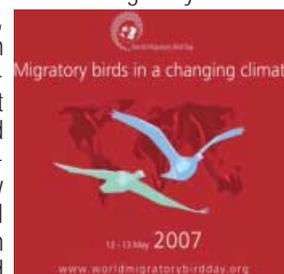
bution of cities to the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target convened in Curitiba from 26-28 March 2007. Participants exchanged experiences and best practices on biodiversity and agreed on a set of actions for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. The meeting adopted the Curitiba Declaration, which reaffirms the urgency to achieve the CBD objectives in the urban world; emphasizes public awareness and education, and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned through co-operation between cities; and recommends establishment of a clearing-house mechanism in the CBD Secretariat as a forum for exchange of experiences. The Curitiba Declaration will be conveyed to the ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD, to be held in May 2008, in Bonn, Germany (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/press/2007/pr-2007-03-28-mayors-en.pdf>; <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/biodiv/mayors-01/official/mayors-01-03-en.doc>).

CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL CONCLUDES, SECOND WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY ANNOUNCED

The 14th meeting of the Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) convened from 15-17 March 2007, in Bonn, Germany. The Council reviewed progress in relation to its Strategy Imple-

mentation Plan for 2006-2011 and agreed that, while significant progress has been made in some activities, the challenges posed by the Strategic Plan require a renewed effort. In this regard, the meeting established intersessional working groups on climate change and migratory species, by-catch, sustainable use, and animal diseases. The Council also considered the status and future prospects of the CMS Small Grants Programme to support conservation and research activities, and made a strong plea for securing adequate funding to the programme. Finally, the meeting suggested several species suitable for listing on the CMS Appendices across various taxonomic groups (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2007/04_Apr/sc14.htm).

The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, together with CMS, has announced that the second World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) will be held on the weekend of 12-13 May 2007 under the theme "Migratory Birds in a Changing Climate" (<http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>).



Logo courtesy of WMBD

GUEST ARTICLE (*cont.*)

In Africa in particular, these issues impinge on intra-regional and international cooperation because most of the African countries do not have the necessary policies, infrastructure, capacities and other resources to regulate and manage the development and application of genetic modification and biotechnology. At the same time, many African governments are taking part in fora where issues pertaining to biotechnology are discussed, most notably the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Codex Alimentarius, and relevant agreements under the World Trade Organization.

The African governments have recognized the importance of regional cooperation to address the range of issues associated with biotechnology and genetic modification. Within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the NEPAD Science and Technology Steering Committee recommended that the NEPAD Secretariat and the African Union (AU) Commission establish a high-level panel of eminent persons/experts to advise Africa on the scientific, policy and legal issues pertaining to the development, commercialization and application of modern biotechnology.

The High-Level African Panel on Biotechnology (APB) was established in June 2005 with a specific remit to provide the AU, its Member States and its various organs as well as NEPAD with independent and strategic advice on developments in modern biotechnology and its implications for agriculture, health and the environment. The Panel held a series of meetings between August 2005 and November 2006, during which it gathered feedback on its evolving draft report. The Panel finalized its report for submission to the January 2007 AU Summit of the African Heads of State, which had endorsed "The Role of Science and Technology for the Development of Africa" as one of the major themes considered by the Summit.

The Panel's report focuses on how best to build the capacity needed to harness and apply the technology to improve

Continued on page 6

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

WORLD BANK APPROVES LOANS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN KENYA AND REDUCING WATER POLLUTION IN CHINA

The World Bank approved, on 27 March 2007, a US\$68.5 million loan for Natural Resource Management in Kenya to enhance the institutional capacity to manage water and forest resources, reduce the incidence and severity of water shocks in river catchments, and improve the livelihoods of communities participating in the co-management of water and forests. Achievements under the project will be measured by indicators tracking changes in organizations and their performance, in the health of the natural resource base, and in welfare of participating com-

munities (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?Projectid=P095050&theSitePK=40941&pagePK=64283627&menuPK=228424&piPK=73230>).

On 21 March 2007, the World Bank approved the Second Guangdong Pearl River Delta Urban Environment Project in China, with a US\$96 million loan to reduce water pollution in the Pearl River system originating from two municipalities through a package of key initiatives, including wastewater treatment and sludge disposal, water quality monitoring, sediment removal from waterways, and flood protection and river embankment improvements (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P081776>).

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF-7 BUREAU OFFERS DRAFT TEXT FOR MYPOW NEGOTIATIONS

On 4 April 2007, the Bureau of the seventh session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF-7) released a suggested draft text for negotiations on the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) of the UNFF for 2007-2015. The draft text is based on the UN Secretary-General's Report and the Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the Bali Country-led Initiative. It supports the Secretary-General's view that the MYPOW should reflect the overall purpose, principal functions and strategy of the international arrangement on forests, with regard to the new working modality (i.e. biennial sessions), and including tasks that would facilitate the implementation of the four Global Objectives on Forests and the non-legally binding instrument (http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff7/bureau_draft_text_mypow.pdf). UNFF-7 will consider the MYPOW and the non-legally binding instrument during its 16-27 April 2007 meeting at UN Headquarters in New York, US (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>).

GM FACILITATION COMMITTEE MEETS DURING CRIC

The Facilitation Committee (FC) of the Global Mechanism (GM) met on the sidelines of the fifth meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-5) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The 17th FC meeting convened on 12 March 2007, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, chaired by the World Bank and attended by the UN Development Programme, the UN Environment Programme, the Global Environment Facility Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UNCCD Secretariat. FC members were informed that the GM is working on a six-year business plan, commencing in 2008, that will be presented to COP-8 in September 2007. The GM also announced that it is adopting a results-based work plan and budget for 2007, in collaboration with the UN Capital Development Fund, and informed the FC that a strategic programme on forests and their rehabilitation had been launched and would be further developed in cooperation with FAO and the World Bank (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news-events/news/fc-meets-in-buenos-aires/>).

▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS



2007
world water day
22nd March 2007



Image courtesy of UN Water

RAMSAR CELEBRATES WORLD WATER DAY, NEW SITE DESIGNATED

On 22 March 2007, the Ramsar Secretariat celebrated the UN's World Water Day, with the theme of "Coping with scarcity." On this occasion, Secretary General Peter Bridgewater, stressed the importance of an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to managing

water resources to address water scarcity and maximize economic and social welfare, and highlighted the Ramsar Convention's role in promoting the understanding that better management of ecosystems, especially wetlands, is essential in the promotion of a sustainable society for the future (http://www.ramsar.org/wm/w.n.world_water_day2007.htm).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

agricultural productivity and public health, increase industrial development and economic competitiveness, and promote environmental sustainability in Africa. The report also takes into account the importance of promoting the conservation and sustainable utilization of Africa's rich biodiversity. It highlights the role of regional economic integration bodies as key institutional vehicles for mobilizing, sharing and using existing scientific and technological capacities. The loci of action are primarily local innovation areas, which have core research and business institutions. It also stresses that international partnerships in biotechnology are critical to the realization of Africa's biotechnology strategies and should be pursued actively.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle24.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.

▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

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The Ramsar Secretariat announced that Guatemala has designated its seventh Wetland of International Importance. The site, the Reserva de Usos Múltiples Río Sarstún, is part of the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas and is located along the southern border with Belize. It constitutes an important breeding site for migratory waterbirds, including several flagship species, and hosts a number of endangered species such as the manatee, the river turtle, the tapir and the howler monkey (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_guatemala_sarstun.htm).

IMO RELEASES AGENDA FOR BLG SESSION

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has released the agenda for the eleventh session of the sub-committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG-11), which is scheduled to take place from 16-20 April 2007, in London, UK. Among the items on the sub-committee's agenda are: the evaluation of safety and pollution hazards of chemicals and preparation of consequential amendments; the review of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL), MARPOL Annex VI (prevention of air pollution from ships enforcement) and the NOx Technical Code; amendments to MARPOL Annex I for the prevention of marine pollution during oil transfer operations between ships at sea; guidelines on other technological methods

verifiable or enforceable to limit SOx emissions; and the BLG-12 work programme and agenda (http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D18196/1-Rev-1.pdf).

DOALOS ANNOUNCES COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, PREPARES FOR UNICPOLOS-8

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has released the list of persons nominated as members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, in relation to item 9 of the provisional agenda (SPLOS/L.50) of the seventeenth Meeting of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which will convene at UN Headquarters in New York, US, on 14 June and 18-22 June 2007 (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/forthcomingmeetingstatesparties.htm).

In related activities, on 30 March 2007, DOALOS held a preparatory meeting for the eighth meeting of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS-8), also scheduled to take place in June 2007 in New York, US. Participants discussed the draft provisional agenda for the meeting prepared by the Co-Chairpersons Ambassador Cristián Maquieira (Chile) and Lorraine Ridgeway (Canada), including the proposed areas of concentration for the discussion panel on "Marine genetic resources" (IISD Sources).

▶ COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Juwang Zhu has been named **Chief of the Programme Coordination, Major Groups and Partnerships Branch of the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)** of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), where he has most recently served as Senior Economic Affairs Officer. He replaces Kathleen Abdalla, who had been officer-in-charge of this branch since October 2006. Abdalla remains Branch Chief for the National Information, Monitoring and Outreach Branch, DSD (IISD sources).
- Edgar Kaeslin (Switzerland) has been appointed to the new position of **Scientific and Technical Support Officer for the Ramsar Convention**. The position was created to provide enhanced scientific and technical capacity in the Secretariat, in particular to support the work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Convention's subsidiary body charged with preparing scientific and technical reports and guidelines for the implementation of the Convention (http://www.ramsar.org/wm/w.n.staff_edgar.htm).

▶ KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **UNFCCC ASIAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ADAPTATION:** 11-13 April 2007. Beijing, China. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ccaaw/>
- **SYMPOSIUM ON THE STATE OF THE CONSERVATION OF WHALES IN THE 21ST CENTURY:** 12-13 April 2007. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/whales/>
- **SPECIAL HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF ECOSOC WITH THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS, WTO AND UNCTAD:** 16 April 2007. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2007/bwi2007/index.shtml>
- **PACIFIC CONSULTATION MEETING ON LAND AND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT:** 16-17 April 2007. Apia, Samoa. <http://www.unccd.int>
- **TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL:** 16-20 April 2007. Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=3840&catid=26&typeid=11&subMenuId=0>
- **SEVENTH SESSION OF UN FORUM ON FORESTS:** 16-27 April 2007. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff7/>
- **INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF STATES PARTIES TO THE UN FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT:** 23-24 April 2007. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/fsaic/>
- **SECOND MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON NON-COMPLIANCE:** 25-27 April 2007. Dakar, Senegal. http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_3/default.htm