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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

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES PREPARE FOR BALI

Delegates to the twenty-sixth sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which convened in Bonn, Germany, from 7-18 May 2007, have adopted 27 conclusions and six draft decisions to forward to the climate change meetings to take place in December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia. Also taking place in Bonn were the third session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments



On Saturday, 12 May 2007, an IPCC briefing took place outlining the contributions of the three Working Groups to the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). L-R: Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer and IPCC Chair Rajendra K. Pachauri

for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG) and the third workshop under the Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention. In addition, a workshop on the Russian Federation's proposal relating to voluntary commitments under the Kyoto Protocol was held, along with numerous workshops and other events on issues ranging from the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report on climate change mitigation and adaptation (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/sb26/>). Commenting at the end of the meeting, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer said: "This meeting has served to resolve a number of issues ahead of the Bali conference. We have come closer to broadening negotiations on a post-2012 regime by resolving some of the outstanding issues and clarifying which building blocks of a future agreement need to be put in place" (http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/20070518_final_sb26_english.pdf).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

LITTLE GREEN DATA BOOK 2007

(World Bank, May 2007) This publication is a pocket-sized quick reference book on key environmental and development data for over 200 countries, based on the *World Development Indicators 2007*. This edition includes a new Focus section, which this year examines carbon dioxide emissions (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/ENVIRONMENT/EXTDATA/0,,menuPK:2875803~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:2875751,00.html>).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Reforming International Governance for Sustainable Development

By Felix Dodds and Jennifer Peer, Stakeholder Forum

Abstract

In the face of a warming climate, increasing energy demand, rising food insecurity, biodiversity loss, and other sustainable development challenges, the world needs strong systems of governance to advance the implementation of sustainable development commitments.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

A STRENGTHENED UNEP AND UN SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENT: COMPILATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSES TO THE REPORT OF THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON SYSTEM WIDE COHERENCE

(Stakeholder Forum, FBOMS and UN-NGLS, 2007) This paper, compiled by Stakeholder Forum, the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Environment and Development (FBOMS) and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), presents a range of civil society views in relation to the High-level Panel's recommendations regarding the UN's work on environment and sustainable development, and puts forward recommendations related to, *inter alia*: strengthening UNEP; multilateral environmental agreements; an independent assessment of IEG; trade and the environment; and civil society and private sector engagement (http://ieg.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/A_Strengthened_UNEP_Updated.pdf).

POLICY DIRECTIONS TO 2050: A BUSINESS CONTRIBUTION TO THE DIALOGUES ON COOPERATIVE ACTION

(WBCSD, 2007) This report examines four policy priorities: a quantifiable, long-term global emissions pathway for the management of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; establishing an international framework to close the gap that will exist after 2012; developing programmes to encourage energy efficiency, broaden fuel choices and boost incentives for low-carbon consumption at the country level; and supporting policies and programmes to develop and commercialize low- and zero-GHG technologies over the coming decades (<http://wbcSD.org/plugins/DocSearch/details.asp?type=DocDet&ObjectId=MjM1MTE>).

STATE AND TRENDS OF THE CARBON MARKET 2007

(World Bank, May 2007) This report represents the seventh annual carbon market intelligence study released by the World Bank. It shows that the global carbon market tripled, from US\$10 billion in 2005 to US\$30 billion in 2006 (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21319781~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

COUNTRIES REPORT ON MONTREAL PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION

China, with support from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), has started training regional customs officials to recognize smuggled chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone depleting substances, and to better control their import and export. This initiative also involves the secretariats of several multilateral environment agreements (MEAs), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the World Customs Organization and Interpol, and seeks to equip customs officials with skills to address a growing problem of environmental crime and illegal trade, which is estimated to be valued at tens of billion dollars a year (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=506&ArticleID=5584&l=en>; http://www.acr-news.com/news/news_story.asp?id=306; <http://www.unepie.org/ozonaction/information/mmfiles/4855-e-shanghaigreencustoms.pdf>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNCCD IIWG HOLDING FOURTH MEETING, GM ANNOUNCES MOU WITH SPAIN

The fourth and last scheduled meeting of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is convening from 29-31 May 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. The session's main objective is to approve and adopt the final version of the draft ten-year strategic plan, integrating the results of the third IIWG meeting (26-28 April 2007, Windhoek, Namibia) and the response to the Joint Inspection Unit report. The IIWG report is expected to be presented to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, which will meet from 3-14 September 2007 in Madrid, Spain.

In other UNCCD news, the UNCCD Secretariat participated in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) 15th Economic and Environmental Forum (Prague, Czech Republic, 21-23 May 2007), which focused on "Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water

management." Among the issues discussed was whether the UNCCD and OSCE should launch a capacity and institution building initiative in Central Asia to raise awareness on and strengthen implementation of the Convention, including through working with the countries in the region towards the creation of an International Centre for Monitoring Land Degradation and Desertification in Central Asia, with a regional workshop to be held as a first step in this direction (http://www.osce.org/conferences/eef_2007_2.html).



Photo courtesy of UNEP DTIE

management." Among the issues discussed was whether the UNCCD and OSCE should launch a capacity and institution building initiative in Central Asia to raise awareness on and strengthen implementation of the Convention, including through working with the countries in the region towards the creation of an International Centre for Monitoring Land Degradation and Desertification in Central Asia, with a regional workshop to be held as a first step in this direction (http://www.osce.org/conferences/eef_2007_2.html).

Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD and the government of Spain came into force on 2 May 2007, through which Spain will contribute Euro 700,000 to the GM to co-finance: GM activities in Honduras, Morocco, Mozambique and Peru; the sub-regional investment platform being developed for Central America; and activities under the GM's South-to-South Cooperation Programme (SolArid) (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/news/gm-signs-700000-cooperation-agreement-with-spain/>).

► WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS

59TH ANNUAL IWC MEETING UNDERWAY

The 59th Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which is taking place from 28-31 May 2007 in Anchorage, Alaska, US, has renewed for five years the following catch limits for aboriginal subsistence whaling: up to 280 bowhead whales, with no more than 67 whales in any year, of the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas Stock, taken by native people of Alaska and

Chukotka; a total of 620 Eastern North Pacific gray whales, with a maximum of 140 in any one year, taken by those whose "traditional, aboriginal and subsistence needs have been recognized;" and 20 Humpback whales taken by St. Vincent and The Grenadines for the seasons 2008-2012. Additional agenda items include scientific permits, whale sanctuaries and socio-economic implications and small-type whaling (<http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2007.htm#schedule>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

GUIDEBOOK TO MARKETS AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF FORESTRY CDM PROJECTS

(CATIE, 2007) This guidebook, published by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), aims to provide information to project developers on markets and commercialization of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) from forestry projects, by means of outlining the development stages of a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) forestry project, the specific characteristics of forestry CERs and the demand for this type of credits (<http://www.proyectoforma.com/Documentos/Guidebookto-MarketsandCommercializationof-CDMforestryProjects.pdf>).

ILLEGAL LOGGING GOVERNMENT BAROMETER

(WWF, April 2007) This Barometer assesses the efforts of European governments to implement the EU's Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement Governance & Trade (FLEGT), which encourages voluntary partnerships between EU countries and timber producing countries to reduce illegal logging (<http://www.wwf.org.uk/barometer/intro.asp>).

MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT: TOOLKIT FOR UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION

(Island Press, 2007) This publication provides an overview of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and its key findings, resources to help communities and organizations bring the MA to practical use, and case studies exemplifying how people globally are using the principles of the MA to protect natural systems (<http://www.islandpress.org/matoolkit/MAToolkit.pdf>).

▶ WATER, WETLANDS AND COASTS



Makuleke Wetland (Photo courtesy of Ramsar)

RAMSAR, UNESCO AND IUCN SIGN MOU WITH AIRLINE GROUP, NEW SITES DESIGNATED

On 14 May 2007, the Ramsar Secretariat, on behalf of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-Man and the Biosphere (UNESCO-MAB) and IUCN-the World Conservation Union, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Star Alliance airline group, thereby launching "Biosphere Connections." This new programme is intended to provide a means to communicate what the three organizations are doing to the wider public. In addition, Star Alliance will assist field workers from the three environmental agencies with transport to relevant meetings, conferences and events (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.star_alliance_press.pdf).

The Ramsar Secretariat has also reported that Mexico and South Africa have designated new Ramsar sites. Mexico has designated its 66th site, Laguna Huizache-Caimanero, which consists of a series of wetlands, ranging from coastal and continental to artificial. The site is located along the Migratory Corridor of the Pacific, and is therefore of importance for migratory birds such as the American White Pelican and the Roseate Spoonbill. It also hosts a wide range of fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates, including vulnerable or endangered species, such as the American Crocodile, the Mexican Beaded Lizard, the Boa, the Mallard and the Olive Ridley (<http://www.ramsar.org/>

[archives/archives_trans_mexico_huizache.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_mexico_huizache.htm)).

The Republic of South Africa has listed two new Wetlands of International Importance: the sub-Antarctic Prince Edward Islands and the Makuleke Wetlands. The islands host numerous breeding seabirds and three penguin species, and commercial tourism and fishing within territorial waters are prohibited. The Makuleke Wetlands, most of which lies within the Kruger National Park in Limpopo Province, features riverine forests, riparian floodplain forests, floodplain grasslands, river channels and flood pans (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.southafrica_makuleke.htm).

SHIPWRECK REMOVAL CONVENTION ADOPTED

A Wreck Removal Convention has been adopted under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The IMO, with the support of the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON) and the government of Kenya, organized a diplomatic conference from 14-18 May 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya, to approve the Convention. Shipwrecks can pose hazards to navigation or, because of the nature of their cargo, to the marine and coastal environments, or to both. The Convention, which was prepared by the IMO Legal Committee, will make ship owners financially liable for wrecks and requires them to take out insurance or provide other financial security to cover the costs of wreck removal. It will also provide States with a right of direct action against insurers. In addition, the Convention includes provisions on: the report of and location of wrecks; determination of hazards when a wreck is beyond territorial waters; rights and obligations to remove hazardous ships and wrecks; financial liability; and settlement of disputes. The Convention will be open for signature until 18 November 2008, and thereafter will be open for ratification, accession or acceptance. It will enter into force twelve months following ratification by the tenth State (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8070).

▶ BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY CELEBRATED, CBD SECRETARIAT LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

This year's International Biodiversity Day on 22 May focused on biodiversity and climate change. Celebrations were held in a number of countries, while in Montreal, Canada, the seat of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), celebrations took place at the Botanical Gardens with the participation of government officials and international participants. In his message, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-

Moon noted that "the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change." CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghla stressed that "the relationship between biodiversity and climate change runs both ways. Climate change is an important driver of the loss of biodiversity. At the same time, the loss of biodiversity and the deterioration of natural habitats also contribute to climate change" (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2007/pr-2007-05-22-ibd-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2007/sp-2007-05-22-sg-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd>.

[int/doc/speech/2007/sp-2007-05-22-es-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2007/sp-2007-05-22-es-en.pdf)).

On the occasion of International Biodiversity Day, the CBD, jointly with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, launched a report on water, wetlands, biodiversity and climate change, based on the provisional outcomes of an expert meeting held on 23-24 March 2007, in Gland, Switzerland. The report addresses the major challenge of combating climate change, and provides some solutions regarding wetlands and biodiversity. It stresses that an effective partnership between

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

Yet, both governments and the UN are failing to address the need to integrate environment and development into decision making.

As the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 15) reveal, there are fundamental problems with the functioning of the UN's highest level forum on sustainable development. This includes, quite significantly, the fact that the CSD has not yet become the forum where national interests are overcome and addressed, through a global lens, for the benefit of all. This is not to say, however, that the CSD is a failure and should be written off. The CSD has over the years proved to be an important 'home' for keeping the broad sustainable development agenda under active review, and has been instrumental in launching a number of new initiatives and securing intergovernmental cooperation. Clearly though, this is not enough and the CSD can do better.

This was precisely the message six former Chairs¹ of the CSD sent to Member States at CSD 15. In an open letter to delegates, the Chairs endorsed a dialogue on the subject of sustainable development in the context of UN reform. The event signalled the beginning of a process of reflection on sustainable development governance and the role of the CSD in particular. A paper prepared by Stakeholder Forum, exploring how to address the current challenges related to international governance for sustainable development (IGSD), provided the basis for the conversation (available at <http://ieg.stakeholderforum.org/>). It proposed launching a two-track sustainable development initiative to enhance 'confidence building' between industrialized and developing countries in an effort to define the areas where the UN's institutions, and the CSD in particular, could contribute to the implementation of sustainable development. During the discussion, participants expressed a range of opinions on IGSD with a clear majority agreeing that a stocktaking exercise on the role of the CSD would be a useful exercise. The call for strengthening the CSD was also heard at the Ministerial level, and according to some sources, these issues were also raised and generally supported in the closed ministerial "straight talk" sessions held at the CSD.

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► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

Continued from page 3

the CBD and Ramsar Secretariats offers the possibility of significant progress, but an effective strategy needs to be designed, which includes having a stronger influence on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2007/pr-2007-05-22-wetlands-en.pdf>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/case-studies/wtr/cs-wtr-ramsar-en.pdf>).

On the same occasion, the CBD Secretariat launched its new website with a new domain name, featuring a graphic redesign and a revised navigation structure, designed to facilitate access to information (<http://www.cbd.int>; <http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2007/pr-2007-05-22-web-en.pdf>).

SIGNATORIES OF THE CMS MOU ON THE SIBERIAN CRANE MEET

The sixth Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane, an instrument developed under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), was held from 15-19 May 2007, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The meeting brought together 50 participants from across the region, including officials from all eleven Range States (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russian



Participants at the Meeting for the MoU concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (Photo courtesy of the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

EBRD FUNDS ENVIRONMENTAL REHABILITATION FOR RUSSIAN OIL FACILITIES

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will provide US\$300 million to Russia's Lukoil Company to fund a pioneer programme for the rehabilitation and enhancement of environmental, health and safety performance of facilities

Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Highlights of the meeting included: the official launch of the Western and Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Waterbirds, with the inclusion of an initial ten sites from five countries; elaboration and adoption of new, detailed Conservation Plans for each of the three flyways covered by the Siberian Crane MoU; review of important considerations related to the eventual integration, within the MoU framework, of activities currently being conducted under the GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project, which will draw to a close in 2009; and the inclusion of two additional partner organizations in the ranks of the MoU, Wetlands International and the Cracid Conservation and Breeding Centre (http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2007/05_May/sibc.htm; http://www.cms.int/news/PRESS/nwPR2007/05_May/sibnet.htm).

CITES LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE TRAINING COURSE

On the eve of its fourteenth Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) launched an interactive training course for enforcement officers and information module for prosecutors and the judiciary. Developed with the financial support of the European Commission, the course aims to introduce the Convention and issues related to enforcement to officers and customs officials who deal with CITES specimens. The information module for prosecutors and the judiciary includes information on legislation, factors considered in CITES-related cases, key considerations in case assessment, concepts used in the assessment of factors, possible sanctions, and key considerations in wildlife prosecution and case examples (<http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2007/E019.pdf>).

belonging to Russia's largest oil company. The project will set up the first systematic remedial programme in the EBRD area and will include activities such as funding pipeline replacement, gas flaring reduction, and facilities' modernization for energy saving and worker's safety (<http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/2007/070521b.htm>).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DSD POSTS CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF CSD-15, DESA CONTRIBUTES TO INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SANITATION PREPARATORY MEETING

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 posted the

Chairman's Summary of CSD-15. The Summary notes that it is presented in lieu of a decision document, because delegates did not reach a negotiated decision at the session. The text reviews the CSD-15 discussions on its thematic issues, energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change, as well as cross-cutting issues and means of

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

What is needed now is a concerted effort to explore how the UN's highest level forum on sustainable development can be revitalised to fulfil its crucial role in the intergovernmental system. Stakeholder Forum's paper offers two options on how governments could proceed, but political will is necessary to turn words into action.

Read the Full Article at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle27.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.

¹ *Børge Brende, CSD Chair 2004; Valli Moosa, CSD Chair 2003; Bedrich Moldan, CSD Chair 2001; Juan Mayr, CSD Chair 2000; Simon Upton, CSD Chair 1999; Henrique Cavalcanti, CSD Chair 1995*

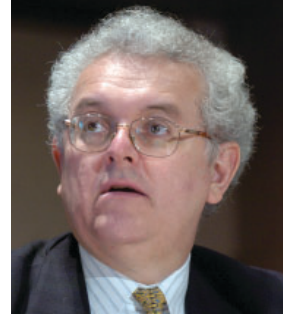
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Continued from page 4

implementation. An annex contains the text that the Chair presented to delegates during the final hours of CSD-15 as a proposed draft for their adoption. The EU and Switzerland rejected the text (http://www.un.org/esa/sust-dev/csd/csd15/documents/chair_summary.pdf).

On 7 May 2007, DESA, the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UN SAB) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) hosted a one-day preparatory meeting in New York, US, to develop an action plan for the 2008 International Year of Sanitation and beyond to help accelerate progress and public awareness. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the meeting and urged the participants to make the most of the opportunity provided by the official Year to generate "real, positive changes" for those without sanitation. The Prince of Orange, Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, who is Chairperson for the UNSAB, highlighted the

need to translate the general goals of the Year into measurable targets that include concrete plans and detailed figures. UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman sent a message highlighting the vulnerability of young people to diseases caused by a lack of proper sanitation. UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs José Antonio Ocampo called the lack of access to sanitation a "silent humanitarian crisis" because many people are too shy or embarrassed to discuss the problem openly (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_39569.html).



UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs José Antonio Ocampo

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNGA PRESIDENT APPOINTS SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE CHAIRS, HIGHLIGHTS CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE AND FOLLOW-UP DEBATE ON MDGs

The President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa stated in a letter on 25 May 2007 that, following



Christopher Hackett (Barbados)

extensive consultations with Member States to establish a transparent and inclusive process on System-wide Coherence, she has appointed

Christopher Hackett (Barbados) and Jean-Marc Hoscheit (Luxembourg) as Co-Chairs to lead the System-wide Coherence consultations, to begin in the end of June 2007 (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/PGA-Letter-25May07.pdf>). On 24 May 2007, Sheikha Haya notified UN Member States that she will convene a thematic debate on "Climate Change as a global challenge" in the second half of July 2007, following a request from the European Union and the Association of East Asian Nations (ASEAN) New York Committee. She also announced that the Permanent Representative of Mexico, Claude Heller Roussant, will take over the role as facilitator for International Environmental Governance from his predecessor Enrique Berruga (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/PGA-Letter-24May07.pdf>).



Jean-Marc Hoscheit (Luxembourg)

un.org/ga/president/61/letters/PGA-Letter-24May07.pdf).

In other UNGA related news, Sheikha Haya informed Member States on 7 May 2007, about the meeting entitled "Financing Development to achieve the MDGs" to take place in Doha, Qatar, from 17-18 June 2007, which is a follow-up to the thematic debate "Partnerships to achieve the MDGs," held in November 2006. The meeting could serve as an input to the preparatory process of the 'Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus,' which will convene in Doha in the second half of 2008 (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/PGA-Letter-07May07.pdf>; <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/DraftProgramme-07May07.pdf>).

UNEP TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN REACHES GOAL

The UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) *Billion Tree Campaign*, which sought to secure pledges to plant one billion trees worldwide during 2007, has achieved its goal seven months early. A pledge from Senegal to plant 20 million trees to mark the International Biodiversity Day took the campaign over its target. The campaign will now switch to ensuring that the pledges result in one billion planted trees by the end of the year (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=506&ArticleID=5587&I=en>).

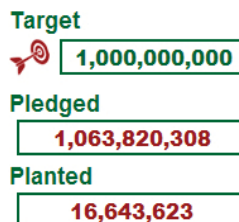


Image courtesy of UNEP

UN INITIATIVE ON RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT GAINING MOMENTUM

The Principles of Responsible Investment, an initiative of the UN Global Compact and the UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), has announced that on its first anniversary it has attained over 180 leading institutional signatories, representing more than US\$ 8 trillion in assets under management. The Principles of Responsible Investment are voluntary and provide a framework for analyzing environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) issues in the investment process. The newly established PRI Engagement Clearinghouse is the first global collaborative forum for investors to work together and share knowledge to take action on ESG issues (http://www.unpri.org/media/PRI_media_release_29-04-07.php).

EQUATOR PRIZE AWARDED TO FIVE COMMUNITY GROUPS

The UN Development Programme announced the winners of the Equator Prize on 22 May 2007 during a ceremony at UN headquarters in New York, US. Five community groups from tropical regions in Africa, Asia and Latin America won the US\$ 30,000 prize for their initiatives to alleviate poverty while conserving local biodiversity. The honor recognized efforts to: sustainably manage an octopus fishery in Madagascar; conserve grasslands and savannah as part of an ecotourism venture in Kenya; conserve nut forests in Guatemala; promote the alternative use of marine resources and control invasive plant species in Ecuador; and deliver information to locals about sustainable agricultural practices and market prices in Bangladesh (<http://content.unep.org/go/newsroom/2007/may/equator-prize-20070522.en>).

▶ CHEMICALS AND WASTES

ROTTERDAM CONVENTION LAUNCHES SIMPLIFIED URLS

In an effort to improve access to frequently visited sections of the Rotterdam Convention website, the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat has announced that it has created a number of simplified links to: designated national authorities (<http://www.pic.int/dnas.php>); Official Contact Points (<http://www.pic.int/ocps.php>); chemicals covered by the Convention (<http://www.pic.int/annexiii.php>); and links to PIC Circulars (<http://www.pic.int/circulars.php>), resource kits (<http://www.pic.int/resourcekit.php>) and technical assistance (<http://www.pic.int/ta.php>).

SAICM LAUNCHES REPORTING INITIATIVE

On 16 May 2007, the Strategic Approach to Chemicals Management (SAICM) announced the formal launch of a reporting initiative, which will seek to assist in the development of appropriate reporting modalities for the SAICM. Canada proposed the project to develop guidance for the Secretariat in consultation with stakeholders. The purpose of the project is to assist preparations for and deliberations at the second meeting of the International Committee on Chemicals Management (ICCM), scheduled for 2009, specifically regarding

approaches for measuring, assessing and reporting on progress under SAICM through 2020. The project will address the preparation of a baseline report and the development of indicators for subsequent progress reports and arrangements for gathering information from stakeholders. Results of the project may also inform other international forums, including the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, where toxic chemicals are scheduled for discussion during the 2010-2011 biennium (http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/Reporting/Project_launch_briefing16May07.doc).

▶ COMINGS AND GOINGS

- On 24 May 2007, the **UN General Assembly** elected Srgjan Kerim (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) as the **President** of its upcoming session. Kerim, who will assume his new role at the start of the Assembly's sixty-second session in September 2007, served as his country's Permanent Representative to the UN from 2001-2003, as well as in several positions within his national government (<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=22676&Cr=general&Cr1=assembly>).
- On 30 May 2007, US President Bush nominated Robert Zoellick to become the next **World Bank President**. The Bank's 24-member Board of Directors is expected to vote on this nomination soon. Zoellick has served in the US State Department and as US Trade Representative, and most recently has been Vice Chairman for International Affairs at Goldman Sachs (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070530-4.html>).



Srgjan Kerim (Photo courtesy of the UN)



Robert Zoellick (Photo courtesy of the World Economic Forum)

▶ KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **59TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION:** 28-31 May 2007. Anchorage, Alaska, US. <http://www.iwcoffice.org>
- **SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW-6):** 28-31 May 2007. Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo. <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/water/amcow/>
- **FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES):** 3-15 June 2007. The Hague, the Netherlands. <http://www.iisd.ca/cites/cop14/>
- **DIALOGUE ON KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES TO BE FACED BY THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL AND 27TH MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL:** 2-9 June 2007. Nairobi, Kenya. http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/upcoming_meetings.shtml
- **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATIONS: BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITY ACTION: A MESSAGE FOR OUR FUTURE:** 5 June 2007. Berlin, Germany. <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/wedc/>
- **FIRST SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:** 5-7 June 2007. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/gpdr1/>
- **CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF WATER UTILITIES IN THE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION:** 11-13 June 2007. Recife, Brazil. http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/water/workshop_lac/index.htm
- **GEF COUNCIL MEETING:** 11-15 June 2007. Washington DC, US. http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/council_documents.html
- **CGRFA-11:** 11-15 June 2007. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/cgrfa11.htm>
- **FINANCING DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE THE MDGS:** 17-18 June 2007. Doha, Qatar. <http://www.qatar-conferences.org>
- **THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA:** 14 and 18-22 June 2007. New York, US. http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/forthcomingmeetingtatesparties.htm
- **EIGHTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA:** 25-29 June 2007. New York, US. <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/icp8/>