



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

IPCC FINALIZES FOURTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded its 27th session after finalizing its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). The session, which was held from 12-17 November 2007, in Valencia, Spain, marked the culmination of several years' work by finalizing the Synthesis Report of the AR4. Having completed the reports of its three working groups earlier in 2007, the IPCC session in Valencia saw the adoption, after lengthy negotiations, of both the Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report and a longer version of the Report. Discussions on the texts focused primarily on what should be included in the shorter version, with debates about how the text from the earlier working group reports should be used in the condensed summary.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon receives the first copy of the Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report

The 23-page final draft of the Summary for Policymakers contains sections on the observed changes in climate and their effects, the causes of change, projected climate change and its impacts, adaptation and mitigation options, and the long-term perspective. After establishing the "unequivocal" warming of the climate system and the "very likely" impact of anthropogenic emissions, the report outlines a wide range of adaptation and mitigation options. It also suggests that neither adaptation nor mitigation alone can avoid all climate change impacts, but that they can complement each other and jointly reduce the risks of climate change significantly (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/ipcc27/>; <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24704&Cr=Climate&Cr1=>).

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GUEST ARTICLE I

A Tale of Two Cities: Lessons for Climate Negotiators

By Romina Picolotti, Argentina's Minister of Environment

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." So begins Dickens's novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. He could have been writing about climate change.

The powerful report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change two weeks ago shows why this may be the worst of times. Climate change is happening faster and with more devastating impacts than previously realized.

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GUEST ARTICLE II

Climate Variability, a Common Factor of Desertification and Climate Change

By Mélanie Requier-Desjardins, Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel

Abstract

Climate change refers to significant long-term modification of the climate, mainly due to human activities. The desertification phenomenon degrades land and soil in dry areas, according to various factors, among which are a combination of climate variations and human activity.

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The *MEA Bulletin* © is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was researched and written by Soledad Aguilar, Melanie Ashton, Alice Bisiaux, Reem Hajjar, Amber Moreen, Renata Rubian, Chris Spence, Elsa Tsioumani, Cecilia Vaverka and Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Diego Noguera. The Editor is Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. <lynn@iisd.org>. The Deputy Director of IISD Reporting Services is Chris Spence and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The *MEA Bulletin* is published by IISD in cooperation with UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DEL/C). Opinions expressed in *MEA Bulletin* are those of the authors and not the publishers. Excerpts from the *MEA Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on IISDRS publications, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St. Apt 11A, New York, NY 10022, USA.

GUEST ARTICLE I (cont.)

The report even appears to understate the problem, as it is the product of a multi-year process that isn't always able to include the most recent scientific data, such as the accelerating ice-melt in the Arctic and Greenland and the lower absorption of carbon dioxide by the oceans. When releasing the IPCC report, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that we may have as little as ten years until we reach the tipping point for abrupt and irreversible climate change, including catastrophic sea-level rise.

Adding to this increasingly dark picture of the worst of times is the disappointing performance of the Kyoto Protocol, the world's first attempt at an international climate treaty, designed to deliver reductions of 1 billion tons of CO₂-equivalent per year between 2008 and 2012, for a total of 5 billion tons of emissions reductions. Unfortunately, the Kyoto Parties are regressing, increasing their emissions by an additional 1 billion tons of CO₂-equivalent each year. While it is important that the Kyoto experiment continue, if Kyoto were a sports team, the fans would certainly be calling for a new coach and a new strategy.

This is the picture of the worst of times, where climate change is so serious it is considered by national security experts to be a greater threat than global terrorism.

But it also may be the best of times, with climate change moving quickly from scientific assessment into public consciousness, including into the boardrooms of the world. Recent issues of *Environmental Finance* show the optimism of the market as it moves aggressively into climate solutions. Markets are fueled by optimism - the one human emotion that may be even stronger than fear. Certainly optimism, more than fear, is what will save us. The challenge is in ensuring that market growth benefits all countries equitably.

A key role of modern environmental law is to harness and direct the power of optimism as well as fear, thus driving markets to a tipping point where they necessarily innovate and provide the environmentally superior solutions we need - essentially, a *Moore's Law* for climate solutions.

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► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

BALI CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE SET TO OPEN

The UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, which is expected to focus on arrangements for negotiating a post-2012 framework for action, will take place from 3-14 December 2007. The conference will consist of a series of UN events, including the: thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); third Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 3); twenty-seventh sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and Subsidiary Body for Implementation; the resumed fourth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol; and a ministerial segment for COP 13 and CMP 3, which is taking place from 12-14 December 2007 (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop13/>; http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13/items/4049.php).



Logo courtesy of UNFCCC

On 20 November, the UNFCCC Secretariat released a report containing emissions data from 40 industrialized countries that are parties to the UNFCCC. The report shows significant differences among parties to the Kyoto Protocol in terms of emissions trends between 1990 and 2005, with Germany, the UK and others showing marked reductions,

while others, such as Canada, showed overall increases. The report will be taken up in Bali by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbi/eng/30.pdf>).

The Secretariat has also recently released a number of other documents that will be considered at Bali. These include documents on deforestation in developing countries, carbon capture and storage, and "long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention" (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbsta/eng/misc14a03.pdf>; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbsta/eng/misc18a02.pdf>; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/04a01.pdf>).

UNEP AND SWEDEN TO HELP DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PHASE-OUT HCFCs

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) launched a partnership with the Swedish Environment Programme earlier this month aimed at assisting developing countries



Logo courtesy of UNEP

in their efforts to phase-out hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone-depleting chemicals that are also potent greenhouse gases (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=521&ArticleID=5709&l=en>). Parties to the Montreal Protocol agreed to an accelerated phase-out of HCFCs earlier this year. Concurrent with the launch of this new partnership, UNEP's OzonAction unveiled its HCFC Help Centre, aimed at assisting this effort (<http://www.unepie.org/ozonaction/topics/hcfc.asp>).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Launch of year of sanitation (Photo courtesy of UNDESA)

UNDESA ORGANIZES EXPERT GROUP ON INTEGRATING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO NATIONAL STRATEGIES, LAUNCHES YEAR OF SANITATION

The Division for Sustainable Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/UNDESA) organized an expert group meeting on "Integrating Climate Change into National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)" (12-13 November 2007, New York, US). Participants heard presentations on, *inter alia*, NSDS, linkages between climate change and sustainable development, impacts of climate change on agriculture, links between climate

change and national decision-making, national experiences in Ghana, Brazil, Barbados and the Cook Islands, adaptation strategies and technologies, adaptation and mitigation planning and response, and the role of forests and deforestation (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/egm_ClimateChange/index.htm).

UNDESA also organized, on 21 November 2007, the global launch of the International Year of Sanitation, in collaboration with the UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation. The theme year is scheduled to encourage public-private partnerships, and will include regional conferences on sanitation as part of capacity building initiatives, including one that will focus on school sanitation (http://esa.un.org/iys/iys_launch.shtml).



Launch of year of sanitation (Photo courtesy of UNDESA)

GUEST ARTICLE I (cont.)

And so we come to the second city in our tale of two cities: Montreal, where 191 countries of the world just celebrated the 20th anniversary of the ozone treaty know as the Montreal Protocol – acknowledged to be the world's best environmental treaty – by explicitly providing climate benefits and solutions, in addition to its original ozone protection mandate.

The Montreal Protocol is reducing climate emissions by a net of 135 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent between 1990 and 2010, and delaying climate change by up to 12 years – helping to keep us from a catastrophic tipping point for abrupt climate change. If early efforts starting back in 1974 to phase-out ozone depleting substances are considered, the effects of climate change have been delayed by a Planet-saving 35 to 41 years, according to a recent study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

In September at the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, the 191 parties bought the world some critical time when they reached consensus to accelerate the phase-out of HCFCs in a way that promotes climate mitigation. As a result, the Parties will reduce GHG emissions by at least 15 billion tons of CO₂-equivalent.

Moreover, the HCFC adjustment was the first time both developing and developed countries, including China, India and the US, essentially agreed on mandatory climate reductions. While the ozone treaty buys more time to avoid the tipping point for abrupt climate change while we get the post-2012 climate regime up and running, the Montreal Protocol also offers the world something more. It provides a beacon of hope – a model of successful environmental governance.

The Montreal Protocol's "start and strengthen" approach is illustrated by its initial CFC phase-out in 1987: the treaty started with 50% phase-out by 2000 for developed countries. This regulatory signal was so successful, and the market responded so quickly with substitutes, that each subsequent year the Parties accelerated the phase-out schedules, ultimately to 100% by 1996 for CFCs, even as they added chemicals. The ozone treaty is now phasing out 96 ozone-depleting substances in more than 240

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► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CITES SECRETARIAT POSTS ANIMALS AND PLANTS COMMITTEES' AGENDAS

The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has uploaded the provisional agenda of the 17th meeting of the Plants Committee, to be held from 15-19 April 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland, as well as the provisional agenda of the 23rd meeting of



Logo courtesy of CITES

the Animals Committee, to be held from 19-24 April 2008, also in Geneva (<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/17/index.shtml>; <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/23/index.shtml>).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

STOCKHOLM POPRC 3 DEVELOPS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COP 4 CONSIDERATION

The third meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC 3) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) took place from 19-23 November 2007, in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 100 participants attended the meeting, including all 31 Committee members, 39 government and party observers and representatives from 24 non-governmental organizations. POPRC 3 approved the risk management evaluation for five chemicals, and recommended that COP 4 consider listing the following under



Donald Cooper, Stockholm Convention Executive Secretary, announced the launch of a new version of the electronic system for national reports

Annex A (elimination): lindane; chlordecone; hexabromobiphenyl (HBB); and pentabromodiphenyl ether (pentaBDE). It also recommended that COP 4 consider listing, under Annex A or Annex B (restriction), perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), its salts, and PFOS fluoride (PFOSF). Risk profiles were approved for four chemicals, and POPRC-3 adopted a draft work programme to prepare draft risk management evaluations for those chemicals, namely on: commercial octabromodiphenyl ether, pentachlorobenzene, and alpha and beta hexachlorocyclohexane. The decision on the risk profile for short-chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) was deferred until POPRC 4, scheduled to convene in October 2008 (http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/poprc_3/meetingdocs/default.htm; <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/poprc3/>).

In other Stockholm Convention news, the Convention has launched an information system on DDT, jointly with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The information system provides access to relevant up-to-date information and guidance on DDT and its alternatives in disease vector control. The System compiles information and can be used to monitor the production, use and

management of DDT on a national, regional and global scale. It is especially developed as a tool for exchanging data, experiences and expertise on the management and use of DDT within and between regions (<http://www.pops.int/documents/ddt/default.htm>; <http://www.chem.unep.ch/ddt/Default.html>). The Stockholm Convention has also launched a new version of the Electronic Reporting System for national reports (<http://www.pops.int/Art15/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fArt15%2fDefault.aspx>).

BASEL CONVENTION POSTS OEWG REPORT

The Basel Convention Secretariat has posted the advance version of the Report of the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (3-7 September 2007, Geneva, Switzerland). Participants at this meeting took 27 decisions on, *inter alia*: the terms of reference for review of Basel Convention Regional Coordinating Centers; enlargement of the scope of the Trust Fund to Assist Developing Countries; the Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation; guidance on dealing with abandonment of ships; the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative; and resource mobilization and sustainable financing (<http://www.basel.int/meetings/oewg/oewg6/docs/29reportADVANCE.pdf>).

PACIFIC ISLAND WORKSHOP ON SAICM DISCUSSES CHEMICALS PLANS AND INITIATIVES

The Pacific Island Workshop on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) took place from 8-9 November 2007, in Apia, Samoa. Participants heard presentations on, *inter alia*: UNITAR and SAICM enabling activities; the SAICM Quick Start Programme; Green Customs initiatives; the sound management of chemicals and the Millennium Development Goals; and the Stockholm Convention Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) and Pacific Island participation. Participants agreed to nominate national focal points, and to develop national and regional projects and participate in the Stockholm Convention GMP (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/pacific/default.htm>).

GUEST ARTICLE I (cont.)

industry sectors and many thousands of applications.

It is important to remember that when the Montreal Protocol was negotiated, CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances were considered essential for a modern way of life. The manufacture and use of these chemicals were multi-billion dollar enterprises, covering everything from cosmetics to telecommunications and refrigerators to computers. Viable substitutes for many applications did not exist in 1987, but the Parties forged ahead, and over time many businesses found they not only could innovate to develop substitutes but also comply with the treaty, often at a profit.

Montreal's governance system includes a number of crucial lessons of success for the post-Kyoto agreement. One stands out: a dedicated funding mechanism that covers the incremental costs of transferring superior substitutes to developing country parties. The next climate change treaty needs to substantially improve technology in developing countries to stave off the effects of climate change. Efficient technology transfer and financing for climate change needs to envision mitigation and adaptation as a symbiotic unit. Countries least able to adapt to climate impacts are already feeling the burden, and if we do in fact reach that tipping point for abrupt climate change, the brunt of the devastation will be borne principally by those least able to save themselves. There is no question that the most effective means to address adaptation is through concrete and immediate action on mitigation.

In the battle against climate change, time is truly of the essence. The lessons of Montreal need to be studied and implemented now. In just 20 years, the ozone treaty has phased out 95% of global production of ozone-depleting substances within a framework that is effective and considered equitable. A governance system that has delayed climate change by up to 41 years, and solved a part of the climate problem that otherwise would have been nearly equal to the CO₂ contribution today, clearly has something important to teach the Parties in Bali next week as we begin negotiations on the post-2012 climate regime.

The question remains: which of the two cities will we choose?

▶ FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND



Ositadinma Anaedu chaired the ESCOP contact group

UNCCD ESCOP ADOPTS PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

On 26 November 2007, the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) serviced the first Extraordinary Session of the Conference of the Parties (ESCOP). COP 8 had agreed to convene this session in New York, US, at UN headquarters before the end of 2007, because it did not complete consideration of the programme and budget item on its agenda. Delegates met in plenary and a contact group, and undertook extensive consultations to negotiate whether the budget would include a 5% euro value increase, a figure that almost achieved consensus in Madrid, a zero growth budget, which was called for by Japan in Madrid, or

some level in between. Delegates presented and defended proposals ranging from 0% euro value growth to 5% euro value growth. The final decision calls for 4% euro value growth of the budget for 2008-09, with 2.8% to be assessed to all parties and 1.2% to be contributed as a voluntary contribution by the Government of Spain. The extraordinary session was gavelled to a close at 3:58 am (<http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop8/>; <http://www.unccd.int/cop/e-cop8/menu.php>).

GOVERNOR OF AMAZONAS STATE VISITS ITTO

Eduardo Braga, governor of the Brazilian state Amazonas, visited the headquarters of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), in Tokyo, Japan, on 19 November 2007, to discuss possible collaboration in the areas of community forestry, including forest extension, forest law enforcement and a phased approach to certification, and administration of a planned forest concession system. ITTO's Executive Director Emmanuel Ze Meka pledged to work closely with the Governor to assist Amazonas in promoting sustainable development based on its forest resources. Amazonas has the most intact forest ecosystem in the Amazon, with 98% forest cover (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelid=217&id=3713>).

▶ WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

NEW RAMSAR SITES DESIGNATED, AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING UNDER WAY

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced the designation of new Wetlands of International Importance by the Governments of Guinea, Togo and Germany. The two Guinean sites are "Bafing-Falém," an extensive area of rolling terrain, and "Bafing-Source," which comprises an extended highland area, wooded savannah, gallery forest and wet meadow (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_guinea_bafing.htm). The two Togolese sites are "Bassin versant Oti-Mandouri," the large catchment of the Oti-Mandouri River and the "Zones Humides du Littoral du Togo," which comprises the entire coastal area in the south (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_togo2007.htm). The German site, "Bayerische Wildalm," is an area of peatland concentration in the southern state of Bavaria (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

The Africa Regional Meeting in preparation of Ramsar COP 10, which opened on 26 November 2007 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, will conclude on 30 November. Meeting participants will, *inter alia*: address problems and challenges faced in the implementation of the Convention in Africa; engage in thematic discussions on regional priorities; and set priorities for the next triennium (2008-2011) (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_africa2008_index.htm; http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_africa2008_agenda_e.pdf).

IMO CONSIDERS GHG EMISSION CONTROLS; LONDON CONVENTION PARTIES CONVENE; MARPOL AMENDMENT COMES INTO FORCE

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Efthimios Mitropoulos, has announced that he will propose that the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) expedite its work on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships at the MEPC's next meeting, scheduled to take place in March/April 2008, in London, UK (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8704).

In related news, the 29th Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention) and the second meeting of Contracting Parties to the 1996 Protocol thereto (London Protocol) was held in London, UK, from 5-9 November 2007. After considering a report from their scientific advisers, parties decided that large-scale fertilization of the oceans using micronutrients to sequester carbon dioxide is currently not justified, as the state of knowledge about the effectiveness and potential environmental impacts of such activities is currently insufficient. The meeting also completed the guidelines for assessment of carbon dioxide capture and storage in sub-

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GUEST ARTICLE II (cont.)

If all other factors remain constant, climate change will increase the risks of desertification in dry areas. There are several possibilities to ensure that efforts undertaken for adaptation and the fight against desertification converge.

Information is vital for adaptation, and climate and environment monitoring is indispensable for forecasting risks. However, the results of the most advanced research must be made accessible and understandable both to national structures in charge of managing and preventing crises and as well as to final users (populations, civil society, NGOs). Translating and distributing information and scientific knowledge requires specific pedagogical skills. Exchanges of experience, for instance between the North and the South of the Sahara, should also be promoted in this framework.

To ensure better management of available information, it is essential to develop a base of regional knowledge of the crucial stakes involved in degradation of natural resources. Such a base will only be viable if it is regularly fed on a national level, through all initiatives related to the environment and socio-economic development. It would require setting up or reinforcing national systems for observing and evaluating natural resources. It would also be useful to specify how monitoring of desertification feeds into climate monitoring. Thus, setting up or reinforcing national information systems for environmental issues would make it possible to improve implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

Regional cooperation is important to the extent that many African countries share natural resources (river basins, aquifers, protected reserves, etc.), belong to common institutions and are subject to the same environmental concerns, including degradation of land and climate variability and change. It may be possible to reinforce regional networks through African organisations on a sub-regional, regional or even international level. Such a regional platform should also involve sub-regional authorities, specialised sub-regional technical organisations working together with bilateral cooperation organisations, multi-lateral organisations with databases on Africa, as well as environmental NGOs.

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▶ WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

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seabed geological formations (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8706).

The IMO has also announced that the amendments to Annex VI - Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships - of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and establishing the North Sea SOx Emission Control Area (SECA) entered into force on 22 November 2007 (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8719).

Finally, the IMO has reported that the Government of Greece announced it will donate US\$ one million to support projects carried out by the recently created Cooperative Mechanism between the littoral States of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, which is aimed to enhance the safety, security and environmental protection of this shipping route (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8717).

ASIAN GPA TRAINING WORKSHOP UNDERWAY

The UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) Coordination Office is organizing a training workshop



Photo courtesy of UNEP/GPA



Photo courtesy of UNEP/GPA

on the implementation and mainstreaming of the GPA at the national level in Chennai, India, from 27-29 November 2007. This is the first of three regional workshops the GPA Coordination Office was mandated to organize during the Second Intergovernmental Review of the GPA (October 2006, Beijing, China). The workshop has convened Asian government representatives of environment, finance and planning ministries of countries involved in the implementation of the GPA at the national level, as well as other key stakeholders. The workshop aims to: ensure sustainable national actions through integrating sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands and their associated watersheds into relevant national development processes; introduce results-based planning and monitoring with regard to activities addressing the coastal and marine environment; and provide background on financing, legislation and policy for the implementation of the GPA (IISD sources; <http://www.gpa.unep.org/content.html?ln=6&id=388>).



Photo courtesy of UNEP/GPA

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

GEF COUNCIL ADOPTS US\$ 237 MILLION WORK PROGRAMME

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council met in Washington, DC, US, from 14-16 November 2007, to address, among other issues, the GEF's relations with multi-lateral environmental agreements and other institutions, the possible establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Adaptation Fund under the GEF, an evaluation of the GEF's Small Grants Programme, the terms of reference for a mid-term review of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), and the GEF work programme.

On the establishment of the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund (AF) under the aegis of the GEF, members discussed how to incorporate such a fund under the GEF, and who would be responsible for decisions on policy and management of the funds. In particular, members debated the composition of the

Governing Body that will manage the AF and the designation of the GEF Secretariat as Secretariat of the AF. They agreed to maintain a flexible approach, allowing negotiations to continue and decisions to be made by UNFCCC parties in Bali.

On the Small Grants Programme (SGP), members decided, among other things, to reform management costs to reflect services rendered rather than a fixed percentage and to revise current criteria for access to SGP resources to maintain cost efficiency.

The Council also approved a work programme (GEF/C.32/6/Rev.1) with a total in GEF financing of US\$ 237.46 million. The work programme introduces a new type of GEF funding for financing programmatic approaches through several projects within an overarching framework. It thus includes 26 free-standing projects and three programmatic approaches. The programmatic ap-

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GUEST ARTICLE II (cont.)

Devising strategies to adapt to climate variability and changes should be a process that reinforces, supports, stimulates and emphasizes the different environmental governance principles defined by the concerned countries and by the actions envisaged as part of the fight against desertification, or the conservation of biodiversity; actions that have not yet been effectively implemented. On the international level, it will be a good idea to redefine the framework for reinforcing relations between UNCCD and UNFCCC, in particular through decisions to be taken on adaptation.

Read the Full Article at: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle37b.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.

▶ TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

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proaches set out a partnership for biodiversity in China (three projects), a framework for sustainable forest management (with nine projects in Malaysia, Brazil, Mongolia, Russia, Tanzania, Indonesia, Iran and Paraguay, among others), and a thematic approach for sustainable land and ecosystem management in India (two projects). The free standing projects address, *inter alia*: biodiversity (with a regional project in Asia, two in Brazil, and single projects in Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Indonesia and Ukraine); climate change (with a global project, three projects in China, two in Indonesia, and individual country projects in India, Thailand and Yemen); international waters (with regional projects in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and South America); and persistent organic pollutants (with projects in Ghana, Mexico, Morocco, Russia, Tunisia, and Vietnam) ([http://gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Documents/Council_Documents_\(PDF_DOC\)/GEF-C32/Joint%20Summary%20of%20the%20Chairs.pdf](http://gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Documents/Council_Documents_(PDF_DOC)/GEF-C32/Joint%20Summary%20of%20the%20Chairs.pdf); <http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=17146>).

The Council meeting was preceded by a non-governmental organization (NGO) Consultation on 13 November, during which the GEF Secretariat briefed NGOs on the key issues to be addressed by the Council. NGOs were introduced to Sekou Toure, the GEF ombudsman, to whom they were invited to address concerns regarding GEF projects. NGOs were also updated on the GEF NGO Network Strategy and Four Year Operational Plan, which the GEF NGO Network has developed (IISD Sources).



Sékou Touré, GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner

▶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO ESTABLISH ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND; TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN CLOSE TO GOAL

On 22 November 2007, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) announced an agreement with the Republic of Korea to establish a Trust Fund that addresses key environmental issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), with the Republic of Korea contributing US\$ 4.4 million. The Trust Fund will focus on forest depletion, declining water quality, air pollution, land degradation and biodiversity in the DPRK, in addition to supporting eco-housing initiatives, environmental education, the clean development mechanism and renewable energy technology. In 2004, UNEP signed a Framework Agreement for Cooperation in Environment with the DPRK, and published the first DPRK State of the Environment report (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=521&ArticleID=5710&I=en>).

UNEP has also announced that more than 100 developing countries now have access to one of the world's largest online databases of environmental science research. The 16 November 2007 press release notes that the "Online Access to Research in the Environment" (OARE) project, coordinated by UNEP, Yale University, the International Association of Scientific Technical and Medical Publishers, and over 340 international publishers and scientific societies, was launched in 2006 to offer free or low-cost access, to assist in bridging the North-South scientific and digital divide and to strengthen environmental institutions in developing nations (<http://www.oaresciences.org/publicity/PressRelease11.06.07.pdf>; <http://www.oaresciences.org/en/>).

Meanwhile, UNEP's *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign*, which was launched in November 2006 with the objective of securing pledges to plant one billion trees worldwide in 2007, has recorded that 806 million trees have been planted thus far. This announcement came following confirmation

by the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry on 20 November 2007 that the country planted 150 million trees during 2007 (http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/20th_Nov.asp).

UNGA ADOPTS CLIMATE CHANGE RESOLUTION

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted, on 19 November 2007, at UN headquarters in New York, US, a draft resolution (A/62/L.11/Rev.1) requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report of the UN systems' activities in relation to climate change. The resolution originates from the consensus reached during the general debate of the 62nd UNGA session, under the theme "Responding to Climate Change," to develop a global response to climate change. The report is expected to provide input for the thematic debate on this issue scheduled for early February 2008 (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10660.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letterclimatechange161107.pdf>).

▶ KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN BALI:** 3-14 December 2007. Bali, Indonesia. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop13/>
- **FOREST DAY: SHAPING THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE:** 8 December 2007. Bali, Indonesia. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop13/fd/>
- **DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE DAYS:** 8-9 December 2007. Bali, Indonesia. <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop13/dcd/>
- **SECOND MEETING OF THE AD HOC JOINT WORKING GROUP ON ENHANCED COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS:** 10-13 December 2007. Vienna, Austria. http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=29
- **CMS MEETING TO IDENTIFY AND ELABORATE AN OPTION FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON MIGRATORY SHARKS:** 11-13 December 2007. Mahé, the Seychelles. <http://www.iisd.ca/cms/sdsey/>