



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

KYOTO PROTOCOL'S FIRST COMMITMENT PERIOD BEGINS

The first "commitment period" has started for countries with emissions targets under the Kyoto Protocol. The commitment period, which began on 1 January 2008, will continue for five years, concluding on 31 December 2012. During this period, most industrialized countries and countries with "economies in transition" (including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States), are obliged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions below levels agreed under the Protocol. These targets compare emissions for the period 2008-2012 against a baseline year of 1990. While each country's target differs, the average reduction expected from this group is five percent (http://www.iisd.ca/process/climate_atmfccintro.htm). In an effort to meet their obligations, many countries are already employing domestic measures, as well as the Protocol's "flexible mechanisms" (emissions trading, joint implementation, and the Clean Development Mechanism, CDM). In December 2007, the 100 millionth certified emission reduction (CER) credit under the CDM was issued (http://unfccc.int/files/press/releases/application/pdf/20071218_100_mio_cer_press_release_final.pdf).



Dais at the 1997 Kyoto Protocol negotiations: (L-R) Then UNFCCC Executive Secretary Michael Zammit Cutajar and Amb. Raoul Estrada.

Climate change meetings during the first half of 2008 will include the First Session of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group (AWG) on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC and Fifth Session of the AWG under the Kyoto Protocol, which are expected to take place in March or April. These will be followed in June by the 28th Sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies to the UNFCCC, the resumed fifth session of the AWG under the Protocol, and the second AWG on long term action under the UNFCCC. Further meetings of the two AWGs will be held in August or September. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will hold its 28th session in April, to discuss the IPCC's future work and directions (http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008; <http://www.ipcc.ch/>).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

STATE OF EUROPE'S FORESTS – 2007

(Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, FAO and UN Economic Commission for Europe, 2007) This report on the status of sustainable forest management (SFM) in Europe concludes that, *inter alia*, Europe is moving towards SFM and indicators of SFM are working, though a few countries have not given sufficient policy priority to monitoring forests and some possess weak forest sector institutions (http://www.mcpfe.org/system/files/u1/publications/pdf/state_of_europes_forests_2007.pdf).

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GUEST ARTICLE

Adaptive Policies: Meeting the Policymaker's Challenge in Today's Complex, Dynamic and Uncertain World

By Darren Swanson, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and Suruchi Bhadwal, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Today's policymaker has a tough job to do. Crafting public policies to ensure our economic, social and environmental wellbeing is challenging under the best of circumstances.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES *(cont.)***2007 WORLD WATER WEEK SYNTHESIS REPORT**

(SIWI, 2007) This resource is the synthesis report of 2007 World Water Week (12-18 August 2007, Stockholm, Sweden), which was organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) around the theme "Striving for Sustainability in a Changing World." The report synthesizes the discussions during the week and is intended to contribute to the 2008 UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) review of the first implementation cycle (2004/2005) of the CSD multi-year programme of work, focused on the themes of water, sanitation, and human settlements (http://www.siwi.org/downloads/WWW-Symp/Synthesis_07_web.pdf).

CARBON CRUNCH – COUNTING THE COST

(UNEP FI, 2007) This briefing paper, published by the UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative's (UNEP FI) Climate Change Working Group, highlights the crucial role of the finance sector in climate change mitigation and adaptation, owing to its influence in directing investment and financial flows, and reviews what leading financial institutions are doing to address climate change. The paper also underlines the importance of the policy-making community in setting up the regulatory frameworks that will provide the necessary long-term investment horizons (http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/documents/CEObriefing_carbon_crunch.pdf).

WORLD IN TRANSITION – CLIMATE CHANGE AS A SECURITY RISK

(German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2007) The key message of this report is that without resolute global action, climate change will overstretch many societies' adaptive capacities within the coming decades, which could result in destabilization and violence, jeopardizing national and international security. The report lists potential hotspots, including northern and southern Africa alongside countries in the Sahel region, the Mediterranean and Central Asia (http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007_engl.html).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE

MULTILATERAL FUND RELEASES REPORT; ANALYSIS HELPS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MANAGE ODS PHASE-OUTS

The Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol has released the final report of the 53rd meeting of its Executive Committee (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/news/1199309826076.htm>). The report lays out the issues discussed, including programme implementation, and the status of contributions, disbursements, resources and planning.

In implementation news, the Belize National Ozone Unit has established a new website detailing, *inter alia*, its national compliance strategies and plans (<http://www.noubelize.gov.bz>). The Nigerian government is reporting that it has begun a sensitization campaign to raise awareness about the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200712101389.html>). China has eliminated the use of chlorofluoro-



Image courtesy of the National Ozone Unit



Image courtesy of CCTV

carbons (CFCs) in its tobacco industry (<http://www.cctv.com/english/20071220/101228.shtml>). Illegal imports of ODS through the port of Gujarat in India have been reported (<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Gujarat-ports-become-transit-points-for-smuggling-illegal-ODSs/255507/>). And, the Green Customs' Fourth Partners' Meeting will take place in Paris, France, from 23-24 January 2008 (<http://www.greencustoms.org/news.htm#fourth>). In addition, looking towards the impending phase-outs of many ODS in developing countries in 2010 and beyond, a new analysis by the OzonAction Branch of the UN Environment Programme's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE) analyzes developing countries' trends of consumption and production of methyl bromide, CFCs, hydrochlorofluorocarbons and halons (<http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/information/trends/index.htm>).



Image courtesy of UNEP

Several meetings will take place under the purview of the Montreal Protocol in the first half of 2008, including meetings of the technical options committees (TOCs) and the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), the 40th Meeting of the Implementation Committee (tentatively scheduled for 2-4 July, Bangkok, Thailand), and the 28th Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (tentatively scheduled for 7-11 July, Bangkok, Thailand).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

AD HOC JOINT WORKING GROUP HOLDS SECOND SESSION

The second meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group (AHJWG) on Enhanced Cooperation and Coordination between the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions convened from 10-13 December 2007 in Vienna, Austria. Participation in the meeting was limited to the 45 members of the AHJWG. The meeting discussed administrative, information management and public awareness, technical substantive, and organizational issues. The meeting agreed that intersessional work prior to the third meeting will focus on developing draft recommendations on, *inter alia*: administrative issues including back-to-back meetings, resource mobilization, financial management and audit functions; information and public awareness; technical substantive issues including national reporting and potential coordination on compliance; and organizational issues including coordination at the national level, programmatic cooperation in the field and coordinated use of offices and regional centers. The AHJWG agreed that it would meet again from 25-28 March 2008 in Rome, Italy. The recommendations from the

meeting will be considered by Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions at their respective meetings (23-27 June 2008, Bali, Indonesia; 27-31 October 2008, Rome, Italy; and 4-8 May 2009, Geneva, Switzerland) (IISD RS sources; <http://ahjwg.chem.unep.ch/>).

SAICM REQUESTS COMMENTS ON AGENDAS

The Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) released the draft provisional agenda for the meeting of the Open-Ended Legal and Technical Working Group (OELTWG) meeting and the Second International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-2). The OELTWG is tentatively scheduled to take place in Rome, Italy, from 22-24 October 2008, back-to-back with the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention. ICCM-2 is scheduled to convene in Geneva, from 11-15 May 2009, immediately prior to the 62nd World Health Assembly. Stakeholders are requested to submit comments to the Secretariat (<http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/OELTWG/Open-ended.htm> and <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/iccm/ICCM2/iccm2.htm>).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

**THE ART OF DIPLOMACY:
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE
MONTREAL PROTOCOL**

(*Our Planet*, UNEP, 2007) This issue of the UN Environment Programme's magazine *Our Planet* contains articles and reflections on the ozone layer, national and international efforts to protect it, and the remaining challenges (<http://new.unep.org/ourplanet/2007/sept/en/>).

**REN21 RENEWABLES GLOBAL
STATUS REPORT 2007**

(REN21, 2007) This pre-publication summary for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 13, issued by the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), argues that renewable energy has evolved from an "alternative" source of energy to a mainstream energy option, underlining that it is one of the best options for carbon emission mitigation (http://www.ren21.net/pdf/REN21_GSR2007_Prepub_web.pdf).

**DO TREES GROW ON MONEY? THE
IMPLICATIONS OF DEFORESTATION
RESEARCH FOR POLICIES TO
PROMOTE REDD**

(CIFOR, 2007) Written by Markku Kaninen and others at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), this study cautions that the push to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) will fail unless the underlying causes of deforestation are addressed. The report calls for financial incentives to flip political and economic realities that cause deforestation (http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/cop/REDD_paper071207.pdf).

**LIVEABLE CITIES: THE BENEFITS
OF URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING**

(UNEP et al., 2007) This report, published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Cities Alliance and ICLEI -Local Governments for Sustainability, explores various options for sustainable urban development, emphasizing that environmental management can prove a strong marketing tool for attracting investors, in addition to helping address climate change and contributing to public health and poverty eradication (http://www.unep.org/urban_environment/PDFs/LiveableCities.pdf).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

**ITTO EVENTS CONSIDER LINKS TO
CLIMATE CHANGE**

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) has posted presentations from the side event it held during "Forest Day" at the UN Climate Change Conference in December 2007. This event addressed implementing sustainable forest management in support of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) in the tropics (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageld=223&id=3616>). On 20 December 2007, Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO Executive Director, addressed the Yokohama City Council, the host city of the Organization's headquarters since 1986, and described ITTO's work on issues such as climate change, poverty, illegal logging and biodiversity, and stressed the importance of environmental education and engaging local children in forest issues. He also highlighted that Yokohama will host the fourth international conference on African development (TICAD IV) from 28-30 May 2008, with climate change high on the agenda (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageld=217&id=3756>). January-June 2008 activities for ITTO will include an international conference on the role of sustainable management of tropical forests in mitigating climate change (dates to be set in March-May, Yokohama, Japan). An intersessional meeting will also convene in Accra, Ghana, from 2-5 June, to discuss the organization's policy work and make recommendations to the Council for its 44th session next November.



Ze Meka addresses Yokohama City Council (Photo courtesy of UNDP)

**COUNTRY- AND REGION-LED
INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT UNFF'S
WORK**

Following the UN General Assembly's adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests in December 2007, several initiatives are being planned for the upcoming months in support of the work of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the implementation of the Instrument. From 28-30 January 2008, Switzerland and Australia will host a Region-Led Initiative in Ge-

neva, Switzerland, on regional processes in support of the UNFF to promote and enhance the contribution and participation of regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments in the UNFF's work, with a view to contribute to enhanced implementation of sustainable forest management (http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/cli/Australian_Swiss_Region_Led_Initiative.pdf). In addition, Switzerland and South Africa will host a Country-Led Initiative focused on forest governance and decentralization in Africa from 8-11 April 2008, in Durban, South Africa (<http://www.intercooperation.ch/projects/p170>).

**UNCCD'S GM ORGANIZES
CONSULTATION ON MIGRATION
AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Global Mechanism (GM) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) organized an expert consultation on desertification, migration and local development, from 26-29 November 2007, in Tripoli, Libya. Participants examined the impact of forced migration as a consequence of natural resource degradation and poverty in the Sahel-Saharan region and identified the need for further research and analysis to, among others: provide a common definition of the concept of environmental migration at the international level; address migration issues in the implementation of National Action Programmes (NAPs) and Sub-Regional Action Programmes (SRAPs); promote North-to-South and South-to-South development partnerships to address migration issues and local development; and increase sub-regional and international solidarity towards migrants. Participants also developed arguments to use with national decision makers and development partners to mobilize investment in sustainable land management in drought-stricken areas, as a way of addressing the migration issue (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news--events/events/expert-consultation-on-desertification-migration-and-local-development-in-sahel-saharan-states/>).

UNCCD activities during the January-June 2008 period are anticipated to include a high-level policy dialogue convened by Executive Secretary Gnacadja to foster awareness of UNCCD issues among policy decision makers.

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

**RAMSAR ORGANIZES COP 10
PREPARATORY MEETING; NEW
RAMSAR SITES DESIGNATED**

The Ramsar Secretariat is organizing the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Ramsar Convention, which opened on 14 January in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 150 participants are registered and will focus on ma-

ior challenges for wetlands, biodiversity and climate change in preparation for the October 2008 COP in Changwon, Republic of Korea. The meeting will continue until 18 January and include a visit to the Bang Pu Nature Education Centre, run jointly by WWF-Thailand and the Royal Thai Army (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_asia2008_index.htm).

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

ANNUAL EC REPORT ON MEMBER STATES' EFFORTS DURING 2006 TO ACHIEVE A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE BETWEEN FISHING CAPACITY AND FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

(European Commission (EC), 2007)
 This report is based on the most recent annual reports provided by member States on their fleets, together with data from the EU Fishing Fleet register. The Commission concludes that: the quality of the reports from member States is not satisfactory and does not allow it to draw clear conclusions regarding overcapacity of the EU fleet; nominal capacity continued to decline in 2006 at a slow but steady rate; and this reduction is too little, given the big reductions in fishing effort required for the sustainable management of several key commercial fish stocks (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0828en01.pdf).

BENCHMARKING STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

(WWF Switzerland and Norway, 2007)
 In this study, WWF identifies four main areas of concern that it argues must be addressed by any certification programme aiming to influence the long-term sustainability of the aquaculture industry: environmental issues; social issues; animal welfare and health; and standard development and verification procedures (http://assets.panda.org/downloads/benchmarking_study_wwf_aquaculture_standards_low_res_with_annex_.pdf).

GREATER MEKONG ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

(UNEP, 2007) According to this report, a joint publication of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Thailand Environment Institute, economic growth together with growing population pressures has led to widespread pollution, land degradation and depletion of natural resources in the Greater Mekong region. The report calls for a strong mechanism for an integrated approach to address environmental challenges in the region (<http://www.roap.unep.org/publications/GMEO.pdf>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS



Photos courtesy of Ramsar

The Ramsar Secretariat has announced the designation of new Wetlands of International Importance by the Governments of Nepal and Korea. The four high altitude Nepalese sites are a group of Himalayan lakes, which are within national parks: Gokyo and Associated Lakes; Gosaikunda and Associated Lakes; Phoksundo Lake; and Rara Lake (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.nepal_4new.htm). The two Korean sites are wetlands conservation areas: the Du-ung Wetland and Moojehineup (http://www.ramsar.org/archives/archives_trans_korea_duung.htm).

In addition, the Secretariat is posting, as they are finalized, documents for the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee, which is scheduled to take place from 25-29 February 2008, in Gland, Switzerland (http://www.ramsar.org/sc/36/key_sc36_agenda_papers.htm).

UNDOALOS ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF ITLOS MEMBER

With the resignation of Judge Guangjian Xu (China) on 15 August 2007, a vacancy has occurred in the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) for the remainder of his nine-year term. The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) has announced that the election to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term



will be held on 30 January 2008. UNDOALOS has posted the nominated candidate's *curricula vitae* (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/SPLOS_documents.htm#SPLOS/165).

Additional January-June 2008 activities for UNDOALOS will include the Seventh Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Fish Stocks Agreement (10-14 March), the Second Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (28 April-2 May), and the Ninth Meeting of the UN Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (23-27 June). All these meetings are scheduled to be held at UN headquarters in New York, US.

IMO ANNOUNCES INFORMAL STUDY REGARDING AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has announced the completion of a study carried out by an informal cross government/industry scientific group of experts to assist in the revision of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which regulates the emission of atmospheric pollutants in ships' exhausts. The report will be presented at the IMO's Sub-Committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases February 2008 session and at the Marine Environment Protection Committee's March/April session (http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1472&doc_id=8837).

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES (cont.)

ASSESSMENTS OF IMPACTS AND ADAPTATIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

(UNEP/GEF, 2007) This report, jointly issued by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), provides examples of how vulnerable communities and countries may "climate proof" economies, livelihoods and infrastructure, underlining that factoring climate into development strategies is feasible, but that hard choices may have to be made. The report's case studies encompass, among others: food security in the Sahel; artisanal fishing communities in South America; coastal townships of small islands in the Pacific; pastoralists in Mongolia; and rice farmers in the lower Mekong basin (http://www.start.org/Publications/other/AIACC_full_report.pdf).

► SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD 16 BUREAU PREPARES FOR MAY MEETING

The Bureau of the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 16) held its first meeting on 19 December 2007, at UN headquarters in New York, US, to discuss preparations for the 5-16 May 2008 session. Among other issues discussed, the Bureau highlighted the importance of national reports for thematic discussions at CSD 16 and recommended that member States that have not done so submit them as soon as possible. The Bureau also: decided to organize the review of CSD 13 water and sanitation during the second week of CSD 16; considered a proposal for an additional dedicated dialogue with Major Groups; and received a letter forwarded by the Secretariat from the CSD 16 Major Groups Organizing Partners, indicating that they are facing challenges



Juan Mario Dary (Guatemala), CSD 16 Vice-chair (Photo courtesy of the UN)



Tri Tharyat (Indonesia), CSD 16 Vice-chair

in finding resources to enable Major Groups to participate in the Commission's activities and suggesting that special discussion topics at CSD 16 be identified early. The next Bureau meeting will convene on the margins of the Beijing International Conference on Combating Desertification (22-24 January, 2008), which will be convened as a CSD 16 intersessional event (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/bureau_mtg191207.pdf; http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/mg_letter.pdf). Major Group Discussion Papers on the CSD 16 themes have been released. The Secretary-General's documents for the session are in the peer review process, including reviews by relevant UN agencies, and are expected to be released in the coming month (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_sdissues_major_groups.htm; <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNGA SECOND COMMITTEE CONCLUDES WORK

On 19 December 2007, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) officially adopted the resolutions that had been negotiated and approved by the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) during meetings held from 8 October-18 December 2007. In her concluding remarks on 18 December 2007, Second Committee Chair Kirsti Lintonen (Finland) highlighted that the Committee had approved 34 resolutions during UNGA's 62nd session and set in motion two major initiatives by formulating the procedure for the Review Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November to 2 December 2008, and by proclaiming the Second Decade on Poverty Reduction (2008-2017). In the resolution 'Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus' (A/RES/62/187), member States agreed that the Conference will include plenary meetings and six interactive multi-stakeholder round tables on the six major thematic areas of the Monterrey Consensus, and that it will result in an agreed outcome. In another noteworthy resolution, entitled 'Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system' (A/RES/62/208), member States reached consensus on a comprehensive policy review that will shape UN development activities over the next three years, specifically on funding, national-capacity development and development effectiveness (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10683.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gaef3208.doc.htm>; <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>).

Looking ahead at the UNGA agenda, UNGA President Srjgan Kerim will hold two high-level thematic debates at UN headquarters in New York, US, during the first half of 2008: the first debate entitled "Addressing Climate Change: The UN and the World at Work" will take place on 11-12 February; and the second on the theme "Recognizing the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015," will convene on 1-2 April.

UNEP INITIATES OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN, TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN TO CONTINUE

On 18 December 2007, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) announced that an oil spill contingency plan had been launched by UNEP's Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) at the request of the Republic of Korea, in response to the oil spill caused by the oil tanker's Hebei Spirit collision with a barge on 7 December 2007. The collision resulted in 10,500 metric tons of crude oil being released into the sea, with the oil slick affecting approximately 160 km of coastline near an important habitat for birds. A joint UN-EU rapid environmental assessment team was also sent to help the authorities mitigate the effects of the spill (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=523&ArticleID=5728&I=en>).

Meanwhile, UNEP's *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign* successfully reached its target to plant one billion trees worldwide during 2007. The campaign has now expanded its objective to plant one billion more trees in 2008, and thus continues to encour-

age communities, business and industry, civil society organizations and governments to enter tree planting pledges online (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>).

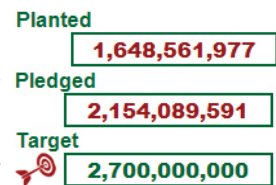


Image courtesy of UNEP

UNEP-related activities during the coming months include: the Tenth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Environment Minister Forum, to take place in Monaco from 20-22 February 2008; and the Conference on Resource Efficiency, jointly organized by UNEP and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which will convene from 23-25 April 2008, in Paris, France. UNEP is also organizing the Ninth Session of the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF 9), which will convene on 19 February 2008 in Monaco, and has posted the draft agenda (http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF9/pdfs/GCSF9-draftagenda21-12-07.pdf) as well as statements agreed on during the six Regional Consultative Meetings, held from October-November 2007 to facilitate Major Groups' participation in and contribution to GCSF 9 (http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF/index.asp). In addition, UNEP will be involved with a CMS - African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Capacity-building Workshop for National Negotiators from Africa (5-8 March 2008, venue to be confirmed) and the Eighth International Conference of the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE) (5-11 April 2008, Cape Town, South Africa).



Image courtesy of UNEP

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

But the reality is that our world is now more complex than ever – highly interconnected, owing to advances in communication and transportation, and highly dynamic, owing to the scale of impact of our collective actions.

Policies that cannot perform effectively under dynamic and uncertain conditions run the risk of not achieving their intended purpose and having unintended negative impacts. Using insights gained from literature on complex adaptive systems as currently being applied in a range of economic sectors, and through the analysis of policies identified through hundreds of on-the-ground interviews in Canada and India, we have compiled a pragmatic set of approaches and tools for adaptive policies and policymaking.

A policy that has the ability to adapt to **anticipated conditions** is built upon insights into cause-and-effect relationships. Mechanisms include:

- **Automatic Adjustment** – Some of the inherent variability in socio-economic and ecologic conditions can be anticipated, and monitoring can help trigger important policy adjustments to keep the policy functioning well.
- **Integrated Assessment to Inform Policy Parameters** – Through an integrated assessment of causal factors, key impacts and scenario outlooks, policies can be crafted to perform under a range of anticipated conditions, and possibly function even under worst cases.
- **Multi-perspective Deliberation** – Deliberative processes strengthen policy design by building recognition of common values, shared commitment and emerging issues, and by providing a more comprehensive understanding of cause-and effect relationships.

The ability of a policy to adapt to **unanticipated conditions** is a newer notion, based on a holistic appreciation of system complexity, capacity, performance and dynamics. Mechanisms include:

- **Formal Review and Continuous Learning** – Policy review undertaken on a regular basis, even when the policy is functioning well, can help deal with “emerging” issues, and trigger adjustments.
- **Encouraging Self-organization and Networking** – By encouraging interaction, policies can foster the emergence of innovative responses to unexpected events.

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► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

CBD AND GERMANY SIGN MOU, ONLINE FORUM FOCUSES ON 2010 TARGET IN DRYLANDS

As announced by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 2 January 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the amount of €1,000,000 to support the project “Linking implementation of the CBD and Poverty Alleviation” has been signed by CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif and the Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN, Thomas Matussek. Aiming to foster the integration of biodiversity into the poverty alleviation agenda, the initiative will facilitate support for eligible countries to implement components of the CBD programmes of work related to poverty alleviation (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2008/pr-2008-01-02-de-en.pdf>).



Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary



Thomas Matussek, German PR to the UN (Photo courtesy of the UN)

In preparation for the deliberations on dry and sub-humid lands of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (19-30 May 2008, Bonn, Germany), the CBD Secretariat is organizing an online discussion forum to gather information on the identification of priority activities, capacity needs and obstacles with regard to the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target in dry and sub-humid lands. The deadline for participation is 31 January 2008 (<http://www.cbd.int/drylands/forum.shtml>).

The CBD Secretariat has published its annual report of activities on the implementation of the work programme of the Convention and the Biosafety Protocol during 2007 (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop-bureau/cop-bur-2008-01/official/cop-bur-2008-01-04-en.pdf>). For the January-June 2008 period, the Secretariat will organize a number of meetings leading up to the COP, including: the sixth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (21-25 January 2008, Geneva, Switzerland); the second meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas (11-15 February, Rome, Italy); the thirteenth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (18-22 February, Rome, Italy); the fifth meeting of the Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress in the Context of the Biosafety Protocol (12-19 March, Cartagena, Colombia); and the fourth Biosafety

Protocol COP/MOP (12-16 May, Bonn, Germany).

CMS SECRETARIAT LAUNCHES ACTION PLAN FOR CENTRAL FLYWAY

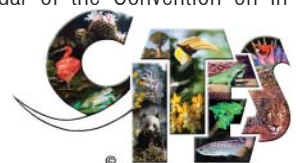
The Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) recently launched the Action Plan for the Central Asian Flyway, one of the world’s most vital routes for migratory birds. The new Action Plan covers 175 waterbird species, 13 of which are listed on Appendix I of the Convention. It contains provisions for species and habitat conservation, single species action plans and emergency measures, and provides the basis for the region’s 30 range States to take individual and coordinated region-wide activities to conserve waterbirds and their habitats. The Action Plan was finalized at the second official meeting of the Central Asian Flyway Range States (June 2005, New Delhi, India) and was launched on 11 January 2008, following the incorporation of technical comments received after that meeting (<http://www.cms.int/species/CAF/news.htm>). The January-June 2008 period will include meetings related to CMS agreements, such as the fourth meeting of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) Jastarnia Group (25-27 February, Kolmården, Sweden) and the second Signatory Meeting of the MOU on West African Marine Turtles (5-7 March, Dakar, Senegal).



Logo courtesy of CMS

CITES PLANTS AND ANIMALS COMMITTEES TO CONVENE IN APRIL

The calendar of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for the January-June 2008 period includes the 17th meeting of the Plants Committee (15-18 April 2008), and the 23rd meeting of the Animals Committee (21-24 April 2008), both of which will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. A joint meeting of the two Committees will be held on 19 April.



Logo courtesy of CITES



Image courtesy of CITES



Image courtesy of CITES

GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

• **Subsidiarity** – By recognizing that action will occur at different levels of jurisdiction, depending on the nature of the issue, policies can be crafted to assign priority to the lowest jurisdictional level of action consistent with effectiveness.

• **Promoting Variation** – Small-scale interventions for the same problem offer greater hope of finding effective solutions. Diversity facilitates the ability to persist in the face of change.

Our two organizations have undertaken a multi-year project (2005–2009), with funding from the International Development Research Centre, to advance the understanding of adaptive policies and to help government agriculture and water resource policy-makers at the local, state and federal levels design adaptive policies – policies that can adapt to anticipated as well as unanticipated conditions.

Link to full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle39.html>

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

WORLD BANK AND IDB APPROVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LOANS

The World Bank approved, on 20 December 2007, a US\$ 20 million interest-free loan for local sustainable development in the Bolivian part of the Lake Titicaca watershed, by promoting tourism, protecting the archeological and cultural heritage of the area, providing basic water and sanitation services for the local population, and strengthening the management capacity of local governments. As a result of the project, 150,000 residents of Lake Titicaca's neighboring towns are expected to receive access to drinking water and solid waste collection and treatment services (<http://go.worldbank.org/K5UPT28040>).

On the same date, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a US\$ 29 million loan to support a sustainable development programme in the province of Bocas del Toro, Panama, a region with high levels of poverty and extraordinary biodiversity. The programme's resources will be invested in improving access to, and quality of, drinking water and sanitation, as well as in financing income-generation projects for small-scale farmers and fishermen, and



Image courtesy of IADB

training in ecotourism for micro-entrepreneurs. In addition, pilot projects will promote conservation

of protected areas, sustainable use of natural resources and mitigation of natural disaster risks, such as through an early warning system for flooding by the Sixaola River (<http://www.iadb.org/news/articleDetail.cfm?Language=En&parid=2&artType=PR&artid=4268>).

Activities in the trade and finance for sustainable development cluster during the first semester of 2008 include the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum (23–27 January, Davos, Switzerland), the UN Economic and Social Council meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank), the World Trade Organization and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (14 April, New York, US), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council Meeting and NGO Consultation (21–25 April, Washington DC, US). Other meetings include the Gleneagles dialogue on climate change, clean energy and sustainable development (14–16 March, Chiba, Japan), and the twelfth session of UNCTAD (20–25 April, Accra, Ghana).



Image courtesy of IADB

▶ COMINGS AND GOINGS

- Professor Bert Bolin, a leading climate change scientist who chaired the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** (IPCC) for its first ten years and whose research into climate change spanned five decades, passed away on 30 December 2007 (<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=2939>).
- Barbara Black, the **UN Framework Convention for Climate Change's** liaison with observer organizations and for side events, retired after 13 years with the Secretariat, at the close of the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia.
- Bouthena Bendahmane has been selected as the **Multilateral Fund's** Senior Administrative Officer, effective 1 November 2007, and Martha Leyva returned from the Ozone Secretariat to the Multilateral Fund Secretariat, in the position of Associate Executive Assistant, effective October 2007 (<http://www.multilateralfund.org/files/53/5302.pdf>).



Bert Bolin

▶ KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM: RESULTS-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: PURSUING NATIONAL INTERESTS:** 19–20 January 2008. Cairo, Egypt. <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newfuncnt/dcfcairo.shtml>
- **SIXTH MEETING OF THE CBD OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING:** 21–25 January 2008. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/abs6/>
- **IPCC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE SPECIAL REPORT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY:** 21–25 January 2008. Lübeck, Germany. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- **BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMBATING DESERTIFICATION:** 22–24 January 2008. Beijing, China. http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/desertification_beijing2008.htm
- **CSD REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING FOR EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA:** 28–29 January 2008. Geneva, Switzerland. http://www.unece.org/env/SustainableDevelopment/3Session/sd_forum.jan2008.htm
- **REGION-LED INITIATIVE ON REGIONAL FORESTS PROCESSES:** 28–30 January 2008. Geneva, Switzerland. http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/cli/Australian_Swiss_Region_Led_Initiative.pdf
- **14TH MEETING OF RAMSAR'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL:** 28 January–1 February 2008. Gland, Switzerland. <http://www.ramsar.org/meetings.htm>