



RECENT MEA ACTIVITIES

▶ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSD16 LINKS THEMATIC TOPICS WITH FOOD CRISIS AND CLIMATE CHANGE



UN Under-Secretary-General Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang and CSD-16 Chair Francis Nhema (Zimbabwe) open "SIDS Day"

Delegates to the sixteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD16) are meeting in New York, US, from 5-16 May 2008, to focus on the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. This first year of the two-year CSD "Implementation Cycle" is reviewing barriers and constraints in implementation, as well as lessons learned and best practices, in relation to the thematic cluster. CSD17, in 2009, will negotiate policy recommendations based on CSD16's review of the issues. Delegates have highlighted links between the CSD16 themes and the current food crisis and climate change, among other concerns. In addition to reviewing the thematic cluster of issues, CSD16 delegates reviewed implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in relation to the thematic cluster of issues, and the CSD13 decisions on water and sanitation (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd16/>).

GUEST ARTICLE

The Value of Livestock-Based Livelihoods

By Arthur Getz Escudero, Heifer International

Abstract

Seventy percent of the world's poor are livestock keepers, and livestock is often the only asset families own in developing countries. Yet for decades, governments and world financial institutions have ignored livestock as a tool to end poverty.

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RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL NEGOTIATOR'S HANDBOOK

(UNEP, 2007) The French version of this book, produced by Environment Canada, UNEP and Joensuu University, is now available. The book provides an introduction to negotiating and working on MEAs and a reference tool for experienced negotiators (http://www.unep.org/DEC/Information_Resources/Publications.asp).

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GUEST ARTICLE (cont.)

By unlucky accident, climate change, the world food crisis, desertification, drought and worsening conditions for Africa may be changing all that. Agriculture, livestock and the sustainable practices that weave them together into a healthy social and physical landscape are now being seen as important tools in mitigating the effects of climate change, preventing desertification, surviving drought and providing a pathway out of poverty. But if governments, international financial institutions and the world community at large allow agriculture and livestock agriculture to fall again between the cracks, humanity will have missed an opportunity to help the most vulnerable groups become more self-reliant – and to save the lives of those depending on the natural resource base.

Animal agriculture, irresponsibly pursued, carries with it a multitude of risks for humanity and the environment. But agroecologically sound livestock-based systems – whether small-scale farming or pastoral sys-

tems – can play a world-changing role.

Smallholders with well-managed, livestock-based integrated farming operations can maintain sustainable livelihoods, and become net sellers of food, instead of net buyers at the mercy of price shocks and diminished food supply.

In areas with depleted soils, manure can often be as valuable as the animals themselves. Manure can increase soil's organic matter, improve soil structure and fertility, reduce erosion, improve water infiltration and increase water retention in soils. Livestock can help improve family nutrition, and profits from the sale of animals or surplus products help pay for health care, school fees and improved housing. Sustainable grazing systems can promote nutrient cycling and enhanced efficiency of nutrient uptake for grazing and fodder crops. Improved plant health provides biomass and higher quality grazing that also improves livestock productivity. Livestock provide services for sus-

tained functioning and productivity of grazing ecosystems.

Well-managed livestock systems can also help mitigate effects of climate change. Soils are the planet's largest terrestrial carbon sinks, and soil improvements can yield valuable returns. Pasture is humankind's largest land use and conscientious grassland management can help vastly increase carbon stores. CSD16 has brought together a new coalition of groups seeking new recognition of livestock as a gateway to self-reliance and dignity for the world's most vulnerable people. Through CSD17, we will continue building a community of interest to convince policymakers of the great opportunity that stands before us.

Link to the full article: <http://www.iisd.ca/mea-l/guestarticle47.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.

► BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

LIABILITY AND REDRESS INSTRUMENT CONSIDERED AT BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL MOP4, CBD COP9 TO FOLLOW

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP 4) convenes from 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. The meeting's focus is the finalization and adoption of an international regime on liability and redress in the context of the Protocol. From 7-10 May 2008, delegates held regional consultations and convened in a Friends of the Chair group to negotiate the liability regime. An open session discussed a detailed draft of a compact proposed by six major agricultural biotechnology companies, constituting a mutually binding contract to cover actual damage to biodiversity, subject to proof of harm. The Friends of the Chair group engaged in closed-door negotiations of proposed operational texts, agreed on

one consolidated definition of damage to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, further refined operational texts on the elements of the administrative approach, and discussed additional elements in regard to exemptions or mitigation, limitation of liability and coverage. The group then considered whether key elements of civil liability should be determined according to domestic law, including the forms of damage to be covered, valuation of damage, and the burden of proof for causation, and further consolidated the definition of scope (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/bs-copmop4/>).

Immediately following the Biosafety Protocol COP/MOP 4, CBD COP9 will convene from 19-30 May 2008, in Bonn. The agenda of the meeting contains the following issues for in-depth consideration: agricultural biodiversity; global strategy for plant conservation; invasive alien species; forest biodiversity; incentive measures; ecosystem approach; progress in the implementation of the

Strategic Plan and progress towards the 2010 target and relevant Millennium Development Goals; and financial resources and the financial mechanism. Other substantive and strategic issues to be addressed include: access and benefit-sharing; Article 8(j) and related provisions; technology transfer and cooperation; biodiversity and climate change; protected areas; marine and coastal biodiversity; island biodiversity; cooperation with other conventions and engagement of stakeholders; and communication, education and public awareness (<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cop9/>).

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY FOCUSES ON BIODIVERSITY

Celebrated on 10-11 May 2008 with concerts, films and other public events to draw attention to the rising threat to migratory birds and global biodiversity, highlighted by a series of recent reports indicating that the numbers of migratory birds are declining globally, World Migratory Bird Day 2008 aimed to send a "clear signal to world leaders that more needs to be done to halt the loss of biodiversity and to increase national and international efforts to protect the network of sites required by migratory birds" (http://www.unep-aewa.org/news/news_elements/2008/wmbd2008_press_release.htm).



View of the Contact Group on Budget during COP-MOP 4

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

WATERBIRD CENSUS OF COASTAL CAMEROON AND SANAGA RIVER

(Working Group on International Waterbird and Wetland Research, 2007) This report presents the results of the waterbird survey performed on the complete coast of Cameroon, from Campo (on the border with Equatorial Guinea) through the Sanaga estuary, the Douala estuary, the Mount Cameroon coastline to the Ndian basin on the border with Nigeria (<http://www.projects.wiwo.org/>).

WHERE THE LAND IS GREENER

(World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies, 2007) This book provides an analysis and practical policy guidance on soil and water conservation from a global perspective, based on 42 case studies. By identifying common elements of success, the book presents the positive efforts for productive conservation efforts at the local level with simultaneous global environmental benefits (<http://www.wocat.org/overview-bookPDF.asp>).

GENDER AND EQUITY ISSUES IN LIQUID BIOFUELS PRODUCTION - MINIMIZING THE RISKS TO MAXIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES

(FAO, 2008) This paper on gender and equity issues in liquid biofuels production was prepared at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) by the Gender Equity and Rural Employment Division. The paper discusses the potential gender-differentiated risks of large-scale liquid biofuels production in developing countries, particularly in terms of food security, and suggests research and policy strategies to better understand and address these risks (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai503e/ai503e00.htm>).

► CHEMICALS AND WASTES

BASEL RELEASES COP9 AGENDA

The Secretariat of the Basel Convention has released the advance annotated agenda for COP9, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 23-27 June 2008 (<http://www.basel.int/meetings/cop/cop9/docs/annotated%20agenda%20ADVANCE%20UNEDITED%2008-05-08.pdf>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

UNFF HOSTS ONLINE FORUM ON FOREST LOSS AND DEGRADATION

“Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries” is the latest in a series of online discussion fora hosted by the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). Participants are invited to post comments, until 30 May 2008, on the types of support the international community could provide to supplement the developmental efforts of developing countries in addressing land-use and forestry issues. The forum also addresses issues that affect deforestation and land degradation, such as institutional capacities, priorities in domestic investment and policies, macro-economic policies of international financial institutions, and land tenure (<http://esaconf.un.org/WB/default.asp?action=9&boardid=46&read=3783&fid=666>).

The UNFF Secretariat has also released its latest newsletter, which recaps recent international forest-related meetings and preparations for the 8th session of UNFF, to be held in 2009. The newsletter states that a meeting of the Advisory Group on Finance for sustainable forest management (SFM) concluded that an analytical mapping of needs and available sources and mechanisms for funding for SFM will be prepared and presented at the Country-Led Initiative on financing SFM, to be held in September 2008, in Paramaribo, Suriname (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/n-feb-apr08.html>).

UNCCD CONVENES SIDE EVENTS AT CSD-16

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has organized a number of events on the side of CSD16. During a side event on the “Right to Food and Water Implies the Duty to Conserve the Land,” UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja suggested that renewed international commitment to create the necessary conducive environment, including by according high priority to investment in sustainable land management and reversing land degradation, would go a long way in ensuring the realization of

The Secretariat has also produced “Our Sustainable Future: The role of the Basel Convention,” a document that seeks to inform donors about the Convention and the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition (<http://www.basel.int/pub/broch090508.pdf>).

the right to food and water. A side event on “Building partnerships to reduce risk to drought and desertification” was jointly organized with the Secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) to consider efforts to support national governments and regional organizations in advancing their agendas to reduce the risks of desertification and drought. Additional side events and learning centre courses addressed “Enhancing the economic value of dryland areas through sustainable agricultural practices: an efficient way to fight desertification” and “Linking Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change – Processes, Policies and Actions” (<http://www.unccd.int/publicinfo/csd/menu.php>).

The Global Mechanism of the UNCCD organized, on the margins of the Central Asian Countries Initiative on Land Management (CACILM) 2nd Steering Committee meeting (23-24 April 2008, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan), a workshop to initiate the process for adapting the Designing Integrated Financing Strategies (DIFS) programme to the Central Asian Countries’ context. Participants, including UNCCD Focal Point Institutions and heads of the CACILM National Secretariats, discussed issues related to the preparation and implementation of the DIFS training programme as a means for mobilizing finance for the second phase of CACILM implementation. Participants agreed on the next steps and a tentative timeframe to prepare and implement the DIFS programme in Central Asia, through convening a subregional workshop for the CACILM Multi-country and National Secretariats, followed by 5 national workshops in each country over the 2008-2009 biennium (<http://www.global-mechanism.org/news-events/news/outcomes-of-workshop-on-designing-integrated-financing-strategies-for-central-asian-countries>).



Participants during the side event on “Right to Food and Water Implies the Duty to Conserve the Land”

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

(UNEP, 2008) The UN Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America has launched a new environmental education website, which contains information on issues such as climate change, consumption and production, ecosystem management, energy, environmental governance, hazardous waste, and water (<http://www.rona.unep.org/education.html>).

► FORESTS, DESERTS AND LAND

ITTO MEETING DEVELOPS RECOMMENDATIONS ON TROPICAL FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

International experts attending a meeting hosted by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), from 30 April-2 May 2008, developed draft recommendations on the roles of ITTO, national governments and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) in addressing climate change through sustainable management of tropical forests. The experts recommended that ITTO's role include: supporting regional meetings,

national activities and the development of policy and institutional frameworks on the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation; assisting member countries to develop proposals for pilot projects on reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD); developing guidelines for mitigation and adaptation options in tropical forests and accounting for carbon in forest management plans; and working with other relevant parties to ensure that REDD and payment for ecosystem services benefit forest-dependent people (<http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=3845>).

► CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE



The Maritim hotel, venue for the Bonn meetings

SECOND REVIEW OF KYOTO PROTOCOL DISCUSSED, UNFCCC PREPARES FOR BONN MEETINGS

A workshop has been held in Bonn, Germany, for parties to the Kyoto Protocol to discuss a second review of the Protocol later this year. The workshop was part of preparations for a review of the Protocol scheduled to take place during the fourth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP4), which will convene in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008. Topics discussed at the 28-29 April 2008 event included: meeting the costs of adaptation and the scope; and effectiveness and functioning of the Protocol's flexible mechanisms, including the Clean Development Mechanism. Preparations for the second review will resume at the twenty-eighth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), which is taking place in Bonn in June (http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/4359.php).

Preparations for the twenty-eighth sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies and other related meetings in Bonn in June have also been taking place, with the UNFCCC Secretariat posting the annotated agenda for the second session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWGLCA 2), along with the agendas for the SBI, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the agenda for the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol. These events will convene from 2-13 June 2008 (<http://unfccc.int/meetings/sb28/items/4328.php>, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/awglca2/eng/04.pdf>).

OZONE SECRETARIAT PREPARES FOR OEWG28

The Ozone Secretariat has released advance copies of documents in preparation for the 28th Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) Meeting of the Parties to take place from 7-11 July 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand. The Note by the Secretariat calls attention to: studies and recommendations of the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel, including those pertaining to hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), as well as essential-use and critical-use

nominations for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and methyl bromide, respectively; a proposed adjustment to the Protocol; and Secretariat initiatives to deal more effectively with interlinkages with other multilateral environmental agreements (http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/28oewg/OEWG-28-2E.pdf).

The Assessment of the Funding Requirement for the Replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol (decision XIX/10) estimates the total funding for 2009-2011 to enable developing parties to comply with relevant control schedules to be between US\$543-640 million, depending on decisions related to the accelerated phase-out of HCFCs. Funding needed for non-HCFC activities is estimated to be US\$203 million, while funding for HCFC activities is estimated to be between US\$140-437 million, depending on the scale and application being phased out (http://ozone.unep.org/Assessment_Panels/TEAP/Reports/TEAP_Reports/TEAP_Replenishment_Task_Force_Report-May2008.pdf).

In other ozone news, the Holy See has recently acceded to the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, as well as its amendments (<http://www.zenit.org/article-22510?l=english>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

FFD PROCESS REVIEWS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The review session on Chapter IV of the Monterrey Consensus, on "Increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development," convened

from 15-16 April 2008, in New York, US. Delegates heard panel presentations and participated in interactive debates centered on the evolution of official development assistance (ODA) since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, which urged developed countries to make concrete efforts towards the tar-

get of providing 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) to developing countries. In particular, developing countries noted that levels of ODA peaked in 2005 and have been declining since, with most industrial nations still missing the 0.7% target (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha/chapter4/index.htm>).

► TRADE, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

DEVELOPMENT BANKS FUND LAND MANAGEMENT, WASTE, CORAL AND CLIMATE PROJECTS

The World Bank approved, on 29 April 2008, a US\$20 million International Development Association (IDA) grant, and a US\$9 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant in support of a project to address land degradation in Ethiopia. The Sustainable Land Management Project aims to reverse land degradation and improve agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers, covering a total area of about 250,000 ha, and benefiting about 400,000 people (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21750129~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

On the same date, the Bank approved a US\$84 million loan to help reduce urban pollution generated from wastewater and solid waste through proper collection, treatment and disposal in Hubei Province, China. Through the Han River Urban Environment Improvement Project, the World Bank will finance the construction of new wastewater collection systems and wastewater treatment plants, new sanitary landfills and solid waste collection and transfer stations, equipment, and closures of existing dumps. The project is expected to benefit 2-3 million people through improved

wastewater and solid waste services (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21750404~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

On 17 April 2008, the World Bank approved a grant of US\$5 million from the Special Climate Change Fund of the Global Environment Facility (GEF/SCCF) to help China's water and agricultural sectors adapt to climate change. The grant will be partially blended with an ongoing Bank-financed project on irrigated agriculture intensification. The Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in Irrigated Agriculture Project will focus on North China Plain consisting of six provinces in the Huang-Huai-Hai River Basins, and introduce and pilot climate change adaptation measures at demonstration sites (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21739045~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>).

The GEF and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are collaborating to support the preservation of Asia's Coral Triangle. The GEF has committed US\$63 million to fund conservation of this area known as "the Amazon of the seas." The GEF funds will cover activities to preserve the region's coastal and marine ecosystems and develop measures to help the area adapt to climate change.

The project is expected to catalyze at least US\$425 million of co-financing for the Coral Triangle Initiative to introduce sustainable fisheries management and conserve coral ecosystems while reducing poverty (<http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=21350>).

In related news, the ADB has announced that it is establishing a new fund to mitigate climate change and help the Asia-Pacific region adapt to the impacts of global warming. The Bank will provide US\$40 million to a Climate Change Fund, which will be open for further contributions from other sources (<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2008/12474-asian-climate-changes/default.asp>).

UNCTAD XII ADOPTS ACCRA DECLARATION AND ACCORD

The twelfth UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII), which took place from 20-25 April 2008, in Accra, Ghana, adopted a ministerial Accra Declaration and an Accra Accord, identifying challenges and opportunities of globalization for development and a four-year work plan. The Conference, which was attended by approximately 4000 delegates, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, considered sustainable development, poverty reduction and related global policies (<http://www.unctadxii.org/en/>).

► WATER, OCEANS AND WETLANDS

RAMSAR CONVENES EUROPEAN MEETING, SIGNS MOC WITH RWANDA

The Ramsar Secretariat has sponsored the sixth European Ramsar meeting, together with the Swedish Environment Protection Agency, from 3-7 May 2008, in Solna, Sweden. The meeting provided European delegates the opportunity to prepare for the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10), to be held in Changwon, Republic of Korea, from 28 October-4 November 2008. Participants considered operational procedures of the Convention, especially at the European and national levels (http://www.ramsar.org/mtg/mtg_reg_europe2008_address.htm).

In other Ramsar news, the Secretary General and the General Director of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to prepare the inventory and categorization of the Rwanda wetlands and marshlands. The MoC provides that the two parties will collaborate on: developing a political and legal framework for the wise use of Rwanda marshlands; strengthening the

conservation and integrated management of Rwanda wetlands; and raising funds and securing technical assistance for the Rwanda Wetlands Program. If successful, this pilot project will be replicated for other Parties engaged in the preparation of national wetland inventories (http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.rwanda_inventory_moc.pdf).

WORKING GROUP FOCUSES ON PRACTICAL MEASURES TO CONSERVE MARINE BIODIVERSITY

The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN DOALOS) has convened the second meeting of the



Co-Chairs Robert Hill (Australia) and Juan Manuel Gómez-Robledo (Mexico)

Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group of the General Assembly to study issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (28 April - 2 May 2008, New York, US). The Group concentrated on practical measures to conserve and protect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, including the implementation deficit in existing agreements, the need for marine scientific research and the continuation of the Working Group. The outcome of the meeting – a Co-Chairs' Draft Joint Statement to be submitted to the 63rd session of the General Assembly – included issues that the General Assembly may wish to consider referring back to the Working Group (<http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/marinebiodiv2/>).

In related news, UN DOALOS has released the provisional formatted and annotated agenda for the ninth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, scheduled to convene in New York, US, from 23-27 June 2008 (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm#A/AC.259/L.9).

► INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

UNEP LAUNCHES COASTAL ZONE PROJECT, AGREEMENT WITH POSTAL UNION

On 6 May 2008, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) launched the project "Development, protection and integrated management of the coastal zone at Itsamia, Mohéli," together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment of the Comoros and the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, in Itsamia, Mohéli, Comoros. The project is being implemented within the context of the UNEP/Global Environment Facility Project, "Addressing land-based activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-LaB)." It seeks to reduce stress to the marine and coastal ecosystem by improving water and sediment quality, and develop regional capacity and strengthen institutions for sustainable, less polluting development (http://www.unep.org/roa/docs/pdf/ProjectWiolabItsamiaEnglishBrief_doc-6-05-2008.pdf).

In other UNEP-related news, UNEP announced an agreement on 5 May 2008 to assist the Universal Postal Service (UPU) to calculate the greenhouse gas emissions generated by the postal sector, and suggest solutions to cut these emissions. The UPU is a member of the UN's Environment Management Group, and has formed a global network within the postal operators of its member countries to help raise awareness of the importance of adopting green policies and sharing best practices (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=531&ArticleID=5800&l=en>).

Meanwhile, UNEP's *Plant for the Planet - Billion Tree Campaign* has announced that it is raising its target from 1 billion trees to 7 billion trees. The campaign, which was launched in November 2006 aiming to collect tree-planting pledges online and catalyse the planting of 1 billion trees worldwide, has in 18

months seen two billion trees planted (<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=535&ArticleID=5806&l=en>)>announced). Other campaign news includes efforts by the community-based organization Green Warriors Movement and the non-governmental organization Youth Environment Network to plant 800 trees in Nairobi's Karura forest, to mark Earth Day on 22 April 2008. In addition, the global hotel group Accor has enrolled its 4000 hotels in the Campaign and is pledging to donate 50% of the savings on laundry costs resulting from the responsible behavior of hotel operators and customers to tree planting projects (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/CampaignNews/index.asp>).

UNGA RESOLUTION SUGGESTS CONTINUED IEG DISCUSSIONS

During a meeting of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) informal process on strengthening International Environmental Governance (IEG) held on 2 May 2008, at UN headquarters in New York, US, Co-Chairs Peter Maurer (Switzerland) and Claude Heller (Mexico) presented a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening the environmental activities in the United Nations system." The content of the resolution follows the seven building blocks that were presented in the Options Paper from June 2007, namely: scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity; agency coordination; multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); regional processes; the Bali Strategic plan; IT, partnerships and advocacy; and funding. Among other things, the draft resolution suggests that: the Environment Management Group be placed under the direct authority of the UN Secretary-General to raise its profile; UNEP's Executive Director submit an annual consolidated appeal containing needs, planned activities and

estimated funding levels for all environmental capacity building activities in the UN system, including for MEAs and for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan; and a Global Environmental Financial Tracking System be created, providing a web-based database relying on voluntary self-reporting by donors and recipients to provide transparent information on multilateral and bilateral financial flows for environmental activities. The resolution also acknowledges that diverse views have been presented on the broader transformation of IEG system. On steps forward, the resolution suggests that the informal consultations continue during UNGA's 63rd session, to discuss the broader IEG transformation and the interaction among different intergovernmental bodies, and to assess progress achieved at UNGA's 64th session. The first feedback session on the draft resolution is tentatively scheduled for 21 May 2008 (<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/environmentalgov/draftresolutionIEG.pdf>; <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/environmentalgov/TPresIEGLAST.pdf>).

ECOSOC DISCUSSES CLIMATE CHANGE

The UN Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Special Event on Climate Change and Development, "Achieving the MDGs and coping with the challenges of climate change," took place on 2 May 2008, at UN headquarters in New York, US. The event, which was funded by the Government of Italy, included panel discussions on "learning to cope with climate change" and "reducing the world's carbon footprint." The outcomes of the event are expected to serve as input to the forthcoming ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review in July 2008, which will focus on sustainable development (<http://www.iisd.ca/csd/csd16/brief/brief0501e.html>).

► COMINGS AND GOINGS

- The **Ramsar Secretariat** has announced that Llewellyn (Lew) Young has been selected as Senior Regional Advisor for Asia/Oceania. He will take office in mid-June (http://www.ramsar.org/index_bulletin.htm).

► KEY UPCOMING MEA MEETINGS

- **CBD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY:** 12-16 May 2008. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/bs-copmop4/>
- **FFD REVIEW SESSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AS AN ENGINE FOR DEVELOPMENT:** 19-20 May 2008. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>
- **CBD COP9:** 19 May 2008 - 30 May 2008. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cop9/>
- **ECOSOC SPECIAL MEETING ON GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS:** 20 May 2008. New York, US. <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/GlobalFoodCrisis/index.shtml>
- **G8 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING:** 24-26 May 2008. Kobe, Japan. <http://www.do-summit.jp/en/about/summary02.php>
- **HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE UNCCD TEN YEAR STRATEGY:** 27 May 2008. Bonn, Germany. <http://www.unccd.int>